

MEDIA RELEASE

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Discover why you can still see the stars and planets in Kanab

Kanab's dark night skies and red cliffs serve as the backdrop that inspired Von Del Chamberlain to return home at the conclusion of a spectacular career in star gazing and teaching others about the art of astronomy. Chamberlain joins a group of local astronomers who explore the dark skies above Kanab on a nightly schedule and will illustrate this fact to others during a pair of seminars to be held in Kanab in April.

Chamberlain has teamed up with Kane County residents, Jerry Foote, Edwin Sheridan and Mike Satter in an effort to show others the value of the night sky as a treasure that many towns and cities have lost in the lights. Chamberlain remembers sleeping outside in Kanab as a youth on summer nights and gazing up at the Milky Way. He said that this experience led him to a life of interpreting and sharing the night view of the universe with others.

A product of Kanab schools, Chamberlain followed that dark summer night fascination. His boyhood impressions led him through higher education at the University of Utah and then on to the University of Michigan.

The academic journey also led Chamberlain to the Smithsonian Institution and finally to the Hansen Planetarium in Salt Lake County. He also taught an Honors course for the University of Utah while at Hansen Planetarium

Chamberlain is retired and he and his wife Marre' call Kanab their second home and an area that he hopes to help preserve his boyhood night sky memories so that it might be enjoyed by visitors and residents for years to come.

Foote has a backyard observatory, as does Sheridan. Satter regularly spends his nights gazing at the stars and planets. Each claim that it was Kanab's relative lack of light pollution that shines up into the night sky as a major factor why they chose to buy or build their homes here.

Kanab is now located in one of the last dark night sky regions in the continental United States. The reasons for Kanab's night sky is a result of the absence of light that is more common in more populated areas. A few miles east of town and thanks to a cliff that juts out and blocks Kanab's lights the night sky is as good as the Grand Canyons.

It is not uncommon to look up in Kanab and watch comets, meteor showers and occasionally northern lights. But, as Kanab grows so will the amount of light escaping up into the sky, unless the lights we use to illuminate the night are shielded and their light pooled to the ground where it is needed. Lights that ensure safety at night, that advertise services and enhance homes can wash out the view of the stars when that light escapes up into the night sky.

International Dark Sky Week is celebrated April 8-16 and Utah Governor Jon M. Huntsman has declared April 11-17, 2005 as Utah Astronomy Week. April 16, 2005, has been designated as Utah Astronomy Day.

Chamberlain, along with other astronomers and special guests will share their knowledge and appreciation of the stars and the solar system with a Celebrate the Night presentation at the Crescent Moon Theater in Kanab on Friday, April 15 at 7 PM. This

educational event will feature free admission, followed by, weather permitting, telescope and guided “naked-eye” viewing of the moon, planets and constellations at a nearby location.

Kanab will also feature a Celebrate the Night Sky Conference on April 21 from 7 to 9 PM in the multipurpose room at the Kanab Library. The event will be hosted by well-known Dark Sky spokesperson Chad Moore. Moore is "the Dark Sky Coordinator for the National Park Service, currently stationed at Bryce Canyon. Moore will be joined by a host of guest speakers. Additional information and discussion will detail methods Kanab can use to protect and preserve its dark night sky.

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