

Outdoor-Lighting Regulation Workshop

by Rémi Lacasse, IDA Québec section coordinator (remi@astromirabilis.com)

The Québec section of the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA), a sub-committee of the Fédération des astronomes amateurs du Québec (FAAQ), was created five years ago, bringing the expertise and energy of around ten participants to the discussion table. The Committee included a few amateur astronomers, several architects, and engineers from different backgrounds, (e.g. the city of Montréal, Québec Hydro, and lighting manufacturers). At the start, we adopted the mission to develop awareness, mobilize individuals and groups, support involvement, and evaluate and underline specific actions aimed at light-pollution abatement.

In 2008, we decided to produce guidelines for outdoor lighting that could be implemented by Québec municipalities. It is based on what had been done in the Mont-Mégantic area, where the first IDA International Dark-Sky Reserve designation was earned. The goal of these guidelines was to facilitate the work of municipalities in establishing outdoor-lighting by-laws based on the Mont-Mégantic experience.



Figure 1 — A scene from the Québec workshop. Photo: Rémi Lacasse.

To promote the acceptance and implementation of the guidelines, we first had to find a way to communicate with municipal planners from diverse backgrounds. Last spring, the Québec section of the IDA developed and offered a workshop on the draft proposal for outdoor-lighting regulations that Québec municipalities could implement. The workshop was advertised by sending letters of invitation to the most likely parties through professional associations such as those maintained by landscape architects, town planners,

engineers, and so on. The response was very good, and 98 participants with different interests, mostly professionals active in municipal planning and design, showed up from within a 150-km radius of Montréal. Considering that we had hoped for about 30 attendees, we were delighted — and pleasantly surprised — by their interest in our proposal. Buoyed by that success, and to develop awareness among municipal planners from other parts of the province, another workshop was conducted in Québec City in October. Seventy participants showed up.

The workshops format included four main themes:

- Bad outdoor-lighting consequences.
- What is an eco-energy concept?
- Introduction to the draft regulations.
- Samples of implementation.

Review of a multiple-choice feedback survey clearly showed that participants liked the format and were motivated toward light-pollution abatement. Based on that same feedback, we identified the following four critical success factors:

- Relevant information (provision and explanation of a basic lighting regulation)
- Credible speaker (Chloé Legris, engineer, Mont-Mégantic project manager.)
- Invitations sent through professional associations.
- Regional meetings (requiring only a day trip, thus limiting expenditures with no overnight stay required)

It was a rewarding team endeavour with lasting benefits from IYA2009. I hope that sharing it here will inspire other initiatives, given that a similar approach could work in other areas of Canada to enhance local decision-makers' awareness of light-pollution problems and solutions.

Should you want additional information, do not hesitate to contact me at remi@astromirabilis.com or by telephone: (819) 429-5516. ●

A Handy Red Light Indeed

by Curt Nason, New Brunswick Centre (nasonc@nbnet.nb.ca)

If you are like me, you spend many hours with a red light in your mouth while setting up and taking down a telescope or writing in a logbook. There are alternatives, such as a headlamp, but if you have observed with somebody sporting one, you learned quickly not to attract their attention while the light was on. Another alternative is available.

GloveLite was conceived seven years ago by Dr. Paul N. Smith of Bangor, Maine. As a private pilot, he was frustrated with trying to write on his kneeboard while maintaining night vision. A red light

on a lanyard or clipped to his shirt would often be dropped or would not always provide illumination where it was needed. Frustration is the other parent of invention.

GloveLite is a black neoprene shell that fits over your thumb and forefinger, leaving the fingertips free; it secures with a Velcro strap around your wrist. Attached near the knuckle of each digit is a 5-candela red LED. A plastic, fingertip-size on/off button is located on the back of the hand. If you find the illumination to be too bright (I didn't), you can replace the pair of 3-volt 2016 batteries