



# Mid-Hudson Astronomical Association December, 2014

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

Yahoo Group: MHAstro

**President :** Willie Yee  
**Secretary:** Jim Rockrohr  
**Newsletter Editor:** Rick Versace  
**Publicity:** Paul Chauvet  
**Parks Liaison:**

**Vice President:** Joe Macagne  
**Treasurer:** Ken Bailey  
**Membership Coordinator:** Caryn Sobel  
**Webmaster:** Paul Chauvet  
**College Liaison:** Dr. Amy Forestell

**Directors:** Steve Carey, Dave Lindemann, Karl Loatman, & Tom Rankin



## Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:38 PM by President Willie Yee in the Coykendall Auditorium at SUNY, New Paltz, NY.

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the last meeting as published in the newsletter be approved. The motion passed.

### Officer's Reports:

**Membership:** Caryn Sobel was not present.

**Treasurer:** Ken Bailey present. See his report in the newsletter. Ken mentioned that he just received our insurance renewal and it was "conditional". He will investigate what this means.

### Treasurer's Report for the month of November

Date: 14 December, 2014

Bank Balance:	\$1476.15
Outstanding Checks:	\$ 100.00
Outstanding Deposits:	\$ 23.97
Ending Bank Balance:	\$1400.12

Checkbook Balance:	\$1400.12
Balance with Bank: Yes	

Ending balance total:	\$1400.12
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Notes: Outstanding check is a speaker's honorarium. Outstanding deposit is from PayPal for a membership.

Respectfully submitted: Ken Bailey  
Treasurer

**Outreach:** Candace Wall reported on upcoming events:

- **Tivoli Free Library:** (Ken Bailey coordinating) December 12, Library members only.
- **Saugerties High School Science Fair:** March 13, 2015.

It was noted that we have done 17 outreach events so far this year.

**Publicity:** Paul Chauvet was not present. Willie noted the story in the "Country Wisdom" newspaper about our club and had copies to hand out.

**Webmaster:** Paul Chauvet not present. No issues reported.

**Upcoming programs:** Joe Macagne present.

- December – Maybe the latest Star Trek Phase II episode; "Mind Sifter", or club speakers.
- We need speakers. If you have any ideas or leads, let Joe or Willie know.

**Old Business:**

- (none)

**New Business:**

- Willee reported that a Meade ETX 125 telescope has been donated to the club. He will be picking it up later this week and will post details on the MHAstro group.
- **Elections** – Paul Chauvet was selected as the nominating committee to present a slate of nominations at this meeting. Willee reported on the proposed slate:
  - o **President** – Willee Yee
  - o **Vice President** – Candace Wall
  - o **Secretary** – Jim Rockrohr
  - o **Treasurer** – Ken Bailey
  - o **Newsletter Editor** – Rick Versace
  - o **Webmaster** – Paul Chauvet
  - o **Directors** – Karl Loatman, Steve Carey, Joe McCagne, and Dave Lindemann



Nominations can still be made from the floor before the election at the December meeting.

- **Upcoming items:**

- We need to pick a date for the **Annual Dinner**. Joe McCagne is coordinating the arrangements. It will probably be at the Would again this year. Send comments to Joe.
- We need to pick a date for the **Annual Shopping Trip** to High Point Scientific (not Martin Luther King weekend; 1/17-19).
- We need to set up the star party calendar for 2015. Paul Chauvet will be contacted to propose dates for comment on the MHAstro group.

### Visitors/New Members:

2 visitors introduced themselves. There were a total of about 22 people present for the meeting.

### Observing Reports:

- Olana, November 15 – 28 people attended.
- Fishkill Plains Elementary School – Good turnout. 4 ‘scopes. Reasonably good weather. Good Iridium flare and ISS pass.
- Saugerties High School – approximately 100 people. Everyone had a good time. Good ISS pass.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 PM. Next meeting is on December 16. It will be our annual holiday party, so bring goodies to share. The program will be short presentations by our members.

The program that followed was a presentation by Gene Hirschel: “Herschel: the Coolest Telescope”

Submitted by James Rockrohr, December 12, 2014.



### **From the President:**

## **SANTA STOPS BY THE MHAA**

SI recently received an email from Caryn Sobel about a letter she received from a Mr. William Millard, who wanted to donate a couple telescopes to the MHAA. I followed up and was able to meet him within a few days. We met at the Eveready Diner in Hyde Park and had a leisurely breakfast together. He is 90 years old, and it moving to North Carolina, and is “lightening his load.” Since acquiring this telescopes he has had only a few opportunities to use them, an he wanted to donate them to a group where they would be in the hands of someone who might use them.



I brought a case and three boxes home, and unpacked them. Really I should have made and “unboxing” video to record what we got and my astonishment at seeing it. First, the Meade ETX-125 came in a heavy aluminum case, not the plastic imitation that most stuff comes in these days. The ETX is a 127 mm Maksutov on a fork mount, with a flip down mirror for the diagonal, a hefty screw-on objective cover, a right angle finder and an AutoStar GoTo hand controller. Opening the case, my jaw dropped. I pulled out the scope and it is in truly mint condition. There wasn't even any dust on the objective! Not a scratch, mark, or indication of wear anywhere.

The accompanying tripod came in a heavy canvas bag specially made for it. Again, no indication of wear, even at the bottom of the feet.

A review of the ETX 125 is here: [http://uncle-rods.blogspot.com/2011\\_11\\_01\\_archive.html](http://uncle-rods.blogspot.com/2011_11_01_archive.html)

Next came a scope that Mr. Millard described as “just a lens to go on a camera.” I pulled it out of its box, and it is a Celestron C90 G-3. This could



actually function as a grab'n'go scope, a spotter scope, or an astrophotography scope. It is a 90 mm 1000mm f/11 Maksutov, with a small base drilled and tapped for a photo tripod, and a focusing system that is a large ring that rotates around the OTA. There were a few cosmetic marks on the tube, but still in near-mint condition. Another WOW.

THEN, there were a couple boxes of accessories. A dew shield and an accessory tray for the ETX. AND a GPS 6010 receiver to add GPS capability to the ETX's AutoStar hand controller. And a case for the hand controller. Nice stuff.

WAIT, there's more: a Celestron NexImage Solar System Imager. It inserts right into the eyepiece hole, and plugs into a computer USB port. There is an accompanying software disc. And a Meade DeepSky Imager. Same story. Brand new, never been used: the cables are still in their original wrapping.

OK, take a breath.

In addition to the 25 or 26 mm eyepieces that came with the scope, there is a Celestron Ultima 12.5 mm eyepiece. A scope ring and mount that goes on the OTA of the ETX that could be used to mount the C90, a camera, or other accessory onto the ETX. There are several tubes and adapter rings to fit various components together (Chuck! Help!), and a 3 point focusing mask for the ETX. In, short, *everything* one would need to begin astrophotography.



Finally, a three ring binder has all the documentation, and Mr. Millard included a file folder containing all his receipts, and some notes documenting his purchases. The original (and probably present) value of all this stuff is over \$3000.

I have added a tool box and a covering bag to house the C90, a few lens caps, and some Dymo labels, including "Donated by William L Millard" labels to the cases. It's the least I could do.



## Keeping an Eye on Storms and More

By Kieran Mulvaney



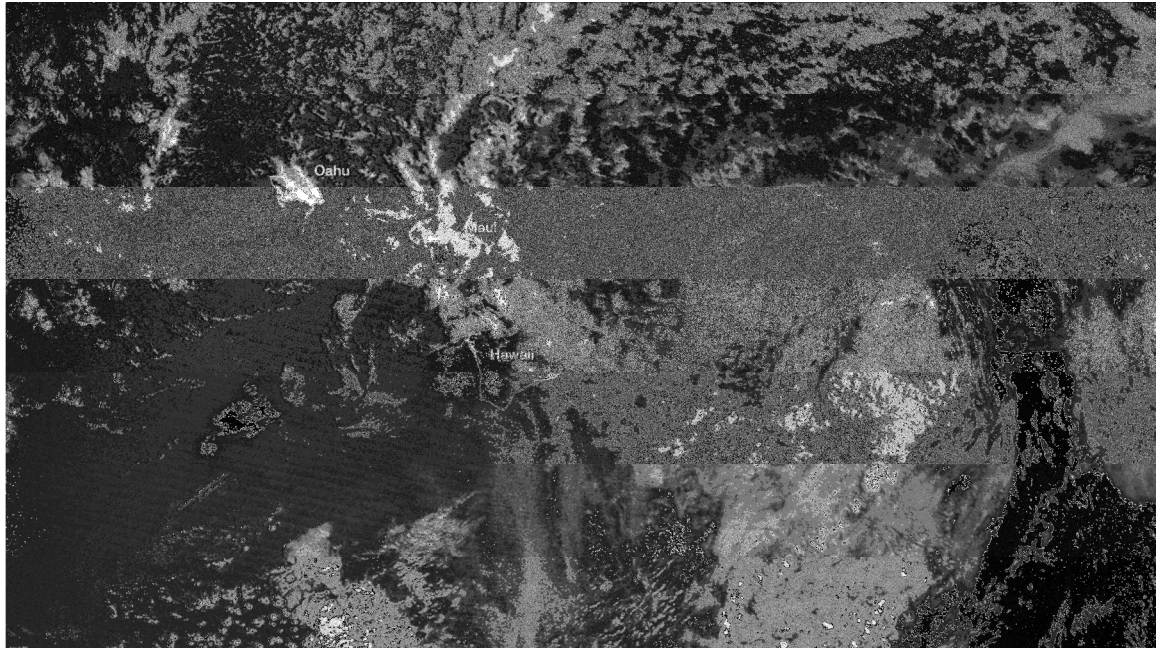
In late July 2013, Tropical Storm Flossie barreled furiously toward Hawaii. The question was not if it would strike, but when and where it might do so.

During the afternoon hours of July 29, forecasts predicted landfall later that week on the state's Big Island; however, by the time residents of the 50<sup>th</sup> state awoke the following morning things had changed. NOAA's Central Pacific Hurricane Center warned that the islands of Oahu, Molokai and Maui were now at a greater risk.

This overnight recalculation was thanks to the Day/Night Band viewing capabilities of the Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite, or VIIRS, on board the Suomi National Polar-Orbiting Partnership (Suomi NPP) satellite. VIIRS is able to collect visible imagery at night, according to Mitch Goldberg, program scientist for NOAA's Joint Polar Satellite System (JPSS), of which Suomi NPP is a part. That means it was able to spot some high-level circulation further north than

expected during the nighttime hours. This was an important observation which impacted the whole forecast. Without this forecast, said the Hurricane Center's Tom Evans, "we would have basically been guessing on Tropical Storm Flossie's center."

Polar-orbiting satellites, like Suomi NPP and the future JPSS-1 and JPSS-2 (scheduled for launch in 2017 and 2021, respectively), sweep in a longitudinal path over Earth as the planet rotates beneath them—scanning the globe twice a day. VIIRS, the imager that will be aboard all the JPSS satellites, images 3,000 km-wide swaths on each orbit, with each swath overlapping the next by 200 km to ensure



uninterrupted global coverage.

**S-NPP captured this image of Tropical Storm Flossie heading toward Hawaii using its VIIRS Combined Day-Night Band sensor. Credit: NOAA.**

This high-resolution, rapidly updating coverage allows researchers to see weather patterns change in near real-time.

Instruments on Suomi NPP allow scientists to study such long-term changes too—things like, "the patterns of sea surface temperature, or coral bleaching," says Goldberg. They are even used by the World Bank to determine how much energy is burned off and wasted from natural gas flares on oil drilling platforms.

While scientists are excited by the JPSS series' wide range of capabilities, the ability to address pressing immediate concerns is, for many, the most tangible value. That was certainly the case in July 2013, when thanks to Suomi NPP, authorities had ample time to close ports and facilities, open shelters, activate emergency procedures, and issue flash flood warnings. Despite heavy rains, high surf, and widespread power outages, accidents and injuries were few. By the time the storm passed, Hawaii was soaked.

But it was largely unharmed.

Learn more about JPSS here: <http://www.jpss.noaa.gov>.

Kids can learn all about how hurricanes form at NASA's Space Place: <http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/hurricanes>



## 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:

- ♦ 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. 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. Call the Club Hotline for updated information. Everyone should meet at the gate at the scheduled time. The gate will be closed after that time.
- ♦ 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).

