



August, 2026

Website: www.midhudsonastro.org

President : Steve Dittmar

Secretary: Jim Rockrohr

Newsletter Editor: Rick Versace

Publicity: Tim Denman

Speakers: Bart Henin

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: Raj Pandya

Directors: Alex Passas, Jack Chastain, Karl Loatman, and Willie Yee

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The next meeting is August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, on Zoom and in person AT 7:15 PM. Check MeetUp for details and link. Zoom link will be sent to all those that RSVP.

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August Speaker

“NASA software OpenSpace Demo”

Irene Pease

The software includes open-source interactive data visualization software that allows for Virtual Space Tours.

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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, July 21, 2026**

The meeting was called to order at 7:19 PM by President Steve Dittmar in the Coykendall Auditorium at SUNY New Paltz, NY, and on the online application Zoom.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted and approved.

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

**President:** Steve Dittmar was present.

- Discussion of plans for future events.

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

- Discussion of plan to petition the NY state legislature to add astronomy events to liability protections of private land owners that open their areas to the public.

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

- Nothing to report.

**Publicity:** Tim Denman was present.

- Nothing to report.

**Newsletter:** Rick Versace was present.

- Nothing to report.

**Treasurer:** Eric Myers was present.

- See newsletter for the current numbers.
- Eric made no progress on the 501(c)(3) application, however:
  - o We need to update our bylaws.
  - o Application and bylaws changes will be reviewed for the members at the September (note change) business meeting.
  - o Final vote for approval will be at the October (note change) business meeting.
- Do we want to rotate the location of our business meeting to attract new/different people?
  - o SUNY, Vassar, Marist, others?
  - o Discuss at the next business meeting.
- Library loan program:
  - o The library wants a "hold harmless" document that clearly holds users liable for use and damage to the telescopes that are loaned out, not the library
    - Eric to work on that.

**Summer Picnic:** Alex Passas was not present.

- You must RSVP for the picnic by this Friday (8/24).

**Outreach:** Michael Goldstein was present.

- See Events below.

**Speakers:** Bart Henin was present.

- August – Irene Peas – “Tours of OpenSpace” a free, NASA-funded, open-source interactive data visualization software that allows for **Virtual Space Tours**.
- September – Dr. Frank Melsheimer, President / Founder / CEO & Chief Engineer of DFM Engineering, Inc. – Topic: intricacies of telescope pointing

**Membership:** Steve Dittmar was present.

- Growth continues.

**Webmaster:** Steve Dittmar was present.

- Security fixes.

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

- 8/30 launch date for the Nancy Roman Telescope.

#### **Old Business:**

- Club's July star party was moved to Saturday due to weather. ~30 people attended. Had first Seestar tutorial. Next one is August 14.
- Walkway event had poor seeing but demonstrated Seestar telescope.

#### **New Business:**

- Karl Loatman discussed that many religious holidays are dependent on local clocks being on “standard time” as the holidays and events are derived from the motions of the sun, moon and stars. He is writing a letter to congress to consider this during their discussions of making “daylight savings time” permanent.
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#### **Upcoming Events:** (as of July 21<sup>st</sup>)

- MHAA July Star Party - Fri August 17
- Walkway Over the Hudson - Sat July 25 AND Fri July 31 (Eric)
- Camp Oh-Neh-Tah in East Windham - Aug 3 (4) (Michael G)
- MHAA August Star Party - Fri Aug 14
- M&D Farms Wedding - Sat Aug 15 (Michael G)
- Storm King – Wed August 12 eclipse watch
- Gardiner Parks & Rec star party – Fri Aug 21 (Michael G)
- MHAA September Star Party - Fri Sep 11
- Innisfree – Sat Sept 19 IOMN (Eric)
- Woodchuck Lodge Star Party – Sat Oct 3 (4)
- MHAA October Star Party - Fri Oct 9
- Gather Greene Wedding – Sat Oct 10 (Michael G)
- Edelman Star Party (Hutton Brickyards) – Oct 29 (Michael G)
- MHAA November Star Party - Fri Nov 6
- Pleasant Valley Historical Society – Sat Nov 24 - Presentation about the connection between Astronomy and the American Revolution (Karl)
- MHAA December Star Party – Fri Dec 11

#### **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:

- (none)

The business meeting was adjourned at 8:03 PM. There were 12 Zoom windows open at the end of the business meeting and approximately 14 people were in the auditorium. **The next meeting is August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, on Zoom and in person AT 7:15 PM. Check MeetUp for details and link. Zoom link will be sent to all those that RSVP.**

The presentation that followed was by Tom Evangelist: “Nuclear Reactions in Stars”.

Submitted by James Rockrohr, August 15, 2026.

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MHAA Treasurer’s Report for August 2026

As of 15 August 2026 we have \$4,068.94 in our PayPal account, \$108.00 in petty cash, and \$8,518.84 in our Bank Account, though with \$416.00 in 3 outstanding checks.

Our monthly payment for Google gSuite on the first of the month was \$36.33, and on the 15th we paid \$16.99 for Zoom for one month. We again paid \$123.00 for the month for Insurance, and this month we paid \$193.31 for another 6 months of Meetup.com.

This month we received \$124.20 in dues for 5 new members, and \$74.20 for renewal of 3 annual memberships. We also received \$250.00 from another new Lifetime member, James Skoufis (less the transaction fee taken by PayPal).

The annual MHAA picnic at Field of Dreams Park in the town of New Paltz took place on August 1st. I was out of town and unable to attend, and so I have not yet received the funds collected or the receipts for expenses. I will report on that next month.

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Myers

MHAA Membership Report for August 2026

No Report

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### **Star Party Schedule**

| Date        | Arrival Time | Civil Dusk |
|-------------|--------------|------------|
| 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  |
| Mar 5 2027  | 5:30 PM      | 18:17 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 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:

- ♦ 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.