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HARMONY Star Party Returns to Bok Tower Gardens February 2

Discover the Gardens by the light of the Milky Way as the **HARMONY Dark Sky Festival & Star Party** returns to Bok Tower Gardens Saturday, February 2 with activities beginning at 4pm. The festival is included in general admission.

Highlights of the festival include learning about the night sky with leading astronomers, nocturnal animal encounters, a mobile planetarium, Orlando Science Center discovery stations and a special astronomy-inspired carillon concert. Celebrated NASA Astronaut **Dr. Story Musgrave** will present the keynote address at 4pm entitled “Adventures with Light.”

Musgrave joins a stellar line-up of scientists discussing a variety of astronomy topics including space exploration, Martian agriculture, nocturnal wildlife and the importance of dark skies to humans. Local astronomers will have telescopes on display for stargazing and Star Wars-inspired characters from the 501 Legion will also be joining the out-of-this-world fun!

Schedule of Events

4PM: **Dr. Story Musgrave**, *Adventures with Light*

5PM: **Francine Prager**, *Bats of the World*

5:30 PM: **Dr. Daniel Batchelder**, *From Rock to Rock: Human Space Exploration Beyond the Moon and Mars*

6:30PM: **Dr. Brooke Wheeler**, *Martian Agriculture: Envisioning How to Support Space Exploration*

7PM: **Dr. Stephen Eikenberry** *Black Holes*

8PM: **Derek Demeter**, *Dark Horizons: Exploring Florida’s Dark Skies*

8:30 PM: **Dr. Kevin Mackay**, *Mae’s Howe to Machu Picchu, human links to astronomy throughout history*

6, 7 & 8PM: **Orlando Science Center** *Digital Planet*

8PM: Evening Carillon Concert with **Geert D’hollander**

Continuous Evening Exhibits

6-9:30PM: **Astronomer and telescopes** in the Astronomy Meadow:

6-9PM: **Orlando Science Center** Hands-On Science

6-9PM: **Mobile Planetarium**

6-9PM: **Owl Encounter**

6:30-8:30PM: **Bat Encounter**

The Importance of Understanding Light Pollution

According to the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA), more than 80% of the world’s population experiences light polluted skies and 99% of Americans are experiencing the harmful effects. Darkness not only adds to the aesthetic qualities of the wilderness but it also is important to the health of wildlife and humans.

Central Florida is listed as one of the world’s hot spots for artificial light pollution and the HARMONY Dark Sky Festival & Star Party aims to

educate visitors about the natural importance of darkness and how controlling light pollution is vital for all of Earth's inhabitants. In anticipation of the festival, the level of artificial light above Bok Tower Gardens was measured by an IDA representative and was found to be only three points higher than the darkest point on the globe and the Milky Way was visible to the naked eye.

About Light Pollution and the Effects of Skyglow

Throughout history, humans have evolved to the rhythm of sunlit days and dark nights known as circadian rhythm or more commonly known as a "biological clock." However, with the spread of artificial lighting, most humans no longer experience truly dark nights. Research published by Harvard University suggests that artificial light (especially blue LED lighting) at night can negatively affect human health, increasing risks for obesity, depression, sleep disorders, diabetes, breast cancer and more.

From a health perspective, exposure to light pollution has been found to reduce the production of the hormone Melatonin, which induces sleep, boosts the immune system, lowers cholesterol, and helps the functioning of the thyroid, pancreas, ovaries, testes and adrenal glands. The dark-sky movement aims to educate about the importance of suppressing light pollution and celebrating the wonder of our solar system and beyond.

About Keynote Speaker Dr. Story Musgrave

Dr. Story Musgrave was born in 1935 on a dairy farm in Stockbridge, MA. Story never finished school, ran off to Korea with the U.S. Marines where he was an aircraft electrician and an engine mechanic. He started flying with the Marines and over the next 55 years accumulated 18,000 hours in over 160 aircraft. He is a parachutist with over 800 freefalls. He has seven graduate degrees in math, computers, chemistry, medicine, physiology, literature and psychology. He has been awarded 20 honorary doctorates. He was a part-time trauma surgeon during his 30-year astronaut career.

A NASA astronaut for over 30 years, Musgrave flew on six spaceflights. He performed the first shuttle spacewalk on Challenger's first flight, was a pilot on an astronomy mission, conducted two classified DOD missions, was the lead spacewalker on the Hubble Telescope repair mission and on his last flight, he operated an electronic chip manufacturing satellite on Columbia.

Today, Musgraves operates a palm farm in Orlando, a production company in Sydney and a sculpture company in Burbank. He is also a landscape architect, a concept artist with Walt Disney Imagineering, an innovator with Applied Minds Inc. and a professor of design at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena.

The Harmony Dark Sky Star Party is proudly sponsored in part by Harmony Institute, Harmony on Lake Eloise, Visit Central Florida and State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs.



About Bok Tower Gardens:

Voted Florida's best garden, Bok Tower Gardens is a National Historic Landmark located 10 miles from LEGOLAND Florida, 55 miles southwest of Orlando and 60 miles east of Tampa near Lake Wales in Central Florida's rolling hills of citrus. Open every day of the year from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Visitor Center, Café and Gift Shop are open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$15 for adults (effective Oct. 1, 2018) and \$5 for ages 5-12. Members and children under 5 are admitted free. For more information contact Bok Tower Gardens, 1151 Tower Boulevard, Lake Wales FL 33853; 863-676-1408 or visit www.boktowergardens.org.

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