

A Bright Idea: Designing the Bill Nye '77 Solar Noon Clock with Solatube Daylighting Systems

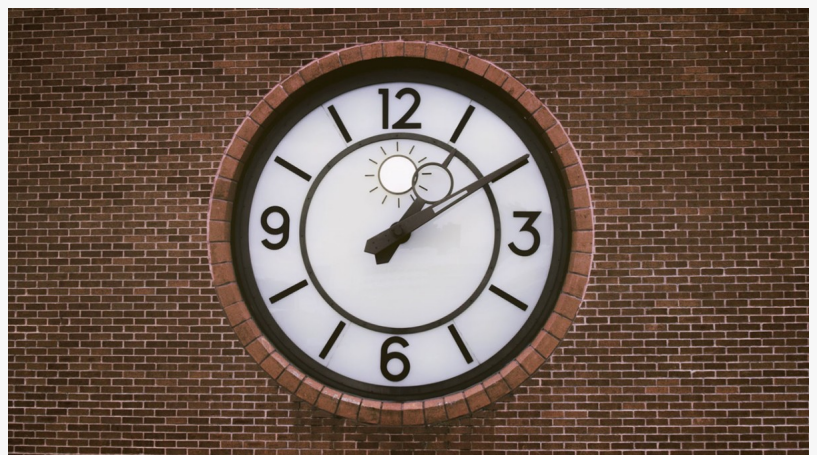
ITHACA, N.Y., UNITED STATES, August 23, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In March 2022, Bill Nye, world-famous "science guy," climate advocate and former Cornell University mechanical engineering student, returned to his alma mater to see the recent modifications made by a group of current students to his [Solar Noon Clock](#).

In the early 2000s, Nye served as a visiting professor for the university and was bothered by the blank concrete circle in the center of the Rhodes Hall parapet. He wanted to incorporate an object to fill the space and inspire current and future students.

"It just didn't look right—somebody meant to put a clock there," Nye told Joe Wilensky of Cornellians, the Cornell University student paper. "Let's put a clock there!"

Inspired by his astronomer father, Nye knew he didn't want just any timepiece. Instead, he wanted to incorporate a piece that would illuminate at "solar noon," thus, the idea for his solar noon clock was born.

Solar noon is when the sun is at the highest point in the sky and can vary from traditional noon by as much as 20 minutes. During the original design and building of the Solar Noon Clock, Nye struggled to find a way to naturally illuminate the clock only at solar noon. The scientist's calculations showed the clock would need a daylighting device that stretched almost 60 feet



Bill Nye Solar Noon Clock



Bill Nye and team get the Solatube Tubular Daylighting Device ready for install

long. This initially seemed impossible until Nye remembered the two [Solatube Tubular Daylighting Devices](#) (TDDs) in his eco-friendly home back in Los Angeles.

Solatube Tubular Daylighting Devices use optical domes that sit on the roof of a building, engineered to capture daylight (from both the sun and sky) from virtually any angle, even on cloudy days. The domes then “push” the daylight into highly reflective tubes, delivering it to fixtures that diffuse it into the area beneath. Both commercial and residential Solatube TDDs can be outfitted with additional accessories, including a daylighting dimmer, LED light kit, etc.

Mechanical and aerospace engineering professor Michel Louge and a group of engineering students programmed and designed an indicator to tell the dimmers inside the [Solatube TDD used in the Solar Noon Clock](#) to open and close at the correct time each day, when the sun is at the highest point in the sky.

The original Solar Noon Clock was unveiled in August 2011, and was later upgraded in the fall of 2021 by a team of current mechanical engineering students led by electrical and computer engineering senior lecturer Joe Skovira, Ph.D. '90. The students designed a replacement control system and developed new software to ensure the indicator controlling the dimmers of the Solatube TDD continued working without fail.

With the help of the bright and resourceful mechanical engineering students and the endless daylight from the Solatube tubular daylighting device, Cornell University's Solar Noon Clock will continue to inspire generations of future scientists and innovators, much like the clock's creator.

About Solatube International

Solatube International, Inc., widely recognized as the daylighting industry innovator, has earned worldwide acclaim for its unrivaled ability to transform interior spaces with natural light. Based in California, the company is the leading manufacturer and marketer of tubular daylighting devices (TDDs) for all types of residential and commercial applications and residential energy-efficient home ventilation systems. Solatube continues to innovate with groundbreaking products that increase energy efficiency and light output and were among the first innovations to receive the “Solar Impulse Efficient Solution” Label by The Solar Impulse Foundation, recognizing all the effort and innovative developments the company has made to become a recognized energy-efficient solution. Solatube celebrated its 30th Anniversary in 2021. For more information about the company and its related products, visit www.solatube.com.

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