

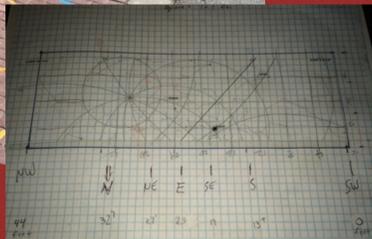
First Midnight

Celebrating history through starlight.

As South Bend, IN, celebrates its sesquicentennial (dubbed SB150) in 2015, the First Midnight initiative recognizes that half of all history has occurred between sunset and sunrise. Community projects during the anniversary year embrace the night sky.

Crosswalk

The name "First Midnight" alludes to how the stars appeared on the first night of the city's incorporation. We painted a downtown crosswalk that depicts an elongated view of the night sky from May 22, 1865. Of course, the location of stars are the same on that date in 2015, though planets and the moon are not. We could also later write notes with chalk to highlight features on the chart—until the next rain.



Scope Out



For the *Scope Out South Bend* challenge, a grant purchased fifteen Galileoscopes that are distributed to eight local libraries. Library patrons borrow a scope to find clues distributed throughout the city, but you can only read the clues with a telescope. Find at least six clues and you are eligible to win up to \$150 and a telescope. In the process, you celebrate and learn more about the city. Of course, families could also use the loaner telescopes to observe Jupiter, Saturn, the moon and more.



Outreach

Public outreach in 2015 carried the theme of astronomy in the context of the SB150 celebration:

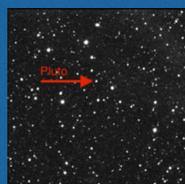
- At the *SB150 Birthday Weekend*, hundreds of people observed sunspots and planets through six telescopes staffed by Michiana Astronomical Society Inc. members.
- At a *Rotary Club* talk I advocated for dark skies and addressed the change in our night over the past 150 years—with an outlook for the next 50.
- At the main library's *ScienceAlive* event, families made Star Finders with Eltanin
- At the *Discover...Science* forum touting science in the community, visitors looked through telescopes and made Star Finders with Eltanin
- At *AstroCamp*, kids found Eltanin in both the Starlab and the night sky
- At a rooftop festival before fireworks, telescopes targeting Jupiter and Saturn attracted a crowd of curious observers.
- At *Nightwise.org*, blog posts connect SB150 and the night sky.
- At *South Bend Science Cafe*, balloons and celestial trifles support larger notions of the universe.



Young Astronomers

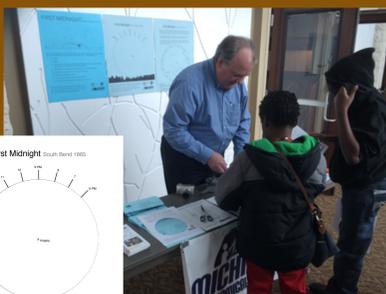
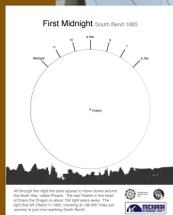
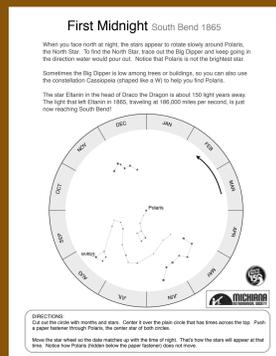


Intending to have a signature astronomy component in the sesquicentennial year, a few volunteers trained (at Yerkes Observatory) to implement the Skynet Junior Scholars program. We enlisted a small inaugural group of youths for *SB150 Young Astronomers* to create a 2015 time stamp of local amateur astronomy. After learning about telescopes, the participants each got online access to SJS's global network of research-grade telescopes. The group is slowly building a collection of celestial images that they have processed and manipulated, including a "blinking" movie of Pluto moving against background stars during the New Horizons flyby of Pluto.



Birthday Star

One connection to the night sky is a self-declared Birthday Star. Eltanin, the brightest star in the head of Draco the Dragon, is approximately 150 light years away. Families and individuals made simplified dials with circumpolar constellations to find the birthday star Eltanin and to launch into stargazing.

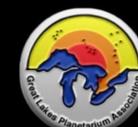


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NEXT
The First Midnight theme begins anew in 2016, when Indiana celebrates the bicentennial of its statehood. Nearly 200 light years away is Scheat, a corner star in the Great Square of Pegasus.

Nightwise.org



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