



# Mid-Hudson Astronomical Association

## April, 2013

Website: [www.midhudsonastro.org](http://www.midhudsonastro.org)

Yahoo Group: MHAstro

President : Willie Yee

Secretary: Jim Rockrohr

Newsletter Editor: Rick Versace

Publicity: Paul Chauvet

Parks Liaison:

Vice President: Joe Macagne

Treasurer: Ken Bailey

Membership Coordinator: Caryn Sobel

Webmaster: Sean Dague

College Liaison: Dr. Amy Forestell

Directors: Steve Carey, Dave Lindemann, Karl Loatman, & Tom Rankin

## Meeting Minutes

### Minutes of the monthly meeting of the Mid Hudson Astronomical Association, March 19, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 PM by President Willie Yee in the John R. Kirk Planetarium at the Coykendall Science Building at SUNY, New Paltz, NY. There were approximately 22 people in attendance at the beginning of the meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting as published in the last newsletter were approved with no changes.

#### Officer's Reports:

##### **Membership:**

Caryn Sobel reported that 9 renewals and 1 new membership were received since the last meeting making for a total of 37 paid members and advocates for 2013, so far. The membership was reminded that membership renewals are due in January for all members. Please submit your \$25 annual renewal as soon as possible.

**Treasurer:**

Ken Bailey gave his report. There is a current balance of \$2391.92.

**Treasurer's Report for the month of March**

Date: 13 April, 2013

Bank Balance:	\$2736.71
Outstanding Checks:	\$ 0
Outstanding Deposits:	\$ 50.00
Ending Bank Balance:	\$2786.71

Checkbook Balance:	\$2786.71
Balance with Bank: Yes	

Outstanding checks since end of month: None  
Outstanding deposits since end of month: \$50.00  
Ending balance total: \$2786.71  
Notes: None.

Respectfully submitted: Ken Bailey  
Treasurer

**Outreach:**

The club will provide 'scopes and a presentation at the Olana State Historic facility on March 23<sup>rd</sup> (rain date April 13<sup>th</sup>).

Willie Yee will be doing a solar viewing presentation at the Roundout High School Science fair on Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> from 1-3 PM. He would like some assistance if you are available.

The club will be providing 'scopes and a presentation at the Haviland Middle School on Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup> (rain date Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup>).

There will be an MHAA presence at the Grey Fox music festival again this year, July 18-21. Paul Granich reported that 6 or 7 people have already signed up to help. He is looking for more help. Watch Yahoo and MeetUp for details.

Our April Star party (April 5<sup>th</sup>) will have a Boy Scout troop visiting us to work on their astronomy badges. Ken will post more details on the Yahoo list so we can be prepared for their questions.

**Publicity:**

Paul Chauvet reported that he will be getting out the word about our next meeting's speaker, Bob Berman, and hopes to get a good turnout.

**Webmaster:**

Sean Dague was not present.

**Upcoming programs:**

Joe M. reported that the April meeting's speaker will be Bob Berman.

**Old Business:****Tee Shirts:**

Ken Bailey reported that the tee shirts have all been delivered to those who ordered them. There are a few extras left and if there is enough interest, another order can be made. Tee shirts are \$15 and sweat shirts are \$25.

**Beginners Workshops:**

Joe Macagne is looking to organize a small group to plan and execute a series of workshops on how to get started in the astronomy hobby and to help beginners. See him if you would like to help. Willie Yee volunteered to give his "How to get started in astronomy cheap" presentation at the November meeting.

**Video Library:**

Ken Bailey reported no new progress due to work commitments. He hopes to have it in good shape next month.

**12" Club Telescope:**

There was a discussion about the state of the club's 12" dobsonian telescope. The club needs to review the evaluation done by Rudy Leon and decide how to proceed to either fix it or get rid of it.

**New Business:**

**Walkway Solar System Model:**

Willie Yee is looking for help to explore getting a permanent scale solar system model on the Walkway Over the Hudson. Contact him if you would like to help.

**Money for club Mailings:**

A motion was made by Paul Chauvet to provide \$15 to support the cost of publicity mailings for the club. It was seconded by Ken Bailey and passed unanimously.

**Observing Reports:**

Several people reported seeing Comet Panstarrs between breaks in the clouds.

**Visitors:**

No visitors identified themselves, but a couple of new members did.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.

The program that followed was a demonstration of the new planetarium digital projection system by Raj Pandya. This system is in addition to the existing starball system which will remain in place. The two systems complement each other.

Submitted by James Rockrohr, April 14, 2013.

## **Dutchess County Science Fair**

April 06, 2013

Willie Yee, Ellie Lopatinsky and Steve Carey represented the M.H.A.A. as special judges for this years Science Fair. For a change, we had two very astronomy related exhibitors.

The young lady we chose as "first place" had a project titled "Making the Math Work Out on Mercury" Her project attempted to explain Crater hole depths and diameters, in relations to other craters on Mercury and Earth.

Second place was a young man whose experiment was titled "Space Farm" He worked on how we would grow food in space aboard a long duration flight. It was interesting how he created artificial gravity using a turntable at 78 rpm. Hey, it worked.

The first place winner received a pair of Binoculars with both winners receiving a year honorary membership in the MHAA, one each of Astronomy and Sky & Telescope magazines, and a planisphere.

--submitted by Steve Carey

## JENNIFER YEE OF NEW PALTZ SELECTED BY NASA TO RECEIVE CARL SAGAN FELLOWSHIP

NEW PALTZ, NY APRIL 11, 2013: The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) announced on Tuesday that Jennifer Yee is one of the recipients of the Carl Sagan Exoplanet Postdoctoral Fellowships. The fellowship, named for the late astronomer, was created to inspire the next generation of explorers seeking to learn more about planets, and possibly life, around other stars.

The primary goal of the fellowship program is to support outstanding recent postdoctoral scientists in conducting independent research related to the science goals of NASA's Exoplanet Exploration Program.

Jennifer Yee, a native of New Paltz, NY, graduated from Oakwood Friends School in Poughkeepsie, NY. She received her Bachelor's degree from Swarthmore College in 2007. She will receive her Ph.D. in astrophysics from the Ohio State University in August of this year. Her Sagan Fellowship will enable her to continue her studies on the discovery and characterization of extrasolar planets through a technique called gravitational microlensing. This technique uses the measurement of the light of a distant star as it is bent around a passing star that may possess a planet.

She states "I knew I wanted to work on exoplanets when I started grad school because I'd watched so much Star Trek as a kid. For the first time, we are able to "explore strange new worlds," to start understanding the broad diversity of exoplanets and exoplanetary systems. Microlensing is a wonderful way to do this because it's capable of finding small planets far from their host stars that cannot be discovered any other way. It is also very exciting because microlensing happens in real-time and there is usually only one opportunity to find each planet."

Jennifer is the daughter of Willie K. Yee, M.D., a retired psychiatrist, presently serving as president of the Mid-Hudson Astronomical Association, and Elizabeth A. Lee, Ph.D., presently Assistant Professor in the Nursing School of Adelphi University.

She joins Katherine Saavik Ford as the second woman astrophysicist from New Paltz. Dr. Ford is assistant professor at the Borough of Manhattan Community College and is on the research staff of the American Museum of Natural History. She is the daughter of Maureen Ford and Natalie Korniloff of New Paltz.

If that is not enough, Maureen points out that "Emily Sobel, daughter of Karyn Sobel, is presently attending SUNY New Paltz, and is considering a career in astrophysics. The odds of a woman being an academic or research astrophysicist in the United States is roughly 1 in 100,000. The odds of three of them coming from a community of about 7000 is – astronomical."

Those looking for a common thread between these three women will not find it in their educational background. Dr. Ford went to public school, Jennifer to a private school, and Emily was home schooled. The one thing they have in common is that all three have parents who are members of the Mid-Hudson Astronomical Association.

Links: The 2013 Carl Sagan Fellowships: <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/news/news.php?release=2013-128>

Details of the individual fellowship awards:

<http://nexsci.caltech.edu/sagan/2013postdocRecipients.shtml>

Mid-Hudson Astronomical Association

<http://www.midhudsonastro.org>



## Exploring the Water World

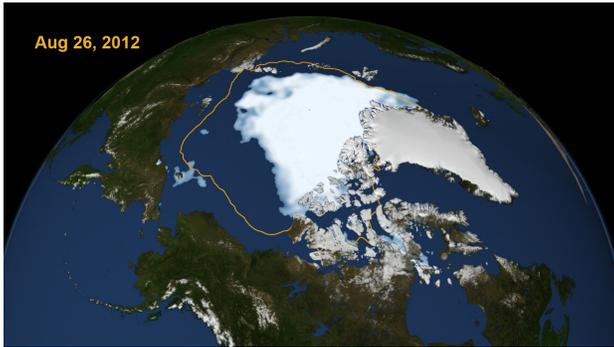
By Diane K. Fisher

In some ways, we know more about Mars, Venus and the Moon than we know about Earth. That's because 70% of our solar system's watery blue planet is hidden under its ocean. The ocean contains about 98% of all the water on Earth. In total volume, it makes up more than 99% of the space inhabited by living creatures on the planet.

As dominant a feature as it is, the ocean—at least below a few tens of meters deep—is an alien world most of us seldom contemplate. But perhaps we should.

The ocean stores heat like a “fly wheel” for climate. Its huge capacity as a heat and water reservoir moderates the climate of Earth. Within this Earth system, both the physical and biological processes of the ocean play a key role in the water cycle, the carbon cycle, and climate variability.

This great reservoir continuously exchanges heat, moisture, and carbon with the atmosphere, driving our weather patterns and influencing the slow, subtle changes in our climate.



The study of Earth and its ocean is a big part of NASA’s mission. Before satellites, the information we had about the ocean was pretty much “hit or miss,” with the only data collectors being ships, buoys, and instruments set adrift on the waves.

Now ocean-observing satellites measure surface topography, currents, waves, and winds. They monitor the health of phytoplankton, which live in the surface layer of the ocean and supply half the oxygen in the atmosphere. Satellites monitor the extent of

Arctic sea ice so we can compare this important parameter with that of past years. Satellites also measure rainfall, the amount of sunlight reaching the sea, the temperature of the ocean’s surface, and even its salinity!

Using remote sensing data and computer models, scientists can now investigate how the oceans affect the evolution of weather, hurricanes, and climate. In just a few months, one satellite can collect more information about the ocean than all the ships and buoys in the world have collected over the past 100 years!

NASA’s Earth Science Division has launched many missions to planet Earth. These satellites and other studies all help us understand how the atmosphere, the ocean, the land and life—including humans—all interact together.

Find out more about NASA’s ocean studies at <http://science.nasa.gov/earth-science/oceanography>. Kids will have fun exploring our planet at The Space Place, <http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/earth>.

## Upcoming Speakers for 2013

### April

Bob Berman - Twenty Amazing Secrets of Celestial Motion

### May

Steve Bellavia - The LSST Camera: The heart and soul of the next generation survey telescope

### TBA

Sue French – A few of My Favorite Things

## Directions To The Star Party Site—

[Lake Taghkanic State Park](#) is in the town Ancram, NY. The park entrance is on the Taconic Parkway 10 minutes north of the exit used for Wilcox park.

Star Parties at Lake Taghkanic are held in the West Parking lot, next to the beach. The skies are darker than in Wilcox, with less stray light to deal with. The horizon is also much lower, especially to the south and east, making many more targets possible.

**IMPORTANT:** all events at Lake Taghkanic State Park require an **RSVP** which includes license plate number of the car you are bringing (please do so via [Meetup](#)). The park is patrolled by state police, and all non registered cars will be ticketed and risk our use of the park.

## General Information:

- ♦ For the foreseeable future, all indoor meetings will be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month in Coykendall Science Bldg., SUNY New Paltz (directions above) at 7:30 PM. All indoor events are FREE! All are welcome. The presentations are generally geared towards teenagers and up. For more information, call the Club Hotline.
- ♦ Dates listed for star parties are the primary dates. The rain date is the following night unless otherwise noted. Only one session is held for a given weekend, usually on the primary date, Friday, unless postponed (usually due to inclement weather) to the backup date, Saturday. Exceptions to this are noted in the “Scheduled Events” section above. Call the Club Hotline for updated information. Everyone should meet at the gate at the scheduled time. The gate will be closed after that time.
- ♦ All outdoor events are FREE! All are welcome. If you bring small children, it is your responsibility to keep a close eye on them. Please do not bring white-light flashlights. Instead, bring a red astronomer’s flashlight or an ordinary flashlight covered with several layers of red cellophane. If in doubt about the weather, check the status of the event at [www.midhudsonastro.org](http://www.midhudsonastro.org).