

# Projections

SPRING 2014

## The Changing Face of Seiler's Planetarium Division



Seiler Instrument and Zeiss are proud to announce our newest member of the team, Mr. Chuck Rau. We have been following Chuck's career for some time now and have considered him to be a friend and valued consultant for several years. As you may know, Chuck is one of the founders of ChromaCove LLC, an LED lighting manufacturer actively supporting the planetarium field. We have been including ChromaCove's products in our own system designs and have been impressed with Chuck's success and professionalism. He is well liked in the field and enthusiastic for immersive presentations.

Chuck has begun reaching out to some of our existing and future customers as he starts to transition to his new role as Planetarium Sales Director. We hope all of you will get the chance to speak with and get to know Chuck better either in person or on the phone. Chuck demands a lot from our team and expects a level of quality and service that Seiler Instrument is committed to delivering.

With his experience in the planetarium field as well as his own company, Chuck brings a new set of skills and a clear vision to the Seiler team. We have dedicated the entire newsletter to this announcement because we feel this is a positive change for our company. We expect some great things to come out of this relationship, you should too. If you have a project you are considering, be sure to talk to Chuck to see how Seiler Instrument and Carl Zeiss can work together to help you design the next great planetarium.

You can reach Chuck by email at [crau@seilerinst.com](mailto:crau@seilerinst.com) or by phone at (314) 303-1140.

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# About Chuck Rau

## *Seiler's NEW Planetarium Sales Director*

It was a cold morning, following a self-indulged snow day in Cleveland. Our street seemed to always be the last one to be plowed, so it was easy to decide to take the day off from work, even more so when it is your own company. I was sitting on the couch quite content with life, the Universe, and everything about my situation, having grown a successful LED lighting business out of a garage and into domes around the world. We had expanded our operation and offerings, and overcome the serious technical challenges that few LED lighting companies even consider, those issues being the ones that are critical in planetariums, such as a buttery smooth fade. Farthest from my mind was the idea of taking a job again, ever again, and that's when I got the most unexpected call of my life thus far.

Ann Lakey from Zeiss in Germany asked me to consider taking a position with Seiler Instrument, representing the Zeiss brand of planetarium systems. Did I want or need a job? No. But I respected Ann and listened to what she had to say. I even visited Seiler, still unsure of what I would do. I met some really great people, saw an amazing manufacturing facility, and started to define my place in the organization.

### Projections Staff

Planetarium Sales Director

Chuck Rau

Planetarium Division Director

Louise Schaper

Marketing Coordinator

Mollie Guller

Technical Administration

Craig Morris

Brian Wirthlin



*Chuck in ChromaCove booth at IPS 2012: Baton Rouge, LA.*

I have always had multiple simultaneous projects and jobs over the years, so adding something else to the mix wasn't new. Most importantly, I realized that ChromaCove had grown to a point where it didn't require my constant attention. I have not had to personally build a fixture for some time, having staff and equipment to handle this process. Our primary products are locked down, finished, and selling well. So with an adjustment to my workaholic ways and a bit of delegation, I could actually look at this offer seriously. But why would I?

For those of you that don't know me, let's flip that calendar back a few decades and visit the Buhl Planetarium in Pittsburgh for the beginning of the story...

As a small child, a young boy, and even a teenager, visiting the Buhl Planetarium was an inspirational experience and one of my fondest and earliest memories. It was a magical place, where the laws of physics were explained and yet seemed to be broken, as lightning was shot overhead, shadows became multicolored, and day became night, then day again. Even the modest gift shop was filled with wondrous treasures.

But the most iconic, scary, amazing, and confounding thing of all was the "giant ant" that climbed out of the middle of the room from its pit and shined the entire night sky onto the dome. A mixture of science, art, and wizardry, the Zeiss Model II star projector, affectionately named "Jake," was a masterpiece of technological wonderment.

As I got older, I volunteered there, admittedly to try to get into the laser shows more easily and often. Nearly every Saturday was spent presenting science demonstrations, and frequently I would be there the entire day from open to close. I even now associate the flavors of a Jr. Bacon Cheeseburger, fries and a



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Frosty from the nearby Wendy's with my time at the Buhl. The small lunch stipend that I received made it all that more special. I felt like I was getting away with something, as they were willing to buy me lunch AND let me play with the toys!

A short time and several cheeseburgers later, the Buhl finally closed before moving and opening the Carnegie Science Center a mile away. The laser shows had been discontinued, and there was no more Jake. He sat in his pit, as unsure of his future as I was. A few years later I got the call that laser shows were coming back, and I was hired by AVI to perform them. During my time there, I got to work with some of the people I knew from the "Old Buhl" and while the laser shows were in the Omnimax, I also presented planetarium shows as part of the arrangement.



*Chuck outside The Buhl Planetarium and Institute of Popular Science.*

It was an incredible experience, and not just from wearing the costume for Zeke's Dazzling Sky. Learning presentation techniques, participating in world-class programs, and learning production tricks from some truly great people was a rewarding few years that I will cherish forever.

Three years later, a production position became available in Orlando with AVI, so I then spent the next eight years there producing content, devising new production methods, and traveling to many planetariums to assist in staff training and productions, aligning full-dome laser projections to opto-mechanical star projectors. On one of those visits, I was offered a job. Having visited the Mayborn Planetarium several times, they figured I was always there and should just take the job. I was ready for a change, so I took the position and remained for about seven years. That's probably where I started to get to know most of you, mostly at conferences as an attendee, vendor, or host.



*Chuck is a fan of fulldome.*

I hope to help many of you provide memorable experiences that inspire the next generation of explorers, scientists, astronomers, and perhaps even more people that we can all call friends.

I love this industry, and by industry, what I really mean is community. The fact that I continue to see friends that I met in 1989 and beyond is really special. I realized that I started this latest chapter on the 20th anniversary of working in and around planetariums professionally. I love the immersive nature of the domed theater, and I am just as excited now as I ever have been. I have some exciting ideas to share, and with the support of Seiler and Zeiss, I



The Buhl's Zeiss Model II Star Projector is currently on display at the Carnegie Science Center in Pittsburgh, PA.

To find out more about Jake, visit them in person or online at:

<http://www.carnegiesciencecenter.org/exhibits/spaceplace-zeiss/>



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## ATTENTION:

Help us keep our mailing list up-to-date.

Please contact Mollie Guller to update your contact information or to suggest another recipient.

Like the publication? Let us know and we will make sure you keep receiving Projections each quarter.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS:



### JENA FULLDOME FESTIVAL

MAY 22-24, 2014

The annual FullDome Festival at the Zeiss-Planetarium Jena is a key event for professionals and activists in the emerging field of 360-degree immersive multimedia productions. The purpose of the Festival is to showcase recent fulldome productions and to provide an open platform to promote the art, the business and the future of fulldome. Now in its eighth year of existence, the Festival has attracted thousands of visitors and gained international reputation. The festival's own "Janus Fulldome-Awards" have become sought after prizes that acknowledge excellence and creativity in fulldome productions.

The philosophical motto for this year's Festival is A HEAD IN THE CURVE! The Festival directors thought, that when you go to the Jena festival, you'll end up being ahead of the curve in the leading edge of the international fulldome scene. The dome is indeed a curved space where people turn their heads in and around in. Audiences may therefore rightfully experience themselves as having A HEAD IN THE CURVE!

Visitors to the festival will watch and assess international fulldome shows, meet professional, student and independent producers and participate in hands-on workshops, making-of sessions, presentations and expert talks. The Festival is dedicated to sounding out the potential of the fulldome medium, trying out new ideas, approaches and technical tools. The meeting of kindred spirits, getting to know inspiring ideas and finding support for collaborative projects across various disciplines have been noted as characteristic features of the Jena FullDome Festival.

The grand opening of the 8th FullDome Festival on May 21st will feature a special theatrical performance ("Kometentanz") in the dome of the Jena Planetarium. From May 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>, full-length feature shows, short films and clips will be presented and assessed. Friday night, May 23<sup>rd</sup> will feature creative productions by students from Germany and abroad.

The best Festival contributions will be judged by an international panel and awarded. At the Festival Gala on May 24, 2014, the FullDome Festival will present »Janus Awards«, Honorable Mentions, and Student Finalists. The Audience Award will be determined by ballot exclusively by the audience present at the FullDome Festival Gala.

ZEISS again is a major sponsor and supports the FullDome Festival with prize money for the best student contributions. The awardees will earn 500 Euro prize money each.