



Mid-Hudson Astronomical Association

December, 2018

Website: 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, November 20, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 PM by President Jack Chastain in the Coykendall Science Center Auditorium at SUNY, New Paltz, NY.

The minutes of the September and October meetings were approved with an amendment to add the Vice President and Outreach Coordinator to the list of open offices for next year.

Officer's Reports:

President: By-Law updates are done, primarily spelling and grammar issues. Jack has sent a Google Document link to the Steering Committee members for review and comment. He hopes to have a version to vote on by the next meeting. He also will arrange a Steering Committee meeting before that.

Vice President: Paul Granich was not present. He will not continue as Vice President next year.

Membership: Caryn Sobel was not present. She would like to pass this job on to a new person. C.E. Raum has expressed interest.

Treasurer: Karen Tulchinski came in late. No official report was given, but she stated that there is about \$2,800 in our account. She would also like to pass this job on to someone else.

Publicity/ Webmaster: Paul Chauvet was not present. There are no issues with the web page or MeetUp. Paul reported that he cannot continue as Publicity officer after the first of the year due to his teaching a class. He will continue as webmaster.

Outreach:

- Joe Macagne was not present.

Upcoming programs: The following information was shared:

- The December meeting program is traditionally short presentations by members followed by an informal holiday party. Please bring goodies to share! (No alcohol, of course.)
- See MeetUp page for latest information.

Old Business:

- November Club Star Party was moved to Saturday, November 10, due to clouds. Only 3 people attended. Cold, windy, and some clouds.
- 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 Jack who plans to junk it.
 5. A planetary camera and a "deep space" camera are available. See Willie.
 6. Jack and Dave Lindeman looked at 2 'scopes offered to us from a person in Hyde Park:
 1. 8" dobsonian – needs some screws and springs but looks promising. It has one eyepiece.
 2. 2 ½ " refractor – not in good shape, saddle mount, no eyepiece.
- International Observe the Moon Night (IOMN) – no report.
- The last Moon Walk of 2018 on the Walkway Over the Hudson was too cloudy for telescopes, but the Solar System Model was a hit. We need more members to help answer questions, etc.
- The Harrington Lecture on Gravity Waves was very good. Audio and video have been posted on the SUNY New Paltz web page.

New Business:

- A suggestion was made to offer a student membership for \$10 per year to try and encourage SUNY students to join. This will be passed to the Steering Committee for consideration.
- Per the By Laws the annual motion was made and seconded to keep the member ship dues at \$25 cash/check or \$26 online, paypal, etc. The motion passed unanimously.
- Eric Myers was appointed to be the nominating committee for 2019 officers. Currently there are openings for Vice President, Treasurer, Publicity, Membership, and Outreach Coordinator.
- **Next Club Star Party:** December 7, 7 PM. Be sure to RSVP with car license plate number, make and model of your car 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.
- Pine Plains Library is looking for a star party between December 12-16. Details TBD.

Observing Reports:

- Venus is very good in the morning.

Visitors/New Members:

There were about 15 people in attendance at the end of the business meeting.

The business meeting was adjourned at about 8:05 PM. **The next meeting is on December 18th, 2018, in the Coykendall Auditorium at SUNY, New Paltz.**

The presentation that followed was "Heart of Darkness – The Hunt for Dark Matter" by Prof. Matthew Szydagis, Assistant Professor of Physics at the University of Albany.

Submitted by James Rockrohr, December 13th, 2018.

From the President:

Association Elections

The following MHAA positions are open. Nominees known at time of writing are listed with “**Nom:**” beside the position. Current holders that are standing again have no notation. Open positions are listed as (OPEN). Nominations may be received either by email before the meeting or before the vote at the normal meeting:

- President: Jack Chastain
- Vice President: (OPEN)
- Treasurer: **Nom:** Eric Myers
- Recording Secretary: Jim Rockrohr
- Publicity Chairperson: (OPEN)
- Newsletter Editor: Rick Versace

PLEASE CONSIDER supporting the Association by standing for a vote in one of the open positions! MHAA Needs to have these positions filled!

Additionally, the following non-officer positions are to be filled, but do not require a vote (per current ByLaws):

- Membership coordinator: CE Raum
- WebMaster: Paul Chauvet
- Outreach: (OPEN?)

The current ByLaws require a minimum of 15 members be present to constitute a quorum, so I encourage everyone who possibly can to make the meeting on 17 Dec! If you cannot make it, please send an email to Jim Rockrohr (jdrockrohr@optonline.net) BEFORE the meeting!

Jack - President



**NASA Night Sky Notes:
Observe Apollo 8's Lunar Milestones**
By David Prosper

This article is distributed by NASA Night Sky Network

The Night Sky Network program supports astronomy clubs across the USA dedicated to astronomy outreach.

Visit nightsky.jpl.nasa.org to find local clubs, events, and more!

December marks the 50th anniversary of NASA's Apollo 8 mission, when humans first orbited the Moon in a triumph of human engineering. The mission may be most famous for "Earthrise," the iconic photograph of Earth suspended over the rugged lunar surface. "Earthrise" inspired the imaginations of people around the world and remains one of the most famous photos ever taken. This month also brings a great potential display of the Geminids and a close approach by Comet 46P/Wirtanen

You can take note of Apollo 8's mission milestones while observing the Moon this month. Watch the nearly full Moon rise just before sunset on December 21, exactly 50 years after Apollo 8 launched; it will be near the bright orange star Aldebaran in Taurus. The following evenings watch it pass over the top of Orion and on through Gemini; on those days five decades earlier, astronauts Frank Borman, Jim Lovell, and Bill Anders sped towards the Moon in their fully crewed command module. Notice how the Moon rises later each evening, and how its phase wanes from full on Dec 22 to gibbous through the rest of the week. Can you imagine what phase Earth would appear as if you were standing on the Moon, looking back? The three brave astronauts spent 20 sleepless hours in orbit around the Moon, starting on Dec 24, 1968. During those ten orbits they became the first humans to see with their own eyes both the far side of the Moon and an Earthrise! The crew telecast a holiday message on December 25 to a record number of Earthbound viewers as they orbited over the lifeless lunar terrain; "Good night, good luck, a merry Christmas and God bless all of you - all of you on the good Earth." 50 years later, spot the Moon on these holiday evenings as it travels through Cancer and Leo. Just two days later the astronauts splashed down into the Pacific Ocean after achieving all the mission's test objectives, paving the way for another giant leap in space exploration the following year.



The Geminids, an excellent annual meteor shower, peaks the evening of December 13 through the morning of the 14th. They get their chance to truly shine after a waxing crescent Moon sets around 10:30 pm on the 13th. Expert Geminid observers can spot around 100 meteors per hour under ideal conditions. You'll spot quite a few meteors by avoiding bad weather and light pollution if you can, and of course make sure to bundle up and take frequent warming breaks. The Geminids have an unusual origin compared to most meteor showers, which generally spring from icy comets. The tiny particles Earth passes through these evenings come from a strange "rock comet" named asteroid 3200 Phaethon. This dusty asteroid experiences faint outbursts of fine particles of rock instead of ice.

You can also look for comet 46P/Wirtanen while you're out meteor watching. Its closest approach to Earth brings it within 7.1 million miles of us on December 16. That's 30 times the average Earth-Moon distance! While passing near enough to rank as the 10th closest cometary approach in modern times, there is no danger of this object striking our planet. Cometary brightness is hard to predict, and while there is a chance comet 46P/Wirtanen may flare up to naked eye visibility, it will likely remain visible only via binoculars or telescopes. You'll be able to see for yourself how much 46P/Wirtanen actually brightens. Some of the best nights to hunt for it will be December 15 and 16 as it passes between two prominent star clusters in Taurus: the Pleiades and the V-shaped Hyades. Happy hunting!

Catch up on all of NASA's past, current, and future missions at nasa.gov

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 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 3rd 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.