

DARK SKIES for October 2021:

F/S Oct.	1/2	8:16 p.m.	-	2:14 a.m.
S/S Oct.	2/3	8:14 p.m.	-	3:24 a.m.
S/M Oct.	3/4	8:12 p.m.	-	4:36 a.m.
M/T Oct.	4/5	8:11 p.m.	-	5:27 a.m.
T/W Oct.	5/6	8:09 p.m.	-	5:29 a.m.
W/T Oct.	6/7	8:07 p.m.	-	5:30 a.m.
T/F Oct.	7/8	8:05 p.m.	-	5:31 a.m.
F/S Oct.	8/9	8:04 p.m.	-	5:32 a.m.
S/S Oct.	9/10	8:35 p.m.	-	5:33 a.m.
S/M Oct.	10/11	9:19 p.m.	-	5:34 a.m.
M/T Oct.	11/12	10:13 p.m.	-	5:36 a.m.
T/W Oct.	12/13	11:16 p.m.	-	5:37 a.m.
W/T Oct.	13/14	12:25 a.m.	-	5:38 a.m.
T/F Oct.	14/15	1:37 a.m.	-	5:39 a.m.
F/S Oct.	15/16	2:48 a.m.	-	5:40 a.m.
S/S Oct.	16/17	3:56 a.m.	-	5:41 a.m.
S/M Oct.	17/18	5:03 a.m.	-	5:42 a.m.
M/T Oct.	18/19	none		
T/W Oct.	19/20	none		
W/T Oct.	20/21	none		
T/F Oct.	21/22	none		
F/S Oct.	22/23	none		
S/S Oct.	23/24	7:40 p.m.	-	7:47 p.m.
S/M Oct.	24/25	7:39 p.m.	-	8:22 p.m.
M/T Oct.	25/26	7:37 p.m.	-	9:05 p.m.
T/W Oct.	26/27	7:36 p.m.	-	9:55 p.m.
W/T Oct.	27/28	7:35 p.m.	-	10:53 p.m.
T/F Oct.	28/29	7:33 p.m.	-	11:56 p.m.
F/S Oct.	29/30	7:32 p.m.	-	1:03 a.m.
S/S Oct.	30/31	7:31 p.m.	-	2:12 a.m.
S/M Oct.	31/1	7:30 p.m.	-	3:24 a.m.

Times listed are for Dodgeville, Wisconsin when

- (1) Moon is below the horizon
- (2) Sun is > 18° below the horizon
(astronomical twilight)

Please minimize your use of outdoor lighting during these times to give everyone the best possible view of the night sky.

Time Travel

conducted by David Oesper

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF DARKNESS

NORMAN SPERLING

Chabot Observatory
Oakland, CA U.S.A.

Continued from last month...

In 1973 and 1974, the United States endured a painful fuel shortage of political origin. Professional and amateur astronomers seized upon an anti-waste strategy for fighting light pollution, and the struggle took on its current aspect. Kurt Riegel published his survey paper in *Science*, and Kitt Peak National Observatory issued another, more

comprehensive book explaining the problem and recently-passed laws restricting the growth of outdoor lighting.

In Manassas, Virginia, at the 18 May 1974 Middle East Regional convention of the Astronomical League, an unprecedented array of leading amateur astronomers passed and published a battle plan. It was authored by Jack Betz of Harrisburg, Pa., and championed by the usually-reactionary Bob Wright, as well as several much more activist leaders, including myself. Betz advocated a succession of measures, from shielding the observing area, through contacting neighbors and utilities, to seeking governmental action. Several regions of the Astronomical League (the American Federation of Astronomy Clubs) have sponsored activist projects fighting light pollution since then, most notably the South East and Great Lakes regions. These efforts typically collect and distribute anti-light-pollution campaign literature, for use by local astronomy clubs. Of course, every amateur works on his own time with his own resources, so these efforts flare up and subside sporadically.

On 1 November 1974, the Toronto Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's "Sky Brightness Programme" issued a manual telling how to measure light pollution photometrically. There was another salvo in amateur activism, taking a scientific-measurement stance. It has been pursued professionally by Arthur Upgren and others.

One of my articles pointed out that astronomers most often succeed when they exercise personal connections with government officials – a very depressing conclusion for societies so proud of their democracy. This may result from a cultural climate in which the kinds of people who become public officials rarely know much science, and astronomy is so far from their awareness that they don't sufficiently understand an astronomer with an odd claim. They listen much more closely to individuals whose personal credibility they already know. Whatever the reason for this effect, astronomers would be wise to take advantage of personal acquaintances among government officials to fight light pollution.

Some local governments force dark-sky advocates to radical positions, as has happened in defense of Palomar Mountain Observatory near San Diego. There, John and Stephanie Mood write and speak from a radicalized stance, having learned that their local politicians respond to nothing less.

Politics also affect other aspects of the struggle. *Sky and Telescope* magazine frequently plants ideas with its readers. A major article fighting light pollution was delayed more than a year because of political considerations: an amateur astronomer who wrote it joined *S&T's* rival, *Astronomy* magazine, and *S&T* editors were exceedingly reluctant to publish his by-line. This phobia delayed the American fight against light pollution.

Light Pollution, Radio Interference, and Space Debris, ASP Conference Series, Vol. 17, IAU Colloquium 112, 1991, D.L. Crawford, Ed., p. 101.

To be continued next month...