



# Mid-Hudson Astronomical Association

## July, 2018

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

Yahoo Group: MHAstro

**President :** Jack Chastain  
**Secretary:** Jim Rockrohr  
**Newsletter Editor:** Rick Versace  
**Publicity:** Paul Chauvet  
**Speakers:** Paul Granich

**Vice President:** Paul Granich  
**Treasurer:** Karen Tulchinsky  
**Membership Coordinator:** Caryn Sobel  
**Webmaster:** Paul Chauvet  
**Outreach:** (open)  
**College Liaison:** Dr. Amy Forestell

**Board of Directors:** Joe Macagne, Karl Loatman, Steve Carey, Willie Yee

### **Minutes of the monthly meeting of the Mid Hudson Astronomical Association, June 19, 2018**

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 PM by President Jack Chastain in the Coykendall Auditorium at SUNY, New Paltz, NY.

The minutes of the May, 2018, meeting were approved as published in the newsletter with a minor correction: Treasurer Karen Tulchinsky was present at the meeting.

#### **Officer's Reports:**

**President:** Jack has been working on transition documents and will distribute them for comments when ready. There are also some minor By-Law updates coming.

There was a suggestion to add quorum requirements for business meetings. Also, a method to allow officers to designate a substitute for quorum purposes.

There were also discussions on other suggested changes to the bylaws and how the newsletter list is kept up to date. Jack will follow up.

**Membership:** Caryn Sobel was not present.

**Treasurer:** Karen Tulchinski was not present.

**Publicity/ Webmaster:** Paul Chauvet was not present.

**Outreach:**

- Joe Macagne was not present.
- **Next Club Star Party:** July 13, 8 PM. Be sure to RSVP with car license plate number, make and model by the Thursday evening before the star party, even if there is only a remote chance that you will attend on Friday evening or Saturday, if postponed due to weather. It's better to have too many people on the list rather than someone who isn't registered.
- **Hutton Brickyard:** Thursday, 6/21 (Friday rain date). Need scopes. Set up 7-7:30.
- **Moonwalk on the Walkway Over the Hudson:** Friday, 6/29. Jack coordinating.
- **York Star Party (formerly the Mason-Dixon SP):** July 11-15. Contact Ken Bailey for more info.
- **Paterson Library:** requesting 'scopes for sometime in August.
- **Possible Private Event:** at some TBD Lodge, willing to pay. August 13, 14, or 15. Jack coordinating.
- **Olana Events:** TBD
- **Walkway Events:** Eric Myers is our representative. July 15: "Moon meets Venus", August 12: "Meteor Shower", September 7: "Neptune in Opposition". These are SEPARATE from the "Moon Walks".

**Upcoming programs:** The following information was shared:

- (None reported. See MeetUp for latest information.)

**Old Business:**

- Club telescopes are available to paid-up members:
  1. If you have one of the club 'scopes, take a picture and send it to Jack so we can display them.
  2. 13" dobsonian, currently with Jack Chastain, is available.
  3. ETX125 maksutov, currently with Joe Macagne.
  4. 4" Tasco refractor on an EQ mount, currently with Paul Chauvet, is available.
  5. A planetary camera and a "deep space" camera are available. See Willie.
- Dues are Due! \$25 for the year by check or cash. PayPal also available for a slightly higher price.

**New Business:**

- Ken Bailey was given awards for his long service to the club. He is retiring to South Carolina.

**Observing Reports:**

- Last Club star Party was great! 20-40 people. Lots of scopes. Great sky.

**Visitors/New Members:**

There were about 10 people in attendance at the end of the business meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at about 8:04 PM. **The next meeting is on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018, in Lecture Center Room 100 at SUNY, New Paltz. NOTE CHANGE IN LOCATION.**

The presentation that followed was "Black Holes: The History, Nature, and Physics of the Invisible Beast...and Some New Information" by Jack Chastain.

Submitted by James Rockrohr, July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018.



## A Close-Up View of Mars

By Jane Houston Jones and Jessica Stoller-Conrad

With articles, activities and games NASA Space Place encourages everyone to get excited about science and technology. Visit [spaceplace.nasa.gov](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov) to explore space and Earth science!

In July 2018, skywatchers can get an up close view of Mars—even without a telescope! In fact, on July 31, Mars will be closer to Earth than it has been in 15 years.

Why is that?

Like all the planets in our solar system, Earth and Mars orbit the Sun. Earth is closer to the Sun, and therefore it races along its orbit more quickly. Earth makes two trips around the Sun in about the same amount of time that Mars takes to make one trip.

Sometimes the two planets are on opposite sides of the Sun and are very far apart. Other times, Earth catches up with its neighbor and passes relatively close to it. This is called Mars's closest approach to Earth, and it's happening this year on July 31. The Moon will be near Mars on that night, too!

Keep in mind that even during its closest approach, Mars is still more than 35 million miles away from Earth. That's really far. So, Mars won't appear as big as the Moon in the sky, but it will appear bigger than it usually does.

July and August will be a great time to check out Mars. Through a telescope, you should normally be able to make out some of the light and dark features of the Red Planet—and sometimes even polar ice. However, a huge Martian dust storm is obscuring these features right now, so less planetary detail is visible.

There is another important Mars date in July: Mars opposition. Mars opposition is when Mars, Earth and the Sun all line up, with Earth directly in the middle. This event is happening on July 27 this year.

Although you may see news focusing on one of these two dates, Mars will be visible for many months. For about three weeks before and three weeks after opposition and closest approach, the planet will appear the same size to a skywatcher.

From July 7 through September 7 Mars will be the third brightest object in the sky (after the Moon and Venus), shining even brighter than Jupiter. The best time to view Mars during this time is several hours after sunset, when Mars will appear higher in the sky.

Mars will still be visible after July and August, but each month it will shrink in size as it travels farther from Earth in its orbit around the Sun.

In other sky news, there will be a partial solar eclipse on July 13, but it will only be visible from Northern Antarctica and southern Australia. On July 27 (beginning at 20:21 UTC), a total lunar eclipse will be visible in Australia, Asia, Africa,

Europe and South America. For those viewers, Mars will be right next to the eclipsing Moon!

If you're wanting to look ahead to next month, prepare for August's summer Perseid meteor shower. It's not too early to plan a dark sky getaway for the most popular meteor shower of the year!

You can catch up on NASA's missions to Mars and all of NASA's missions at [www.nasa.gov](http://www.nasa.gov)



In 2018, Mars will appear brightest from July 27 to July 30. Its closest approach to Earth is July 31. That is the point in Mars' orbit when it comes closest to Earth. Mars will be at a distance of 35.8 million miles (57.6 million kilometers). Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

## 2018 Star Party Schedule

Date	Time	Sunset	End Civil Twilight	Nearest New Moon
January 19th	7:00 PM	4:55 PM	5:25 PM	January 17th
February 16th	7:00 PM	5:30 PM	5:58 PM	February 15th
March 16th	7:00 PM	7:03 PM	7:31 PM	March 17th
April 13th	8:00 PM	7:34 PM	8:03 PM	April 16th
May 11th	8:00 PM	8:04 PM	8:35 PM	May 15th
June 15th	8:30 PM	8:31 PM	9:06 PM	June 13th
July 13th	8:30 PM	8:29 PM	9:02 PM	July 13th
August 10th	8:00 PM	8:00 PM	8:31 PM	August 11th
September 7th	7:30 PM	7:18 PM	7:46 PM	September 9th
October 5th	7:00 PM	6:30 PM	6:58 PM	October 9th
November 9th	7:00 PM	4:41 PM	5:10 PM	November 7th
December 7th	7:00 PM	4:25 PM	4:46 PM	December 7th

## 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 Taghanic 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.
- ♦ 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).