

Galilean Nights Event ID: gn296

Number of telescopes: 2

Number of organisers: 10-15

Number of attendees: 360

Event Report:

At it's banquet in October, the Tuscany Society of Vancouver took the opportunity to celebrate Galileo and participate in the Galilean Nights project. Since Galileo was 'Toscano,' it was a perfect! We spent many months planning the evening and our goal was not only to have an evening with good food and dancing but also to present our guests with the opportunity to have a 'Galileo Moment'.

The evening started with guests arriving at the Italian Cultural Centre in Vancouver and seeing the artwork of local students on the walls and as centrepieces on each banquet table. As guests entered the grand hall of the Centre, they were greeted by 'Galileo' and two young renaissance ladies. The music of Archangelo Corelli was playing in the background and photos of Galileo were displayed on the overhead monitors. The 'WOW' factor continued as we started the evening with a viewing of the International Year of Astronomy trailer.

We welcomed our guests and outlined some of the opportunities that would be available to them during the evening. We had arranged for a student from the Astronomy Department at the University of British Columbia to come with a telescope. Our original intent had been to have it set up outside for guests to look through, but unfortunately the weather did not cooperate. Even so, numerous guests chatted with the young astronomer about telescopes and the field of astronomy. During the evening guests were encouraged to sign several large greeting cards for the Canadian astronomer, Dr. Robert Thirsk, who is currently on-board the International Space Agency. We also took a photo of all the young children at the banquet and emailed it to Dr. Thirsk via the Canadian Space Agency website. We even managed to squeeze in a quick science lesson for the children when our Galileo recreated his experiment of dropping two objects of different size to see if they fell at the same rate.

The Galileo and astronomy theme even carried over to our prizes which included a Galileoscope, official Canadian International Year of Astronomy postage booklets, a copy of the book Galileo's Daughter by Dava Sobel, the DVD '400 Years of the Telescope' and many other items. One final gift was donated by the H.R. MacMillan Planetarium who provided tickets for the children to see their 'Galileo Live' show. Their generosity and support was very much appreciated.

The evening was a great success and we felt that we had done our small bit for this worldwide event.