



March, 2026

Website: www.midhudsonastro.org

President : Steve Dittmar
Secretary: Jim Rockrohr
Newsletter Editor: Rick Versace
Publicity: Tim Denman
Speakers: Bart Henin

Directors: Alex Passas, Jack Chastain, Steve Dittmar, and Willie Yee

groups.io Group: mhaa.groups.io

Vice President: Mike Goldstein
Treasurer: Eric Myers
Membership Coordinator: Steve Dittmar
Webmaster: Steve Dittmar
Outreach: Michael Goldstein
College Liaison: Dr. Amy Bartholomew

The next meeting is March 17th, 2026, on Zoom and in person. Check MeetUp for details and link. Zoom link will be sent to all those that RSVP.

March Speaker

Chasing Starlight: Adventures in Landscape Astrophotography

Kerry-Ann Lecky Hepburn

She'll be showing the essentials for capturing the night sky, from planning a location, to figuring out gear and camera settings. She'll also cover some basic post-processing techniques used today to blend the cosmos with your favorite scenery. She will also share the stories behind some of her favorite photos taken both globally and close to home.

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Online link to the MHAA monthly Business Meeting Agenda:

<http://mhaa.midhudsonastro.org/agenda>

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"Astronomy at Lake Taghkanic State Park"

<http://spy-hill.net/myers/astro/ltsp/>

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## **Minutes of the monthly meeting of the Mid Hudson Astronomical Association, February 17, 2026**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by President Steve Dittmar in the Coykendall Auditorium at SUNY New Paltz, NY, and on the online application Zoom.

The minutes of the January meeting were approved with the following corrections:

- Michael Goldstein prefers "Michael" over "Mike".
- Steve and Michael did the planning for the strategic initiative meeting, not Jack and Michael.

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

**President:** Steve Dittmar was present.

- Nothing reported.

**Vice President:** Michael Goldstein was present.

- Nothing to report.

**Recording Secretary:** Jim Rockrohr was present.

- Nothing to report.

**Publicity:** Tim Denman was present.

- Tim wants a second contact number for information in case he is not available.
- Jack Chastain volunteered his number.

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

- No report.

**Treasurer:** Eric Myers was present.

- See newsletter for the current numbers.
- \$9,366.81 in checking account.
- \$3,172.96 in PayPal account.
- \$26.00 in petty cash held by Eric.
- Gained 2 new paid members and 6 renewals this month.

### **Budget Discussion:**

- Steve asked for any other important news from the officers. Hearing none he turned the remainder of the meeting to Eric.
- Per the By Laws, Eric presented his budget for 2026/27 and also the 2025/26 budget for reference.
- Discussion followed.
- A motion was eventually made, seconded and the budget was adopted unanimously.

**Speakers:** Bart Henin was present.

- (Not discussed)

**Outreach:** Michael Goldstein was present.

- (Not discussed)

**Solar System Ambassador:** Willie Yee was present.

- (Not discussed)

**Membership:** Steve Dittmar was present.

- (Not discussed)

**Webmaster:** Steve Dittmar was present.

- (Not discussed)

**Old Business:**

- (Not discussed)

**New Business:**

- (Not discussed)

**Upcoming Events:**

- (Not discussed)

**Reminders:**

- Paid members get access to club equipment (telescopes, imagers, trackers) and club DVD/VHS video library.
  1. See the website or Steve for a list of available items and how to pay to join the club.
- Paid members can also get access to the club Slack channels. Contact Steve or Eric for access.

**Observing Reports:**

- Nothing reported.

The business meeting was adjourned at 8:02 PM. There were 15 Zoom windows open at the end of the business meeting and approximately 11 people were in the auditorium. **The next meeting is March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026, on Zoom and in person. Check MeetUp for details and link. Zoom link will be sent to all those that RSVP.**

The presentation that followed was by Theodore van Kessel: “Surya - A Foundation Model for Heliophysics”.

Submitted by James Rockrohr, March 14, 2026.

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MHAA Treasurer’s Report for February 2026

As of 16 February 2026 we have \$9,366.81 in our bank account, \$3,172.96 in our PayPal account, and \$26.00 in petty cash, for a net loss of \$4.30 since last month.

Our monthly payment for Google gSuite on the first of the month was \$36.33, and we just paid \$16.99 for Zoom for one month. Our insurance for the next year will be \$936.00, but instead of paying it all at once, as I usually do, I made a monthly payment of \$123.00 to allow us to consider a potential cheaper/better alternative via the Astronomical League.

This month we received \$49.20 in dues for 2 new members, and \$148.00 for 6 renewed memberships, and I refunded \$26 to a member who paid dues twice.

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Myers

Treasurer

MHAA Treasurer's Report for March 2026

MHAA Treasurer's Report for March 2026

As of 15 March 2026 we have \$9,667.94 in our bank account, with one outstanding check for \$123.00 for a monthly insurance payment. We have 3,291.84 in our PayPal account, and the Treasurer has \$51.00 in Petty Cash. This gives us a net gain of \$321.61 since the report of last month.

Our monthly payment for Google gSuite on the first of the month was \$36.33, as usual, and we just paid \$16.99 for Zoom for one month. In addition to the insurance payment mentioned above, we also paid \$25.00 to New York State Parks, Recreation, and Historical Preservation (NYSPRHS) for a Stargazing permit for Lake Taghkanic state park.

This month we received \$74.20 in dues for 3 new members, and \$173.40 for 6 renewed memberships. We also received \$250.00 for a Lifetime membership for Susan and Roger Lipsey.

Expenses for FY 2025-26 and Budget for FY 2026-27

At the February meeting I presented a preliminary report on expenses for the previous year, but it neglected a payment for one speaker, and it didn't include the purchase of a Seestar S50 for the Library Loan program. The final total for expenses for FY 2025-26, including those, is:

	<u>2025-26 Accepted Budget</u>	<u>Actual Expenses</u>
Insurance:	\$1000	\$ 123.00
Park Permit:	\$25	\$ 0.00
Meetup.com:	\$ 250	\$ 386.62
Google gSuite:	\$400	\$408.68
Zoom:	\$ 200	\$ 200.88
Domain Registration:	\$ 75	\$ 0.00
Speakers:	\$300	\$ 100.00
Publicity:	\$300	\$ 27.02
Equipment Repair	\$500	\$ 0.00
New Equipment	\$500	\$ 250.00
Science Fair Prizes	\$150	\$ 25.00
501(c)(3) Certification	\$250	\$0.00
TOTAL:	\$ 3950	\$ 1521.20

The actual amount spent was \$2,2428.80 below the approved budget. The overall gain for FY 25-26 was

At the February meeting the proposed budget shown here was voted on and accepted by the members present:

<u>2026-2027 Proposed Budget</u>	
Insurance	\$ 1000
Google gSuite	\$ 450
Meetup.com	\$ 400
Zoom	\$ 250
Equipment – New	\$ 500
Equipment - Repairs & Hdw	\$ 500
Speakers	\$ 300
Publicity	\$ 300
Awards	\$ 200
Park Permit	\$ 25
501(c)(3) Certification	\$ 300
TOTAL:	\$4,225

As a cross-check, if we continue with the existing 108 members paying \$25 dues each, totaling \$2,700, and with expected donations at the average over the past several years, which was \$1,660, then this budget would put us \$135 ahead of the previous year. But keep in mind that the budget values are maximums for each kind of expenditure, and it is unlikely that we would reach those maxima for all of them.

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Myers
Treasurer

MHAA Membership Report for March 2026

No Report

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| Date        | Arrival Time | Civil Dusk |
|-------------|--------------|------------|
| Feb 13 2026 | 5:30 PM      | 17:53 EST  |
| Mar 13 2026 | 7:00 PM      | 19:26 EDT  |
| Apr 17 2026 | 7:30 PM      | 20:07 EDT  |
| May 15 2026 | 8:00 PM      | 20:40 EDT  |
| Jun 12 2026 | 8:30 PM      | 21:05 EDT  |
| Jul 10 2026 | 8:30 PM      | 21:05 EDT  |
| Aug 14 2026 | 8:00 PM      | 20:27 EDT  |
| Sep 11 2026 | 7:00 PM      | 19:39 EDT  |
| Oct 9 2026  | 6:30 PM      | 18:51 EDT  |

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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:

- 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.