



Touch the Cosmos: Dark Skies Awareness During Global Astronomy Month

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"Alps at Night" by Thomas Kurat (www.tkfotos.at). The first winner of Against the Lights category in the 2011 International Earth and Sky Photo Contest. The starry sky above this misty alpine landscape around light dominated lake Traunsee in Austria shows the fight between increasing light pollution and the natural dark skies. Date: 2010 Feb. 17



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Introduction

The International Year of Astronomy

- ☐ Provided opportunities to experience the beauty of the night sky

Global Astronomy Month (GAM)

- ☐ Carries on many of those activities as well as new ones

Dark Skies Awareness (DSA) programs

- ☐ One of the main "take away" messages: why preserve the night sky and how

"A Starry Night of Iceland" By Stephane Vetter (www.nuitsacrees.fr). The first winner for Beauty of the Night Sky category in the 2011 International Earth and Sky Photo Contest. The arch of aurora shines over Jökulsárlón; the largest glacier lake in Iceland. The Milky Way is framed by the dancing the ring of northern lights. Date: 2011 March 10





GAM DSA Programs 2012



- ☐ International Earth & Sky Photo Contest, April 1-22
- ☐ GLOBE at Night, April 11-20
- ☐ International Dark Sky Week, April 14-20
- ☐ World Night in Defense of Starlight, April 20
- ☐ Dark Sky Rangers
- ☐ One Star at a Time
- ☐ Dark Skies Awareness audio podcasts and poetry

"Isfahan Milky Way" by Mehdi Momenzadeh (www.photographyblog.ir). The 2nd winner of Against the Lights category in the 2011 International Earth and Sky Photo Contest. The arc of the Milky Way rises above central Iran, and it is faded away in the north east by light of the historic city of Isfahan. Date: 2010 April 14





International Earth & Sky Photo Contest



- "TWAN" style landscape astrophotography
- Contest open to anyone of any age from anywhere
- 2 categories: "Beauty of the Night Sky" and "Against the Lights."
- 240 entries last year, 58 photographers, 30 countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Chile, China, Columbia, Cambodia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, India, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Malaysia, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, UK, USA, and Venezuela
- www.twanight.org/newTWAN/news.asp?newsID=6065

"Galactic View From Planet Earth" by Alex Cherney (www.terraastro.com). The 2nd winner for Beauty of the Night Sky category in the 2011 International Earth and Sky Photo Contest. The central bulge of the galaxy (the brightest region in the band of the Milky Way) is captured in a starry night of Australia. Date: 2009-11-11





GLOBE at Night



- International citizen science star hunt campaign for the promotion of dark skies and the abatement of light pollution
- Everyone everywhere can measure local levels of night sky brightness and contribute observations online to a world map
- 2 two-week campaigns last year (ending in April)
- Over 14,000 measurements last year from 115 countries
- 4 ten-day campaigns this year (mid-Jan thru mid-April)
- www.globeatnight.org

"Lisbon Sky Lights" by Miguel Claro (<http://miguelclaro.com>). The 3rd winner of Against the Lights category in the 2011 International Earth and Sky Photo Contest. Stars and the crescent Moon trail toward the western horizon above the 25 April Bridge (Ponte 25 de Abril) in Lisbon, Portugal. There are also many trails by airplanes to or from the Lisbon airport including the bright light crossing the moontrail. Date: 2010 February 17





International Dark Sky Week



- Raise awareness of the value of maintaining dark skies
- Encourage proper use of outdoor lighting: when, where, how much you need it
- Host a neighborhood star party to introduce the idea of preserving a dark night sky to the community.
- Encourage friends, relatives, and neighbors to participate, to make a difference in the quality of the night sky and preserve its beauty.
- A poster child = Harmony, Florida Dark Sky Festival
- www.astronomerswithoutborders.org/programs/all-programs/556-international-dark-sky-week.html



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"Beauty of Southern Sky" by Luc Perrot (www.lucperrot.fr). The 3rd winner for Beauty of the Night Sky category in the 2011 International Earth and Sky Photo Contest. The band of the Milky Way arcs above Piton de la Fournaise (Peak of the Furnace); a very active volcano in the Réunion Island, Indian Ocean. In the background sky note the Southern Cross on the upper left and the Small Magellanic Clouds on the lower right. Date: 2010 July 6

Luc Perrot

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World Night in Defense of Starlight



- World Night has occurred on April 20.
- Promoted annually as part of our cultural, scientific and environmental heritage.
- Activities: switch-off lights at night to recover stars/save energy.
- Organize artistic competitions, media campaigns, conferences
- Create artistic materials like videos, music, books, stories, photographs or paintings on the beauty of the night sky.
- Identifying and possibly protect dark skies oases.



"Venus Above Reunion Island" by Luc Perrot (www.lucperrot.fr). The 4th winner of Against the Lights category in the 2011 International Earth and Sky Photo Contest. Dazzling light of planet Venus is captured in this panoramic mountain view from the World Heritage listed National Park of Réunion Island in the Indian Ocean. Note Mars to its lower right and bright stars Alpha and Beta Centauri at the top left. The colorful glows in the fog are from light pollution of small villages hidden in the valley. Date: 2010 Sep. 16

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- www.starlight2007.net/TheWorldNight2011.html



Dark Sky Rangers



- During GAM, kids pick activities to become DSRs.
- Energy saving activities.
- Follow curfew for turning off lights.
- Do an outdoor lighting audit
- Measure sky brightness with "Magnitude Readers"
- Form an astronomy club; hold a star party.
- Write to the city council or school board.
- Participate in GLOBE at Night and artistic competitions
- Downloadable poster and DSR certificate
- www.astronomerswithoutborders.org/programs/program-schedule/554.html

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"The Great Wall at Night" by Xiaohua (mr_wxh@hotmail.com). The 4th winner for Beauty of the Night Sky category in the 2011 International Earth and Sky Photo Contest. The Milky Way in the constellations Scorpius and Sagittarius stands above the Wu Saint Gate in the Great Wall of China. Date: 2011 April 12

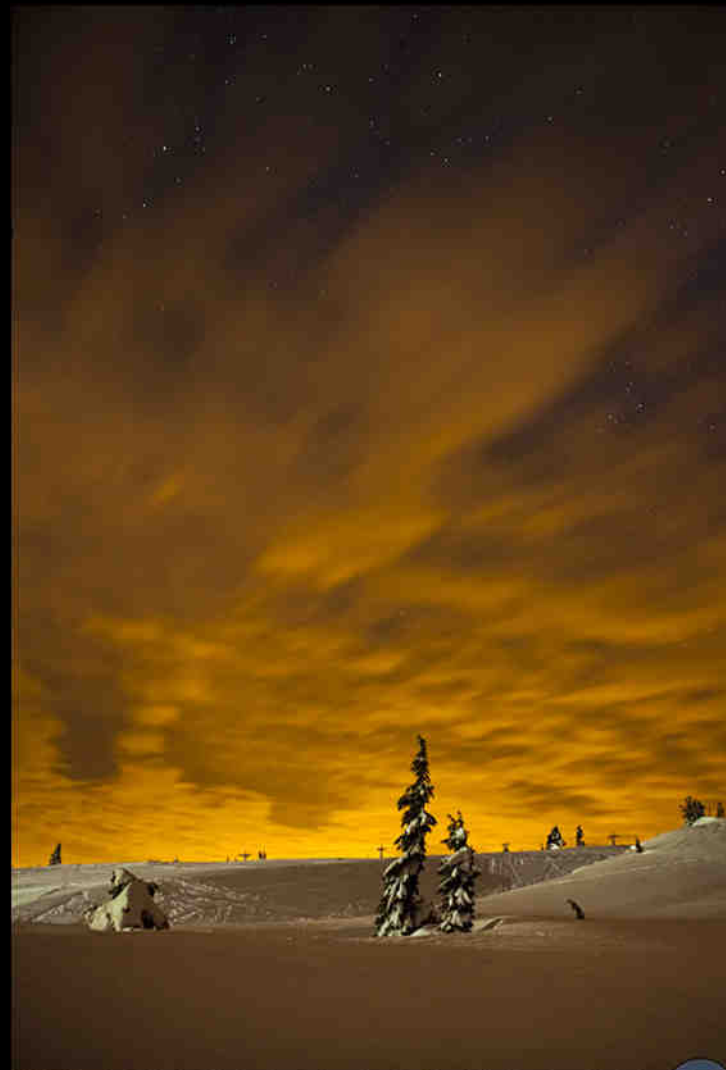




One Star at a Time



- Worldwide effort to create accessible public spaces to view a starry night sky.
- Available year-round
- Uses night sky conservation to unite people across the planet.
- Engages the average citizen, individually or in groups, to cherish and protect the night sky through personal pledges, registration of public stargazing areas, and information sharing.
- www.onestar-awb.org/



"Lights From the Hidden City" by Ben Canales (www.thestartrail.com). The 5th winner of Against the Lights category in the 2011 International Earth and Sky Photo Contest. Light pollution in cloud reflection streams from major city of Portland (United States) 80 km away and 1500 m lower in elevation. Stars manage to break through in top of image. Date: 2010 Dec. 3





Audio Podcasts



- Ten minute audio podcasts, starring the "Dark Skies Crusader",
- Available on dark skies awareness at 365DaysofAstronomy.org
- A fun way to learn about serious light pollution issues that affect energy use, our health and wildlife.
- See the archival podcasts on March 7, 2011, February 7, 2011 and March 21, 2010, respectively.
- Also one on GAM DSA activities: "Happy Nights: Dark Skies and Global Astronomy Month"



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"Startrails above an Allen Lake" by Grant Kaye (<http://grantkaye.com>). The 5th winner for Beauty of the Night Sky category in the 2011 International Earth and Sky Photo Contest. Stars trails around the north celestial pole as photographed from shore of Mono Lake in California. The salty, mineral-laden lake has spindly rock formations which are naturally formed limestone towers known as tufa. Date: 2010 December 30



AstroPoetry



Upward-facing lights fog our
starry nights. Replacing nature's
creations with urban
constellations. Shed light on light
pollution. Be part of the solution.

astropoetry@astronomerswithoutborders.org



Summary



- Need your help with advertising Dark Skies Awareness for Global Astronomy Month, as well as GAM (April 2012) in general.
- Spread the word to the public to increase participation in the GAM 2012 DSA programs to redress a disappearing natural heritage – our dark night sky.



Websites of Interest



- Global Astronomy Month Dark Skies Awareness Program:
<http://www.astronomerswithoutborders.org/programs/dark-skies-awareness.html>
- International Dark Sky Week: www.darksky.org/IDSW
- GLOBE at Night: www.globeatnight.org
- One Star at a Time: onestar-awb.org
- Earth and Sky Photo Contest on Dark Skies Importance:
www.twanight.org/newTWAN/news.asp?newsID=6029
- Dark Skies Poetry Submissions:
astropoetry@astronomerswithoutborders.org



Contact Information



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- Dark Skies Rangers Program &
- GLOBE at Night Program Director
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- cwalker@noao.edu





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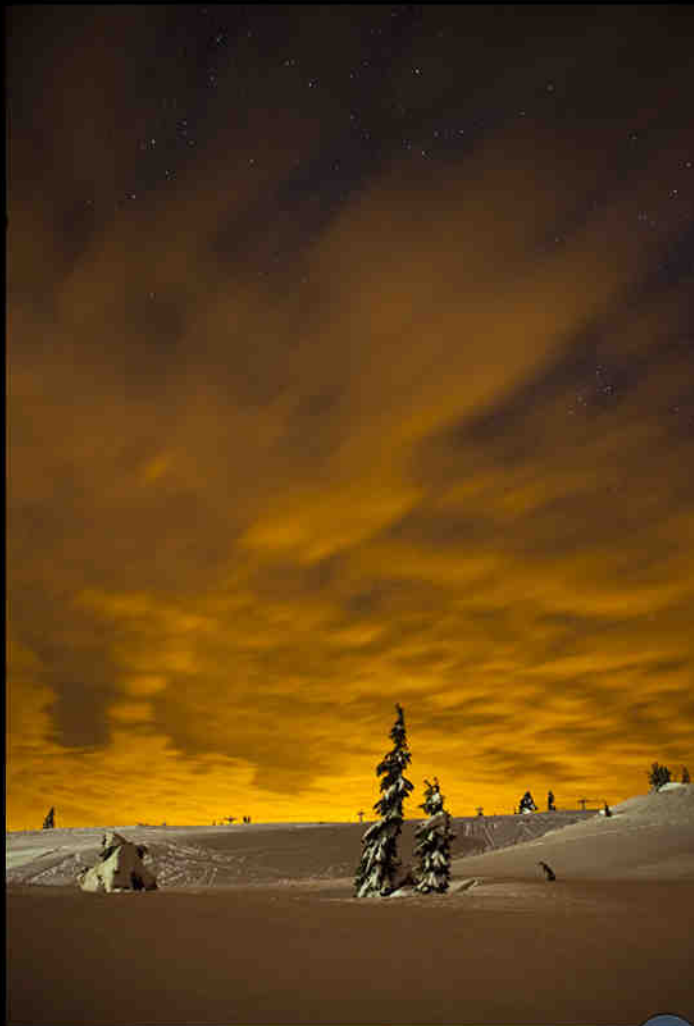
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Prizes and Sponsors



Prizes included:

- a 127mm and an 80mm refracting telescope (first place)
- gift certificates for a few hundred dollars of telescope or camera equipment (second place)
- two 10X42 Parks binoculars (third place)

The sponsors that provided the contest prizes were:

Scope City

Canadian Telescopes

Explore Scientific

Dubai Telescope

Woodland Hills Camera & Telescopes

Lumicon International

Sky&Telescope

Starizona