



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## President of Menare Foundation and Monocacy Park Ranger Headline April Newcomer House Porch Program

Keedysville, MD- The President of the [Menare Foundation](http://www.menarefoundation.org) and operator of the [Button Farm Living History Center](http://www.buttonfarm.org), Tony Cohen, and [Monocacy National Battlefield](http://www.monocacynationalbattlefield.org) Ranger Brian Dankmeyer will tell the story of the night sky during and before the Civil War as the featured speakers of April's Newcomer House Porch Program. Visitors will also have a chance to look at the sun through a solar lens.

Tony Cohen traveled twice from below the Mason-Dixon Line to Canada to tell the story of the Underground Railroad and prepared Oprah Winfrey for her role as Sethe in *Beloved*. His talk will focus on the role of the night sky in guiding the enslaved north to freedom.

Park Ranger Brian Dankmeyer began his career in National Parks at age 13 as a volunteer at Antietam National Battlefield. He worked for a time at Fort Sumter National Monument before returning to the area as a Ranger at Monocacy National Battlefield. Dankmeyer's talk will focus on the significance and symbolism of stars and the night sky in American history, particularly during the Civil War.

Presentations will be held at the Newcomer House on Saturday, April 21 at 11:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. This program is being held in conjunction with Star Parties by the Tri-State Astronomers, who will hold programs April 20 & 21 from sunset to 11:00 p.m. near the Antietam Visitor Center. See [www.tristateastronomers.org](http://www.tristateastronomers.org) for more. Additionally, this program is related to April's NPS theme: "Finding Your Park After Dark-- Starry Skies."

Porch Programs take place at the Newcomer House each month during the open season (April-December). The Newcomer House is the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area's Exhibit & Visitor Center, located on Antietam National Battlefield at 18422 Shepherdstown Pike in Keedysville, Maryland. Volunteer docents staff the Newcomer House from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM to share knowledge about the Newcomer House and offer assistance to visitors to the three county Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area. The house is open on weekends only in April, May, October, and November, and is open daily from June to September.

For more information, contact Newcomer House Manager Rachel Nichols at [rachel@heartofthecivilwar.org](mailto:rachel@heartofthecivilwar.org) or (240) 308-1740.

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