



# Mid-Hudson Astronomical Association

## April, 2019

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

Yahoo Group: MHAstro

**President :** Jack Chastain

**Secretary:** Jim Rockrohr

**Newsletter Editor:** Rick Versace

**Publicity:** Tim Denman

**Speakers:** Paul Granich

**Vice President:** C. E. Raum

**Treasurer:** Eric Myers

**Membership Coordinator:** C. E. Raum

**Webmaster:** Paul Chauvet

**Outreach:** Joe Macagne

**College Liaison:** Dr. Amy Forestell

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

### **Minutes of the monthly meeting of the Mid Hudson Astronomical Association, March 19, 2019**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by President Jack Chastain in the auditorium of the Coykendall Science Building at SUNY, New Paltz, NY.

The minutes of the February meeting as published in the newsletter were approved with one correction: mention of the Goshen Library should have been the Gardner Library.

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

**President:** Jack published some Policies and Procedures that are still under construction in Google Documents. Please review them and comment.

Jack also mentioned that we can arrive at Taghkanic State park for our monthly star parties as early as we like. In the summer months (Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend) there may be a guard at the entrance to collect day use fees until about 8 PM. You may have to explain that you are with the Mid Hudson Astronomical Association and our permit allows us to enter without the fee.

**Vice President:** C. E. Raum was present. He is making progress on scheduling speakers for our meetings:

- April – Steve Conard (Johns Hopkins) on Ultima Thule
- May – Antonio Contos (Bard) on LIGO
- June – Bob Berman

**Secretary:** Jim Rockrohr was present. No news to report.

**Treasurer:** Eric Myers was present.

- Balance is \$2440.55 with 1 check outstanding.
- Submitted form 990-10 to maintain our federal non-profit status. It was mentioned that a state form may also be needed.
- Dues are due - \$25 per year.
- It was asked if there was still a family membership category? It had been the policy that one membership included all direct family members. This needs to be documented in our Policies and Procedures including voting rights, etc.
- Is there a student membership? This is under consideration by the Steering Committee.

### **Treasurer's Report**

As of 12 April 2019 the club has a bank balance of \$2,440.88, with no outstanding checks, and one new membership.

Last week I filed New York State form CHAR500 with the Attorney General's office. We are technically exempt from having to do this, but it serves to give them notice of change of mailing address, and change of e-mail address. These forms are displayed publicly, so it also shows that we are active.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eric Myers, Treasurer

**Publicity:** Tim Denman was present.

- Still contacting newspapers:
  - o The Middletown Times Herald Record gave a very good write up last month.
  - o Other newspapers were suggested to contact including Albany papers since it is closer to our star parties than New Paltz is.
- Radio stations were suggested: WAMC, WPDH, WDST, etc.
- It was also suggested to investigate local high school science/astronomy clubs for invitees.

**Newsletter:** Rick Versace was not present.

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

**Outreach:** Joe Macagne was present.

- "Lot's of stuff cooking".
- Willie Yee is getting a lot of invitations to various local libraries. He will need some help.
- **LaGrange Library:** July 15. Presentation only, Jack coordinating.
- **Staatsburg Library:** July 19. Star party, Jack coordinating.
- **Gardiner Library:** July 23. SSA event, Willie coordinating. Presentation and viewing.
- **Pine Plains Library or Ronnybrook Farm:** August 9. Details TBD
- **Other possible events this summer:**
  - o Grinnel Public Library
  - o Goshen Public Library
  - o Moffet Public Library
  - o Saugerties High School
  - o Girl Scouts (Ulster County Fairgrounds)

**Upcoming programs:** C.E. Raum was present.

- (see the Vice President report above.)
- See MeetUp page for the latest information.

**Membership:** C. E. Raum was present.

- Still trying to get “Member Planet” membership software configured. Look for an email invitation to join. (Questions are optional.)

**Solar System Ambassador:** Willie Yee was present. See Outreach above.

#### Old Business:

- The March Club Star Party on March 8 was not as cold as recent parties. About 7 people attended. One of the ‘scopes present was a 16” F2.9 Dobson mount doing a Messier search.
- Club telescopes are available to paid-up members:
  1. Criterion RV-6, 6 inch reflector on an equatorial mount is with C. E. Raum. A new motor is on order for the clock drive.
  2. 13” dobsonian, currently with Jack Chastain, is available.
  3. Meade ETX125 maksutov, is currently with Joe Macagne.
  4. Meade 80 mm refractor is currently with Karl Loatman. It has a motorized X-Y mount that does not track.
  5. Orion 8” dobsonian needs some screws and springs for the mirror mount replaced. It still needs a finder scope (Willie may have one). It has one eyepiece. – Tim Denman currently has the ‘scope. Karl Loatman is interested in it.
  6. A 90 mm camera lens is available, see Willie.
  7. A planetary camera and a “deep space” camera are available. See Willie.
- Jack is soliciting astro photos taken by members to show at our meetings instead of the Hubble images he is currently using.

#### New Business:

- **Next Club Star Party:** April 5, 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.
- **We have been invited to participate as judges in the Dutchess County Science Fair:** March 30, Jack, C.E. Raum, and Steve Carey will act as judges for astronomical or space related projects. More help would be appreciated.
- **We need speakers:** please let C.E. Raum know if you have any leads or ideas.
- **“Business Cards” are underway.**
- **Club History:** We are looking for someone to document the club’s history. It was mentioned that Dave Lindeman had originally done one many years ago. Karl Loatman and Tom Rankin have some historical information.
- **By Laws:** Jack explained that we are not legally required to have by laws, but the Steering Committee believes it is a good idea. Therefore, he asked for a vote to approve the updated by laws as presented at last months meeting. Karl Loatman moved they be approved. Lisa White seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Observing Reports:

- (none mentioned)

#### Visitors/New Members:

There were about 24 people in attendance at the end of the business meeting including 2 new visitors that heard about us through MeetUp.

The business meeting was adjourned at about 8:18 PM. **The next meeting is April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in the Coykendall Science Building Auditorium at SUNY, New Paltz.**

The presentation that followed was “NASA 2018: Return to Human Space Flight” by Dr. Willie Yee, Solar System Ambassador.

Submitted by James Rockrohr, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Here is a link to the document that shows the locations of various MHAA events...

[MHAA Event Locations Link](#)



## Mars the Wanderer

By David Prosper

*(Repeat of last month)*

This article is distributed by NASA Night Sky Network

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

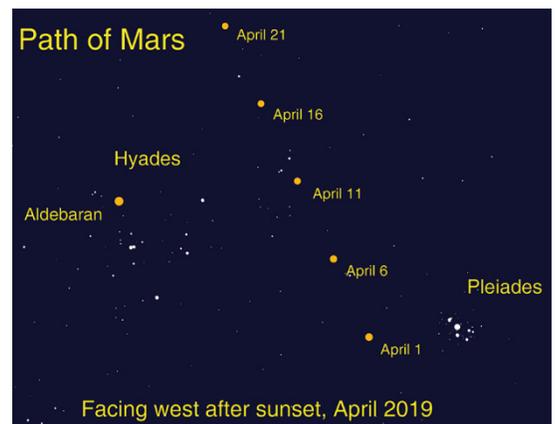
Visit [nightsky.jpl.nasa.org](http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.org) to find local clubs, events, and more!

April's skies find Mars traveling between star clusters after sunset, and a great gathering of planets just before sunrise.

**Mars** shows stargazers exactly what the term “planet” originally meant with its rapid movement across the evening sky this month. The ancient Greeks used the term *planete*, meaning *wanderer*, to label the bright star-like objects that travelled between the constellations of the zodiac year after year.

You can watch Mars as it wanders through the sky throughout April, visible in the west for several hours after sunset. Mars travels past two of the most famous star clusters in our night sky: the **Pleiades** and **Hyades**. Look for the red planet next to the tiny but bright Pleiades on April 1st. By the second week in April, it has moved eastward in Taurus towards the larger V-shaped Hyades. Red Mars appears to the right of the slightly brighter red-orange star **Aldebaran** on April 11th. We see only the brightest stars in these clusters with our unaided eyes; how many additional stars can you observe through binoculars?

Open clusters are made up of young stars born from the same “star nursery” of gas and dust. These two open clusters are roughly similar in size. The Pleiades appears much smaller as they are 444 light years away, roughly 3 times the distance of the Hyades, at 151 light years distant. Aldebaran is in the same line of sight as the Hyades, but is actually not a member of the cluster; it actually shines just 65 light years away! By comparison, Mars is practically next door to us, this month just a mere 18 light minutes from Earth - that’s about almost 200 million miles. Think of the difference between how long it takes the light to travel from these bodies: 18 minutes vs. 65 years!



The rest of the bright planets rise before dawn, in a loose lineup starting from just above the eastern horizon to high above the south: **Mercury**, **Venus**, **Saturn**, and **Jupiter**. Watch this month as the apparent gap widens considerably between the gas giants and terrestrial planets. Mercury hugs the horizon all month, with Venus racing down morning after morning to join its dimmer inner solar system companion right before sunrise. In contrast, the giants Jupiter and

Saturn move away from the horizon and rise earlier all month long, with Jupiter rising before midnight by the end of April.

The **Lyrids** meteor shower peaks on April 22nd, but sadly all but the brightest meteors will be washed out by the light of a bright gibbous Moon.

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

## 2018 Star Party Schedule

January 11	7:00 PM
February 1	7:00 PM
March 8	7:00 PM
April 5	8:00 PM
May 3	8:00 PM
May 31	8:30 PM
July 5	8:30 PM
August 2	8:00 PM
August 30	8:00 PM
September 27	7:30 PM
October 25	7:00 PM
November 29	7:00 PM
December 27	7:00 PM

### 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.
- ♦ 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).