

**Galilean Nights Event ID:** gn492

**Number of telescopes:** 9 Telescopes

**Number of organisers:** 19

**Number of attendees:** 250

**Event photos:** [http://www.flickr.com/photos/sidewalk-astronomy\\_at\\_cbss](http://www.flickr.com/photos/sidewalk-astronomy_at_cbss)

## **Event Report:**

### INTRODUCTION

The main aim of the Galilean Night celebration at CBSS Nsukka Nigeria was to have as many people as possible look through a telescope, just like Galileo Galilei did 400 years ago.

The Galilean Night was scheduled to coincide with the the Moon at waxing crescent phase, while Jupiter "King of the Planets" was at its peak for viewing in the early evening October sky in Nigeria. These two objects are ideal targets for sidewalk astronomy.

On Friday 23rd October, 2009, the Centre for Basic Space Science hosted a pool of students from different departments of the University of Nigeria Nsukka, and other participants from beyond the university campus (general public). The event started at about 4:15 pm (local time) with a welcome address/opening speech perfectly delivered by the Director of the Centre, Prof. P.N.Okeke who was able to grace the memorable occasion.

#### Attendance:

It is heart warming to state here that the level of interest shown by our students and the general public was marvelous. In fact, it was far beyond the imagination of the organizers of the event. In all, we hosted a total of about two hundred and fifty (250) participants who came from within, and outside the school campus.

Precisely, two hundred and twenty-five students (225) attended from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Twenty-three (23) other participants attended the great event from outside the University campus (villages)

#### The Event:

The IYA 2009 Galilean Night at CBSS Nsukka with the theme: Experiencing the Galileo's Experience featured the following events:

1. Paper Presentation on the following topics which are drawn mainly from those celestial objects Galileo observed 400 years ago:

i. Our Closest Star by Engr J.O Inwelegbu. (CBSS, Nsukka)

ii The King of the Planets by Mr Musa I.A (CBSS, Nsukka)

iii Our natural Satellite by Mr Nasiru A. (CBSS, Nsukka)

It should be noted that each presentation was followed by question and answer session, which showed that the participants really enjoyed all the three topics presented by our staff.

2. Astronomy Software presentation/Poster Presentation

Several Astronomy software programmes prepared for the IYA2009 celebration were also presented to the participants by Mr Obi I.A (CBSS), before the night observation. At the same time, many astronomy posters were showcased while waiting for our target objects to appear in the night sky.

3. The Star party:

In the course of observing the night sky in search of those celestial objects Galileo observed in those days, we made use of the 9cm Meade telescope, as well as the Galileoscopes that were ready as at that time.

The sky was purely photometric throughout the night at Nsukka Nigeria on the day of this event. Thus, this particular session happened to be the climax of the whole event in that all the participants really appreciated what they saw through the telescopes.

Among the prominent astronomical objects they were able to observe includes: the Moon, as well as "king of the planets" the Jupiter and its moons.

It is also noteworthy that the participants were briefly taught how to assemble and operate their own Galileoscopes (hand-held telescopes) before the main event.

#### Personal Observation:

I wish to use this opportunity to state that there is no better way to promote the image of astronomy in Nigeria than to organize such activities for students and the general public at least once every month at our observatory, in parks, or at different schools across the country. There was a remarkable improvement in the number of participants recorded during the Galilean night event, when compared with the number of participants we hosted during the 100Hours of Astronomy that was organized earlier in the year.

Above all, the level of excitement exhibited by the participants while observing the astronomical objects through the telescopes was a clear indication that most of them have not looked through the telescope before. This really gave us a great sense of fulfillment.