



# The Mini Page

**Next Week:**  
Autism  
Awareness Day

Issue 10, 2023

Founded by Betty Debnam

## A Light Problem



photo courtesy National Park Service

### Mini Fact:

This baby green sea turtle is making its way to the ocean. Sea turtles that become confused by artificial lights may be eaten by other animals or run over by cars.

### Changing the light

Cities are beginning to pass **ordinances**, or laws, about using lighting that shines only where it's needed.

For example, in Toronto, Canada, city lights are dimmed during bird



Toronto at night.

photo by Sergiu Dumitriu

migration seasons. Many cities along Florida's coast have laws against lighting that can be seen from the beach. Some areas also restrict bonfires and flashlights on the beach during sea turtle nesting season.

Technology is making it easier to conserve energy and light with motion sensors, which turn on the lights when someone enters the area. These types of lights are even available for parking lots and streetlights.

### What can you do?

Families can start by looking at outdoor light fixtures at home. Does the light go where it's supposed to? Is it too bright? Can lights be turned off when they're not needed?



Write a letter to local leaders, such as the mayor, or to the editor of the newspaper about light pollution in your city.

Are you a stargazer? Whether you're a beginning astronomer or just like to enjoy the twinkling stars, you've probably noticed that you can see more of them when you're away from towns and cities.

Today, we let lights burn all night — streetlights, porch lights, office lights — even when we don't need the illumination. Scientists call this **light pollution**.

### Not all lights are pollution

Modern humans need **artificial** light. It allows us to work indoors and throughout the day and night. Imagine hospital workers trying to take care of sick people without artificial light.

### What is light pollution?

The International Dark-Sky Association works to reduce light pollution. It defines light pollution as any negative effect of artificial light, including light that creates sky glow, glare, light trespass, light clutter, bad visibility at night and energy waste.

- **Sky glow** is the brightening of the night sky over cities.

- **Light trespass** is light falling where it's not needed or wanted.

- **Glare** is too much brightness.

- **Light clutter** is bright and confusing groupings of lights.



This photo shows an example of glare. The bright spotlights on the top of this building shine right into the eyes of people outside.

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### Too much light

In the evening, when it's dark outside, we have bright lights on indoors. This artificial lighting confuses our bodies and their **circadian** (sir-KAY-dee-un) **rhythms**. These rhythms affect when people sleep, when they work and how they feel.

When these natural cycles become too unbalanced, it makes it difficult for people to fight off diseases and stay healthy.

Artificial lights can be particularly harmful to animals. Whether they're active during the day (**diurnal**) or at night (**nocturnal**), all animals need a period of darkness.

Birds that migrate at night, for example, may be attracted to brightly lighted tall buildings and fly into them. Some birds will fly into a searchlight's beam and become disoriented, continuing to swirl in the light until they die of exhaustion.

### Wasting energy

Have adults ever reminded you to turn off the lights when you leave a room — and then left a porch light on all night? Some people feel safer when lights are on, but experts say evidence shows that bright outdoor lights don't reduce crime.



One study showed that light trespass from U.S. streetlights alone wasted \$2.2 billion in energy costs over a one-year period.

## Resources



### On the Web:

- [bit.ly/MPLight](http://bit.ly/MPLight)

### At the library:

- "Dark Matters: Nature's Reaction to Light Pollution" by Joan Marie Galat
- "Save the Sky" by Bethany Stahl

## Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of light pollution are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

- ARTIFICIAL, BEACH,
- BIRDS, CIRCADIAN,
- CLUTTER, DIURNAL,
- ENERGY, GLARE,
- GLOW, LIGHT,
- MIGRATE, NOCTURNAL,
- ORDINANCE, OUTDOOR,
- POLLUTION, STARS,
- TRESPASS, TURTLE.

E R A L G O B E A C H G N S C  
 E N O I T U L L O P D K A S X  
 C G P N A I D A C R I C G A L  
 L A I C I F I T R A U S L P T  
 U D Y G R E N E M V R D O S H  
 T C Y R O O D T U O N R W E G  
 T L A N R U T C O N A I O R I  
 E E T A R G I M P O L B E T L  
 R I E C N A N I D R O P H Q W  
 M S R A T S K N F E L T R U T



## Cook's Corner

### Strawberry Yogurt Parfait

#### You'll need:

- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 (6-ounce) containers of low-fat vanilla yogurt

- 3 cups fresh strawberries, hulled and sliced
- 1/4 cup granolas



\* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

#### What to do:

1. Mix brown sugar and vanilla extract into vanilla yogurt. Stir well to blend flavors.
2. Divide half of strawberries among 4 dessert dishes. Spoon half of yogurt mixture over strawberries.
3. Layer again with strawberries and yogurt mixture.
4. Top with granola. Chill until ready to serve. Serves 4.

## Mini Jokes



**Paul:** How was Thomas Edison able to invent the lightbulb?  
**Petra:** Because he was so bright!

## Eco Note



Researchers have observed that dolphins appear to overcome human-made noise during echolocation and communications with other dolphins by what they describe as "shouting." Noise pollution in the world's oceans from such sources as shipping and construction has increased dramatically in recent years. Tests conducted at the Dolphin Research Center in the Florida Keys measured the communication skills between two of the marine mammals at different levels of noise from a submerged speaker.

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### For later:

Look in your newspaper for articles about light and other types of pollution.

**Teachers:** Follow and interact with The Mini Page on Facebook!



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1. To give off light or reflect it (5-letter verb)

□ □ □ □ □

2. The sense of seeing (5-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □

3. Something to be worked out or solved (7-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □

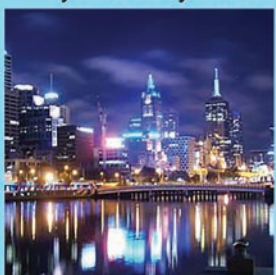
4. Of an important form of energy (8-letter adjective)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

1. For safety, streetlights \_\_\_\_\_ powerfully on busy roads.
2. At the \_\_\_\_\_ of so many bright lights, Sue blinked.
3. Jason has a \_\_\_\_\_ understanding arithmetic.
4. A small \_\_\_\_\_ heater keeps this bedroom very warm.

### ROOTONYM®

by Jan & Carey Orr Cook



Study the definition. When you know the missing word, fill in the letter boxes and the sentence blanks.

Answers: Shine, Sight, Problem, Electric.

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