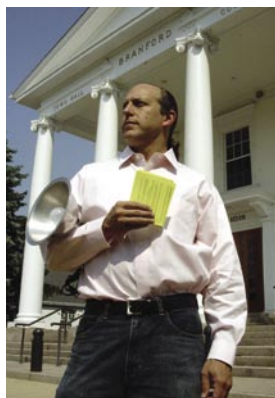


CHANGING THE WORLD, ONE LIGHT AT A TIME (my dark sky ‘toolbox’)

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Growing up in the USA in the 1960s and ‘70s, I witnessed many profound changes in our world. The fading view of my starry night skies sounded an alarm for me – its cause made no sense, no one benefitted from it- but, its remedy seemed easily within reach of our modern society. Our now customary use of electric lights to prolong the day had begun to conquer the night – and, it was happening slowly enough to evade public awareness. For me to help to set things right, I needed ‘tools’ - tools with which I could not only educate people about light pollution, but also tools to control the indiscreet and wasteful use of outdoor lighting. The year was 1994, and I went right to work.

Thirteen years later, the tools that I ‘forged’ have helped to greatly increase awareness of light pollution and have initiated real changes in the ways that people light the night. Today, I open my toolbox to you, with the hope of changing the world.



Tool 1

The Local Lighting Law -*getting active in the community*

The town where I was raised, Branford, Connecticut, was beginning to lose the night sky. The poorly designed and excessive outdoor lighting from town and commercial properties was spilling far beyond the property where it was being used. I knew that my community had laws in place to regulate many different things. I thought, why not control poor outdoor lighting too? Glare and intrusive light spill affects everyone in a negative way - not just astronomers. I began recruiting support at the local star gazing events, where I handed out pre-addressed post cards to the townspeople who came. These cards requested that Branford town officials enact a new law to stop light pollution. Enough of these postcards arrived in the Town Planner’s mailbox to illustrate the citizens’ concerns. This opened the door for me to start a conversation. Even though I was new to the law-making process, I was able to work together with the Town Planner to write a brand new lighting regulation for the town. Assembled as a simple set of guidelines with some illustrations, the Town of Branford’s outdoor lighting law was enacted in 1997.

This new law caught the attention of several other communities. Town officials across the state of Connecticut began to request that I speak to their commissions about the benefits of outdoor lighting regulation. I put together a program in which I showed photographic examples of good and bad lighting, as well as a very effective demonstra-



tion of glare and shielding using a simple ‘clip-on’ light. Inspired by these presentations, nearby towns and cities began to enact their own lighting laws. In 2002, the story detailing my experience was published as a feature article in Sky & Telescope magazine called, “How I Beat Light Pollution in My Hometown”

June, 2007 will mark the tenth year of the Branford, CT lighting law. Since the law’s enactment, the town has experienced an explosion of commercial growth and development – however, all of the new compliant lighting has created model examples of not only excellent light pollution control, but energy conservation too!

Tool 2

The GlareBuster light – *getting started, right in your own backyard*

As public awareness about light pollution grew and new lighting laws were enacted, the demand for night sky-friendly lighting products began. New commercial-grade lighting fixtures, called ‘Full Cutoff’, or ‘Fully Shielded’ type began to become available- but, the retail store shelves continued to offer nothing new for the homeowner. The restless designer within me dreamt of a foolproof, non-light polluting alternative to the ubiquitous home floodlight – these are the glary, bare bulb (PAR) floodlights that can be found above every garage and backyard across the entire United States. Working with Perry Maresca, an old friend and schoolmate in the lighting business, I began modeling the prototype light fixture on my dining room table. Thus started the process that materialized my dream and birthed the “GlareBuster” light for the homeowner. This light fixture’s patented design was carefully crafted to disallow incorrect mounting, so it would be unable to produce glare or light trespass in most installations. Since its introduction to the market in July 2001, the GlareBuster has now been sold across the USA and in Great Britain. For it’s noted performance as a dark sky lighting fixture, the GlareBuster has been recently chosen for use in several US National Parks by Chad Moore and the NPS Night Sky Team.

Due to the GlareBuster’s success, for 2007 we have introduced a new model called the GB-2000, which is listed under the ‘ENERGY STAR’ moniker. Energy



Star is an identifying mark awarded to outstanding energy conservation products. These products are qualified through the stringent requirements of the US Environmental Protection Agency. Now the GlareBuster light is not only friendly to the night environment, but a great energy conservation product as well.

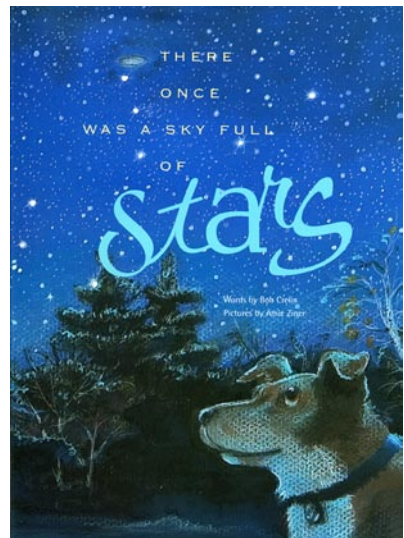
Tool 3

Tell the Children – *bringing the message to the future generations*

After realizing that the Milky Way and the star-filled skies of my youth were being swallowed up by the encroaching glow of city lights - I knew that I had to act. The children born into this new star-starved era of our history would have difficulty believing that, only a generation ago, a breathtaking view of universe waited outside nearly everyone's backdoor. Now I, one of the last "children of the starry nights", faced a quickly fading opportunity to help make things right for our future.

I began devising educational resources to tackle the tallest obstacle in the way of correcting the problem - a lack of public awareness. I spoke publicly, educating about the issues surrounding light pollution. During this time, I crafted a rhyming children's manuscript called, *There Once Was a Sky Full of Stars*. I was determined to introduce the younger generation to the wonders of the night sky, why we are losing them and- how we can all fix the problem of light pollution. I shared the verse wherever I had an audience and it was enjoyed by young and old. The manuscript then found interest to be made into a children's book, and was eventually published by Sky Publishing of Cambridge Massachusetts in late 2003. As a perfect match for the rhyming verse, illustrations for the book were created by artist, Amie Ziner. Lush, colorful scenes fill the pages, clearly depicting the glory of the star-filled sky, and the powerful impact of manmade light. The first, modest paperback run of the book sold out, and it was re-introduced as a large hardcover book in 2006. For the young reader or listener, *There Once Was a Sky Full of Stars*' simple message is understood after one reading, and with hope, held within the heart for the rest of their lives.

Through my journey and through my own eyes, I have seen the seeds of hope that will someday restore the magic of our starry night skies. Using the right tools, anyone, from the neighbor next door to the government official can gain an entirely new awareness of outdoor lighting- and rediscover the night.



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