



# Obs~server

Newsletter of the Racine Astronomical Society

September 2007

[www.rasastro.org](http://www.rasastro.org)

## ~Presidents Message~

We've had some great weather for the Public Nights so far. With only one left this season, let's hope the trend continues. I'd like to thank the regulars, who are always there to help out. And, I'd like to extend an invitation to those of you who haven't been out before. Our last Public Night is September 21st. Come and join us, see what it's all about, and have some fun, too.

~Carla Chalker~

## ~Contact Information~

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## Upcoming Events

*(Updated or new events will be highlighted)*

### September

Public Night – September 21<sup>st</sup>

### October

Fall Star Party – October 5<sup>th</sup> (rain dates 6<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, or 13<sup>th</sup>)

Fall Work Party – October 20<sup>th</sup> (rain date on the 27<sup>th</sup>)

### December

Christmas Party – TBD

## International Dark-Sky Association e-News August 31, 2007

### Upcoming Meetings and Conferences:

#### **Southwest Night Sky Conference, September 13-15, 2007**

\* Are you interested in expanding your knowledge about the vast night sky and helping to preserve the nighttime vista that inspires us?

\*Join us! Come to the 2007 Night Sky Conference to learn the latest night sky discoveries and to help preserve our Southwest dark sky heritage. Conference seating is limited, as are special lodging rates in Taos (listed in the conference brochure). Call and register soon!

\* For the complete three-day conference brochure and on-line registration, please go to [www.nmheritage.org](http://www.nmheritage.org) or call 505.989.7745 or email [conference@nmheritage.org](mailto:conference@nmheritage.org)

\* Please share this invitation with your friends and other organizations.

#### **International Dark-Sky Association Symposium**

The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) is pleased to announce its collaboration with the Mont-Mégantic ASTROLab in hosting the 2007 Fall IDA Symposium, to be held September 20 & 21 at the ASTROLab of Mont-Mégantic National Park.

The first event of its kind in Québec, Canada, the symposium is dedicated to "Creating a Dark Sky Reserve in an Inhabited Area" by providing information that will enable others to preserve their dark skies through the success of the ASTROLab. The bilingual symposium (English and French) will highlight speeches by Richard Wainscoat, president of IAU Commission 50: Working Group on Controlling Light Pollution; Kimberly R. Szinger, president of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America; Robert Dick from the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada; David Welch of Parks Canada; Chad Moore of the U.S. National Park Service's Night Sky Team; and many more.

For more information on the symposium, please visit the IDA Web site at <http://www.darksky.org/news/events-2007-symposium-at-astrolab.php>

#### **2008 Annual General Meeting**

Please join the International Dark-Sky Association for our milestone 20th Anniversary Annual General Meeting celebration on June 8 - 10, 2008 at: Loews Ventana Canyon Resort, 7000 North Resort Drive, Tucson, AZ. 85750, United States

The call for presentations is now open. For more information, view the [Call for Papers.](#)

Please view our [Exhibitor and Sponsor Prospectus](#) for information on how your company, organization, or individual donation can help make this event possible.

As more information becomes available, it will be posted on the IDA website at <http://www.darksky.org/news/events-2008-annual-meeting.php>

Members respond to the August 15<sup>th</sup> e-News request - Did You See the Annual Perseid Meteor Shower?

**From John Gorka in Ohio**

*We were fortunate to have a few clear nights in NE Ohio during the Perseid meteor shower. Even in August a clear night in NE Ohio cannot be assumed. Saw a number of Perseids (but none was spectacular) during a public astronomy night hosted by a local park service and our astronomy club, the Chagrin Valley Astronomical Society (founded 1963). Would have seen more Perseids if I weren't so busy pointing the telescope to various star clusters, nebulae, etc., for the public that showed up.*

**From Bob Mizon, UK Campaign for Dark Skies**

*I observed the Perseids on my holiday in France (I live in Wimborne, Dorset, England) on the night of August 12-13, from 2210 UT to 0015 UT (French time 0010-0215). I was on a patch of land beside a country lane in Eastern Brittany, France, about 10 kilometres north of the small town of Josselin, which boasts a magnificent riverside chateau. This area is criss-crossed by numerous narrow roads linking tiny villages, and the population density is very low. I had arranged my family's tour of Brittany to be at this place on the date in question, as I know from experience that it is a truly dark-sky area. The Milky Way was solid, with much naked-eye detail, from horizon to horizon, and faint objects like M31 were strikingly obvious. There was no artificial light to be seen. The sky was completely clear throughout, and many fine meteors sliced across the sky, some leaving sparking trains, and several fell in near-simultaneous pairs. I was photographing various areas of the sky, so may have missed quite a few. There was a flurry of bright meteors around 0030-0100 UT. On returning to Josselin in the early hours, I was struck by the fact that nearly all the streetlights were off, and the chateau floodlighting, muted as it had been, was also switched off. So I was able to savour the view of the great dark bulk of the chateau with the northern-sky stars soaring above it in a black sky. I am going to write to the authorities in Josselin praising their night sky and suggesting they make it a feature of the local tourist brochures!*

**From Charles Mundy in California**

*Observing in transparent skies at Blair Valley in Anza Borrego State Park, CA, on the morning of the 13th, I saw 328 shower members in a space of six hours. Limiting magnitude at the site was fairly constant, 5.5 - 5.9. Great show!*

**From Eric Holcomb in Washington**

*Yes, I did see the Perseids from a dark sky site about 20 miles east of Prineville, Oregon, not far from the Oregon Star Party (OSP) site. Since this year's OSP didn't begin until August 16, I had not intended to travel so far from the Seattle area the first night of my trip, but due to weather I did not reach clear skies until*

*near the Oregon border on highway 97. I also visited Steens Mountain in southeastern Oregon on August 14 before the OSP.*

*Sites visited:*

*Walton Lake area (August 12-13) 44 26 N, 120 19 W, Alt 5500 ft Peak Perseid rate approximately 70/hour between 3:00 and 3:30 AM.*

*Steens Mountain (August 14-15) 42 49 N, 118 51 W, Alt 4400 ft (near first campground)*

*OSP Site (August 16-19) 44 18 N, 120 09 W, Alt 5000 ft*

*All of these are very dark sites. Steens is widely regarded as one of the darkest locations in the U.S., with no city lights visible on the horizon in any direction, although I would say that the lower part of the 9000-ft mountain is only marginally better than the OSP site, plus there are some minor lights from the campgrounds, a resort, and the Frenchglen Hotel/state park at the entrance to the mountain loop road. Higher on the mountain is probably a bit darker, but subject to more severe weather conditions.*

### ***From Dave Walker in Pennsylvania***

*I saw exactly one meteor on Friday 10 August about 20:00. At my other viewing times, around family commitment in Portland Maine, there were low clouds.*

### ***From Bill Souder in California***

*I watched the meteor shower from my front yard in Yucca Valley, CA. The sky was clear and the Milky Way was easily visible. I counted 22 meteors from 12:30 AM to 1:30 AM on Monday, August 13th.*

*I also "think" that I saw 2 or 3 times that many barely visible streaks. Was this my imagination or are there many very faint meteors?*

### **"Dark Sky e-News Tip"**

Looking for a dark sky friendly fixture for your home? Visit our Fixture Seal of Approval (FSA) page at <http://www.darksky.org/programs/fixture-seal-of-approval.php>. There you will find a directory of up-to-date fixtures approved by IDA to preserve and protect the nighttime environment. If you're having problems locating these at your big box store, you can easily order dark sky friendly lighting products by visiting our *Distributors Directory* at

<http://www.darksky.org/lighting/>. Or visit them directly at their websites, Green Earth Lighting (<http://www.greenearthlighting.com/>) or Starry Night Lights (<http://www.starrynightlights.com/>).

Do you have a handy dark sky tip that you could share with IDA members? If so, please send an email to [ida@darksky.org](mailto:ida@darksky.org) with "Dark Sky e-News Tip" in the subject line. We look forward to hearing from you.

## IDA in the News - Recent Media Coverage

### [Letters to the Editors](#)

By David L. Crawford & Robert L. Gent, Arizona Daily Star, 08/14/07

. . . "It may be lights out for Tucson Sports Park."

<http://www.azstarnet.com/sn/education/196200>

### [The Hitchhiker's Guide to Light Pollution](#)

By Brandon Keim, Wired Science, 08/14/07

. . . What would Douglas Adams say?

<http://blog.wired.com/wiredscience/2007/08/the-hitchhikers.html>

### [Starlight Reserve Project](#)

08/19/07

. . . Professor John Hearnshaw from the University of Canterbury talks about a dream to turn the night sky above Lake Tekapo into a world heritage site.

[http://museumdetective.com/modules/journal/journalview.php?space\\_key=1&module\\_key=1](http://museumdetective.com/modules/journal/journalview.php?space_key=1&module_key=1)

### [What Is the Light?](#)

Filed under: [astronomy](#) | 08/17/07

. . . For many people the image of our world under the cover of night has proved a fascination.

<http://www.invertedworld.co.uk/blog/?p=95>

### [New Yorker in the Dark](#)

By Kate Becker, The Visible Universe, 08/16/07

. . . In this week's New Yorker, David Owen writes on our disappearing dark skies and what organizations like the International Dark Sky Association are doing to save them.

<http://visibleuniverse.blogspot.com/2007/08/new-yorker-in-dark.html>

### [Let There Be \(Less\) Light](#)

By Lynn Becker, ArchitectureChicago PLUS, 08/16/07

. . . The current New Yorker magazine has a must-read article by David Owen

<http://arcchicago.blogspot.com/2007/08/let-there-be-less-light.html>

### **[RSVP for NM Wilderness Alliance Grand Opening in Santa Fe](#)**

Democracy for New Mexico, 08/17/07

. . . New Mexico Wilderness Alliance invites you to celebrate the GRAND OPENING of our new Santa Fe Office!

[http://www.democracyfornewmexico.com/democracy\\_for\\_new\\_mexico/2007/08/rsvp-for-nm-wil.html](http://www.democracyfornewmexico.com/democracy_for_new_mexico/2007/08/rsvp-for-nm-wil.html)

### **[Sky Friends](#)**

8/21/07

. . . Tribute to all of You Engineers Out There Making the World a Better Place

<http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-je9TUJU9efKiO09C7Fjse8Krpw--?cq=1&p=322>

### **[Their Dark Materials](#)**

The Bow and Lyre, 8/21/07

. . . A recent article by David Owen in The New Yorker

<http://bow-and-lyre.blogspot.com/2007/08/their-dark-materials.html>

### **[State Seeks to Promote Night Sky Preservation](#)**

By Staci Matlock, The New Mexican, 08/20/07

. . . With growth of cities and traffic, ability to stargaze quickly fading

<http://www.freewmexican.com/news/67045.html>

### **[Campus Security at Night](#)**

08/22/07

. . . Campuses should be lighted when students and staff are present for personal safety.

<http://floridaschoolboss.spaces.live.com/Blog/cns!1E56463A3B8792CF!465.entry>

### **[Turn Off the Bright Lights](#)**

Austinist, 08/26/07

. . . David Owen has an interesting article in last week's New Yorker

[http://austinist.com/2007/08/26/light\\_pollution.php](http://austinist.com/2007/08/26/light_pollution.php)

### **[Seeing Stars Is as Simple as Turning Down the Lights](#)**

By Blair Anthony Robertson - Sacbee.com, 08/27/07

. . . Local light pollution activist works to further stargazing and fight energy waste.

<http://www.sacbee.com/101/story/346209.html>

### **[Utah: The Best Snow and the Best Dark Sky](#)**

By Professor Les, 08/27/07 in Tourism

. . . I was pleasantly surprised to see Utah's special mention in David Owen's excellent piece in the August 20 issue of The New Yorker.

<http://saltlakecityutahblog.com/2007/08/24/utah-the-best-snow-and-the-best-dark-sky/>

### **[Five Flybys](#)**

Space Law Probe, 8/27/07

. . . And on a *lighter* note... more darkness wanted:  
<http://spacelawprobe.blogspot.com/2007/08/five-flybys-82707.html>

### [Lights Out San Francisco](#)

08/28/07

. . . Dark Skies Are A Good Thing  
<http://lightsoutsf.blogspot.com/2007/08/dark-skies-are-good-thing.html>

## Various Ways to Continue Your Support of IDA

### [Membership Categories](#)

Individual/Family  Contributing Organizational  Supporting Organizational   
Lifetime  Gift  
<http://www.darksky.org/support/membership.php>

ALL NEW! eBay [giving works program](#). Donate proceeds to IDA from items you sell on eBay.  
<http://pages.ebay.com/givingworks/index.html?ssPageName=MOPS5:HCH01>

[A memorial donation or commemorative gift](#). Commemorative gifts offer a unique way to honor a special event, such as a wedding, anniversary or birthday, in the life of someone you love. By giving a memorial gift in memory of a family member or friend, you not only affirm your environmental values but also recognize that these values were shared by the individual being honored. Whether in condolence or in honor of an occasion or person, your friends and family will appreciate the thoughtfulness of your contribution.  
<http://www.darksky.org/support/>

[Planned Giving](#) - Gift planning is an exciting way to fulfill philanthropic goals because planning a gift through your estate provides not only a legacy of support for IDA but also multiple financial and tax benefits to you and your family. [http://ida.giftlegacy.com/plgive\\_main.jsp?WebID=GL2006-0531&SSID=BB06AED1519DB2E3C74C9CAAEE38B325D](http://ida.giftlegacy.com/plgive_main.jsp?WebID=GL2006-0531&SSID=BB06AED1519DB2E3C74C9CAAEE38B325D)

**Your support allows us to continue the fight to save the night!**

International Dark-Sky Association, 3225 North First Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85719, (520) 293-3198; (520) 293-3192 fax; [www.darksky.org](http://www.darksky.org)

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