

**Galilean Nights Event ID:** gn216

**Number of telescopes:** 7

**Number of organisers:** 3

**Number of attendees:** 100

**Event photos:** go to [www.emmetcounty.org](http://www.emmetcounty.org) where there is a press release and photos of our event.

**Event Report:**

We held our event Friday night in Petoskey, Michigan and Saturday Night at the Headlands on Cecil Bay, Mackinaw City, Michigan under damp dark October skies, which meant that plan B went into full effect. We chose an urban and a rural setting for our event to highlight the effects of light pollution for our community. Friday we were donated use of the space on the Rose Garden Veranda of the Perry Hotel overlooking the beautiful Little Traverse Bay on Lake Michigan, and instead we were given inside use of their nicely-appointed Reycraft Room, where we set up projection equipment and event coordinator Mary Stewart Adams presented a cultural history tour of humanity's beliefs about its position in the cosmos, from Ptolemy to Copernicus to the present. This included images of art, recitation of poetry and photographs of the constellations that would have been visible were it not for the weather. We did an exercise with flat marbles on black craft paper where folks looked at the MSU Abrams Planetarium sky calendar and chose a constellation that they then created on their paper that their neighbor then had to identify, to highlight how different our perceptions can be. The evening concluded with a very informative talk from Mary Lou Tanton of the Outdoor Lighting Forum (also an event coordinator) about the county lighting ordinance and how to make night-sky friendly lighting choices. Saturday Night we were at the Headlands on Cecil Bay just off the Straits of Mackinaw where Lake Michigan meets Lake Huron, again under overcast skies. We lit the one-mile-long driveway with 200 pumpkins that were carved by the area school children through a service learning project tied to our event, and we did an abbreviated projector presentation as we had done the night before. Individual stars had been hadned out with names on them and participants were called to the front where they donned beads and capes etc and did mini-skits of the stories of the constellations we would have been seeing were the sky clear. A local resident is also the discoverer of Comet Stonehouse in 1998 and I asked him to be the star Mira in the constellation Cetus so that he could then describe what a variable star is and how he works in imaging nebulae, etc. We had cider and donuts for our guests, we did an origami project making star boxes and we concluded our evening with Adams' recitation of a native tale regarding how the stars fell into the sky (the Odawa tribe is still quite prominent in our area). A new restaurant is opening at our local airport and they donated hors d'oeuvres to our Saturday event as well, so a great deal of community involvement prevailed throughout. Friday night we had 30 people on-site and Saturday about 70, which was amazing despite the weather! There were local amateur astronomers who brought telescopes for people to see and hear about how to use, etc. We feel it was quite successful and the interest is definitely there for more such events and for our creation of a Dark Sky Park in Emmet County, Michigan.