

## Eyes to the Sky

# Protect the heavens, the atmosphere we breathe

By **Judy Isacoff**

Special to The Eagle

Pink and gold light tint the snow-painted forest at dawn: the power of the beauty of sky and Earth meeting electrifies our lives.

We are born of the marriage of sunlight, which is starlight, and the riches of planet Earth. How crucial it is to connect to the cosmos and to our planet that creates and recreates our lives. Aware of this, we find it in ourselves to respect and express gratitude to Earth and the universe

beyond. We ask, humbly, what can I do to take care of my home? What action, however small, can I take that will enhance the world today and for future generations?

What may seem an obscure call to action, to protect the dark of night, is urgent for the health of, for example, people, plants, birds and turtles.

Light bulbs are again the objects that contain part of the solution. In recent years, energy conservation initiatives have brought about a switch to bulbs that use less power for equivalent light. Beyond energy sav-

ings, attention is now focused on deleterious impacts of the light itself! Light "trespass" from poorly designed, "unshielded" sources outdoors and unnecessary use indoors is interfering with nature inside and outside ourselves. Artificial light has evolved from a precious enhancer of human life to a threat in the form of "light pollution."

Is something missing from the experience of being human in the absence of awe inspired by looking up to a dark sky lit with infinite stars? How can we protect wildlife that

need the dark to nest or migrate? What of the questions that physicians are raising about the human organism's need for darkness?

Each of us can learn simple, appropriate ways to light our spaces, just like we've learned to recycle. And each of us can contribute to public awareness. Find out how-to's from the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) <http://darksky.org/>

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