Replacing a Perfectly Good *Bad Light*

If a neighbor shined a flashlight into your bedroom windows , you would probably consider this rude or invasive. Yet, many of us have outdoor lighting that has the same effect. Our outdoor lights lack the deliberate appearance of spying, but they are on all night, shining into neighbors' bedrooms and yards, interfering with enjoyment of the night sky, and contributing to the skyglow that washes out the stars.

The problem is NOT outdoor lighting. Rather, the problem is unaimed lights that miss the target. This problem mostly occurs when we use a decorative light where we want a safety and security light.

My home came equipped with five outdoor lights of poor design. In these lights, a third of the light shines upward, where it provides no safety or security benefit, but contributes to skyglow. Another third shines beyond my property into the yards and bedrooms of my neighbors. This creates glare, disturbs sleep, and interferes with viewing the night sky, a passing comet, or faint fuzzy galaxy.

A common house light with no shielding

A decorative lamp with shielding that preserves the beauty of the night

For $18 dollars, I replaced the orginal light with a decorative, hooded light, that does not shine into my neigbors' windows. All the light from this fixture falls onto my yard. Being in the backyard is more pleasant with this type of light because the light doesn't shine into my eyes. I also learned that two of the original lights I replaced had not been grounded properly, and one hadn't been mechanically secured to the wall. It was held on by its wiring. Finding these errors from the builder or former owner alone was worth the effort of replacing the lights.

A few unshielded house lights may not seem like much, but considering our region's growth, this type of light will add up.

Another disadvantage of an unshielded house light is shown here. If you drove by this house and saw its lights on during the day over a holiday weekend, what might you think?

No one is home!