

# GUEST SPOTLIGHT



## SEDONA'S GRANDSON: HOW SEDONA ARIZONA GOT ITS NAME AND OTHER MUSINGS

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### HOW SEDONA GOT ITS NAME

I didn't see the sky over Oak Creek Canyon when my grandpa, Theodore Carlton (T.C.) Schnebly, brought my grandma Sedona to their new home in 1901. However, having seen the Oak Creek skies plenty of nights in the 1930s and 40s, I can imagine how truly dark it was when they arrived.

My grandpa named the town after my grandma when the U.S. Postmaster General sent back his application for post office names (Schnebly Station and Oak Creek Crossing were too long to fit on the Arizona Territory cancellation stamp). Sedona was rather embarrassed about it, but acquiesced.

### THE SON OF A TEACHER

When we didn't live in Sedona we were in other rural Northern Arizona towns including Sanders, Parks, Dennehotso, and Mayer where my dad, their oldest son Ellsworth, was a teacher. He probably taught me most of the constellations and I remember him taking a carload of us from Parks to Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff to look through the same telescope that Clyde Tombaugh had used only ten years earlier to prove the existence of Pluto.

It was also in Parks that my sister Pat and I saw shadows traced by the stars on the snow. That's a rare experience. Since my dad got his masters during summers in Flagstaff, it meant even more to me that in 2001, Flagstaff became Arizona's first Dark Sky Community, followed by Sedona and four others.



## SHARING THE WONDER WITH FAMILY

I remember our youngest son getting out of the car one night after driving up to Sedona from Tucson, looking up, and asking, "What is that?" It struck me then that he'd never really seen the Milky Way. After that experience I began sharing night sky viewing with the four kids after summer nighttime swims. To this day, I can't stop sharing things by email such as the schedules for meteor showers and when the International Space Station will pass overhead. As the son of a teacher, I guess I value sharing important information. To me, the fact that humankind has advanced to the point that we have made our own contribution to the astral scenery overhead at night qualifies as important information. I've also taken grandchildren to Hart Prairie Preserve for Nature Conservancy work weekends to let them see and marvel at stars so bright they create shadows.

The opportunity to attend Dr. Tyler Nordgren's lecture at NAU's Colorado Plateau Conference about the threats to Arizona's dark skies was also very edifying. I'm grateful that with all the "progress" our state faces, the Colorado Plateau Dark Sky Cooperative is working to help us all still stand outside and wonder at the stars.

To learn about Sedona's Dark Sky Community Certification visit: <https://www.darksky.org/our-work/conservation/idsp/communities/sedona/>

Read more about the history of Sedona at the Sedona Heritage Museum website: <https://sedonamuseum.org/historyofsedona/>



*The Schnebly's cabin on another dark night. Photo by Lisa Schnebly Heidinger*



*Larry at Flagstaff's Lowell Observatory on his 75th birthday.*