

Viewpoints

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Electronics illuminate our lives

What's wrong with the dark? I had that thought the other night, after getting up to shush Caden back to sleep. At 17 months old, he sleeps pretty well, but he sometimes needs a little nighttime attention - usually when he starts feeling for his lost pacifier and can't find it.

Caden's room is never totally dark. We keep a night-light on, but that's more for my pacifier searches than it is for him.

As I walked toward his room, I was struck by all the glowing things in our house. We live in the woods, in a neighborhood with (thankfully) no streetlights, but the inside of our house is not truly dark. There are all the numbers on the digital clocks, some red, some green. The smoke detectors shine helpfully in the ceiling to let us know they're on duty. We have an alarm in a small outbuilding, so the monitor for that is plugged into the wall of our bedroom. Its light radiates like a small green eye. And the DVD player, just to be different, has a red light to show it's not on.

If we forget to turn it off, the paper shredder beside the desk in our bedroom shoots a beam of green light toward the ceiling that would make any UFO proud. Even the bathroom is not immune. The charger for Ed's electric shaver gives off so much green light you can see your reflection in the mirror, though you do look a little like you just beamed in to the paper shredder from your spaceship.

While the inside of our house glows with all its electronics, I want the outside of our house to stay dark. That's why I almost cheered when I read James N. Butterworth's Dec. 18 letter to *The Northeast Georgian* about the Haber'sham Dark Sky Project.



**Kimberly
Brown**

One of the reasons we love our neighborhood is that there are no streetlights. I grew up in Warner Robins, and we lived there until about six years ago. Warner Robins is an Air Force base town, so no matter where you are in town, the whole eastern sky is lit up from lights at the base. I was used to it, and even didn't mind it, until we came here and I saw what a night sky full of stars is really like.

I know people have security lights for, well, security, but it seems to me that burning an outside light all night only illuminates the way for a potential burglar. Wouldn't a motion detector light - one that only comes on when

someone approaches - be so much more effective? I'm not a security expert or a burglar, so I don't really know. But a motion detector light would be more palatable to people who enjoy a dark night and stars in the sky.

I do know that Caden loves the moon. When we're out as it's getting dark, his little eyes go straight to the sky, searching for the moon even before it rises. He's also observant of the first star, and we recite "star light, star bright" and make a wish when we see it.

Being a 21st century child, Caden will always have the glowing lights of electronics inside the house. But one of my wishes I make for him when we see that first star is that he'll be able to grow up seeing and appreciating the thick blanket of stars in the night sky.

Kimberly Brown is a staff writer for The Northeast Georgian.