



May, 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 May 17th, 2026, on Zoom and in person. Check MeetUp for details and link. Zoom link will be sent to all those that RSVP.

May Speaker

“Artemis II: Moon Joy!”

As many reading this already know, Artemis II successfully returned a crewed exploration to the lunar vicinity, marking a historic milestone for the Artemis Program. Irene's presentation places the mission's significance within Artemis and the broader legacy of lunar exploration, reviewing mission successes alongside the heartwarming and meme-worthy moments that captured the public's imagination.

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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, March 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 February meeting were approved.

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

**President:** Steve Dittmar was present.

- Steve wants to skip to New Business and come back to Officer's Reports.

### **New Business**

- For the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the constitution the Pleasant Valley Historical Society has requested a presentation on the connections between astronomy and the US revolution.
  - o The presentation date is November 24, 2026.
  - o After discussion Karl Loatmann volunteered to prepare and give a presentation.
- The club's officers would like to have the club join the Astronomical League to take advantage of some of their benefits.
  - o The fee is \$10.00/year for the club's membership
  - o Individuals can also join as members for \$9.00/year.
    - Steve will implement a method for individual memberships through our web page.
  - o A motion was made, seconded and approved to spend the \$10.00 and join the league.
- A suggestion has been made to start our business meeting earlier at 7:15 PM.
  - o This will allow more time for business as we seem to be pushing into the presentation time at 8:00 PM.
  - o After discussion a motion was made, seconded and approved to try the new meeting time for three months (April, May, June) then revisit this subject.
- A request was made from Michael Goldstein to appropriate \$500.00 toward the awards dinner to cover the cost of the honorees and their guests.
  - o Individual member attendees will pay for themselves and their guests.
  - o Final costs still in negotiation.
  - o A motion was made, seconded and approved to allocate up to \$500.00 to cover honorees costs.

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

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

- Nothing to report.

**Recording Secretary:** Jim Rockrohr was not present.

- No report.

**Publicity:** Tim Denman was not present.

- No report.

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

- No report.

**Treasurer:** Eric Myers was present.

- See newsletter for the current numbers.
- Paid our insurance bill for the month.
  - o Paying monthly since we may be switching to a new plan through the Astronomical League.

**Speakers:** Bart Henin was present.

- (Not discussed)

**Outreach:** Michael Goldstein was present.

- **Birthday Party** – 5/2 in Fishkill
- **Gardiner Parks and Recreation** – 8/21
- **International Observe the Moon Night** – 9/19
  - o Innisfree
  - o SUNY New Paltz
  - o Olana (? Tbd)
- **Woodchuck Lodge** – 10/3
- **Gather Green Wedding** – 10/10
- **Durham Steampunk festival** – 10/(tbd)

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

- IOMN
- NASA morale.

**Membership:** Steve Dittmar was present.

- (Not discussed)

**Webmaster:** Steve Dittmar was present.

- (Not discussed)

**Old Business:**

- None.

**Upcoming Events:**

- See above under Outreach.

**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:**

- Karl Loatmann mentioned a sun-grazing comet on the way in for April. If it survives its approach to the sun, it should be naked eye visible possibly during the day.
- The last club star party was moved to Saturday due to weather. Although a bit windy on Saturday a good time was had.

The business meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM. **The next meeting is April 21<sup>st</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 Kerry-Ann Lecky Hepburn: “Chasing Starlight: Adventures in Landscape Astrophotography”.

## **Minutes of the monthly meeting of the Mid Hudson Astronomical Association, April 21, 2026**

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM by President Steve Dittmar in the Coykendall Auditorium at SUNY New Paltz, NY, and on the online application Zoom.

There were no minutes of the previous meeting to review. They will be done at the next meeting.

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

**President:** Steve Dittmar was present.

- Steve has talked to a lawyer about our application for 501(c)(3) designation.

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

- We will be giving a banquet to honor founding members of the association.
  - o It will be at Garvan's restaurant in New Paltz.
  - o May 21 at 7 PM
  - o 3 course dinner, cash bar
  - o \$60.00 for members only, \$80.00 for nonmembers and guests
  - o Soft drinks included
  - o Honorees and their guests will be paid for by the association.
  - o After discussion a motion was made to accept this arrangement. It was seconded and approved by the membership.

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

- Nothing to report.

**Publicity:** Tim Denman was present.

- If you see errors in press releases, please let Tim know.

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

- No report.

**Treasurer:** Eric Myers was present.

- See newsletter for the current numbers.
- Are we a 501(c)(7) organization?
  - o After discussion we fit better as a 501(c)(3).

**Outreach:** Michael Goldstein was present.

- Nothing new.
- Is there any individual interest in joining the Astronomical League?

**Speakers:** Bart Henin was present.

- Doing well.
- May – Irene Pease: “Artemis II: Moon Joy!”

**Solar System Ambassador:** Willie Yee was not present.

- No report

**Membership:** Steve Dittmar was present.

- We currently have 111 paid members with 25 on Slack.

**Webmaster:** Steve Dittmar was present.

- Lending library is now under Resources on the web site.
  - o Steve needs pictures of club items! If you have something of the clubs please send him one or more pics.
- There's a broken sub domain that will get fixed later.

#### **Old Business:**

- There were about 40 people at the last club star party.

#### **New Business:**

- Updates on Astronomical League membership.
- Business meeting will start at 7:15 PM for May and June.
- Karl Loatmann will prepare and give a presentation on Astronomy and the American Revolution to the Pleasant Valley Historical Society in November.
- Working on setting up a star party for the Town of Cornwall.

#### **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:**

- Meteor shower tonight.

The business meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM. There were 11 Zoom windows open at the end of the business meeting and approximately 12 people were in the auditorium. **The next meeting is May 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 presentations that followed were by SUNY New Paltz students introduced by Eric Myers:

- Shoshana Shapiro: "Gold Mine Project". Identify Active Galactic Nuclei (AGN) in the Webb calibration field.
- Leonides Lopez and Maria Garcia Martinez: "Testing SeeStar's Capabilities to Collect Varying Magnitude Data".

Submitted by James Rockrohr, May 17, 2026.

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MHAA Treasurer's Report for May 2026

As of 18 May 2026 we have \$9,320.15 in our bank account, \$3,548.65 in our PayPal account, and \$153.00 in petty cash, for a net gain of \$67.20 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. We paid \$123.00 this month for Insurance.

This month we received \$75.00 in dues for 3 renewing members, and \$123.00 for 5 new members. We have also received \$44.73 for 5 memberships in the Astronomical League.

For the club Banquet I anticipate the club will spend \$660 to pay for the meals of the honored founders and to supplement the meals of members attending.

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Myers

MHAA Membership Report for May 2026

As of May 19, 2026

Club Membership: 112 total

Members	Students	Honorary from SUNY New Paltz
93	17	2

Social Network Engagement

Slack	Meetup	Groups.io	Facebook	Instagram	YouTube
25 active of 136	2625	125	1337	268	619

Respectfully Submitted,
Steve Dittmar
President, Membership Coordinator

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**From Eric Myers:**

### Teacher Training Opportunities

Please share this with local teachers you may know.

The Mid-Hudson Teacher Center currently has a portable inflatable planetarium which they will loan to teachers in the Mid-Hudson valley, and they are working on obtaining one or two Seestar S30 telescopes which they will also loan out to local teachers. This training shows teachers how to use the Seestar telescopes, and how to work the Planetarium software (Stellarium and others) . Eric Myers (MHAA and SUNY New Paltz) will be leading the first session, and Raj Pandya of the Kirk Planetarium at SUNY New Paltz will lead the second.

#### [1. Using a Smart Telescope for Engaging Students in Astronomy](#)

Program: Teacher Center

Audience: K-12

Dates: 7/7/2026

Hosted by the Mid-Hudson Teacher Center, this summer workshop at SUNY New Paltz will provide educators with an orientation to the Seestar All-in-One Smart Telescope and its use in K-12 instruction. Teachers will learn how this compact, portable digital telescope combines automated locating and tracking, smart imaging, and app-based control in a format that is accessible for classroom use. Participants will explore features such as simple setup, integrated imaging for capturing views of the sun, moon, and night sky objects, and tools that support observation, inquiry, and student engagement in astronomy. Completion of this training will allow participants to borrow a SeeStar from the MHTC for use with their students. The session will also highlight connections to the New York State Science Learning Standards across grade levels, from elementary observations of the sun, moon, and stars to intermediate, middle and high school investigations of space systems, scientific modeling, and evidence-based exploration.

Please Register by 7/5/26

#### [2. Unleashing the Wonder of Planetarium Learning](#)

Program: Teacher Center

Audience: K-12

Dates: 7/7/2026

Hosted by the Mid-Hudson Teacher Center, this workshop will utilize both the SUNY New Paltz John R. Kirk Planetarium and the MHTC Portable Go-Dome. Taking place at SUNY New Paltz, it will introduce K-12 educators to the planetarium as a teaching and learning space, along with hands-on exploration of Stellarium and other astronomy software that can support classroom instruction. Participants will gain practical ideas for using these tools to strengthen student understanding of celestial patterns, Earth's place in the universe, and observational science across multiple grade levels. The information shared in this workshop will help prepare educators who complete a separate training specifically for borrowing the MHTC Go-Dome Portable Planetarium for use in their own schools. The workshop will highlight connections to the New York State Science Learning Standards, including elementary investigations of observable patterns in the sky, intermediate elementary and middle-level studies of the solar system, and high school Earth and Space Science concepts.

Please Register by 7/5/26

Paul Rubeo

Assistant Director: [Mid-Hudson Teacher Center](#)

SUNY New Paltz OM 223

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Date	Arrival Time	Civil Dusk
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
Nov 6 2026	4:30 PM	17:12 EST
Dec 4 2026	4:30 PM	16:54 EST
Jan 8 2027	4:30 PM	17:11 EST
Feb 5 2027	5:00 PM	17:43 EST

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