



Mid-Hudson Astronomical Association

March, 2019

Website: www.midhudsonastro.org

Yahoo Group: MHAAstro

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, February 19, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 7:28 PM by President Jack Chastain in Room 108 of the Lecture Center at SUNY, New Paltz, NY.

The minutes of the January meeting as published in the newsletter were approved.

Officer's Reports:

President: Jack presented the new By Laws that will be voted on at the next regular meeting. The full texts were published in a shared folder in Google Docs at the internet link in the last newsletter. All members are encouraged to read them before the next meeting. He also published some Policies and Procedures that are still under construction. Jack also mentioned that some changes to our MeetUp pages are in the works.

Vice President: C. E. Raum was present. He had no report.

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

Treasurer: Eric Myers was present.

- The latest treasurer's report is in the most recent newsletter.
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Treasurer's Report

As of 12 March 2019 we have available funds of \$2440.55, with one check outstanding for about \$90 to pay for Meetup.com for 6 months.

I have submitted form 990-N to the IRS, which will help us preserve our 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Myers, Treasurer

- He also presented the 2019 budget. It was also published in the last newsletter.
 - o Business cards are being designed to spread information about MHAA and our events.
 - o "Member Planet" is a computer program to manage our membership. The basic program is free, but we will pay for a couple of options to help with email and communications with our members.
- It was suggested that we increase the speaker honorarium.
- We will renew our donation to the International Dark Sky Association.
- We will also donate to Clear Skies that provides the sky weather predictions for our viewing sites.
- In a change in procedure, member dues will now be due on the anniversary of your membership rather than the calendar year. This will eliminate the need for prorating dues for a partial year, and it can be managed by the Member Planet software.

Publicity: Tim Denman was present.

- Working with C.E. Raum.
- Contacting newspapers:
 - o The Times Herald Record gave a very good write up last month.
 - o The Poughkeepsie Journal did not mention us this month.
 - o It was not known if the Kingston Freeman mentioned us.
 - o Other newspapers were suggested to contact.
- Radio stations were suggested: WAMC, WPDH, WDST, etc.
- The calendar in MeetUp needs to be updated sooner. It was suggested to put in place holders for all of our meetings a few months ahead even if we don't have a program arranged yet.

Newsletter: Rick Versace was not present.

Webmaster: Paul Chauvet was not present.

Outreach: Joe Macagne was not present.

Upcoming programs: C.E. Raum was present.

- Willie Yee scheduled for March.
- See MeetUp page for the latest information.

Membership: C. E. Raum was present.

- Membership list is currently on an Excel Spreadsheet.
- After review, C.E. recommends "Member Planet" software.
 - Program is free, but small charges for ancillary services.
 - We can do dues payments online through the program for \$1 per transaction (plus \$1.05 to PayPal). (No fees if paid in cash or check.)
 - Therefore dues will be \$25.00 per year plus \$2.05 service charge if paid online.
 - Watch for an invitation to join Member Planet.
- Discussion about a student membership was tabled for future discussion.

Solar System Ambassador: Willie Yee was present. He presented Night Sky Network awards to various members that do outstanding outreach; Jack Chastain, Rick Versace, Joe Macagne, and Eric Myers were presented with certificates and pins for their work in 2018.

Old Business:

- The Lunar Eclipse events at SUNY were cancelled due to weather, but it still cleared enough to see some of the event.
- There was a concern that people can see everyone's license and car information when RSVPing. Jack has investigated and only designated organizers can see the information. Individual members can only see their own information.
- The February Club Star Party on February 1 was very cold; 5 degrees and falling. 3 visitors and others attended. Good skies.
- Club telescopes are available to paid-up members:
 1. Criterion RV-6, 6 inch reflector on an equatorial mount is with C. E. Raum.
 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.
 5. Orion 8" dobsonian had 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.
 6. A 90 mm camera lens is available, see Willie.
 7. A planetary camera and a "deep space" camera are available. See Willie.
 8. 4" Tasco refractor on an EQ mount will soon be junked unless someone wants it for parts.
- Business cards demo'd. Suggestions welcome.
- 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:** March 8, 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:** Jack and Steve Carey will act as judges for astronomical or space related projects. A motion was made and passed to spend up to \$200.00 for prizes.
- **We need speakers:** please let C.E. Raum know if you have any leads or ideas.
- **Several libraries are looking to host events this year.** Let Jack know if you are interested.
 - o **Lagrange Library** is looking for a presentation on beginning astronomy and viewing on 7/15.
 - o **Staatsburg Library** would like a star party on 7/19.
 - o **Goshen Library:** Willie Yee as Solar System Ambassador will be making a presentation and viewing on 7/23.

Observing Reports:

- Supermoon on February 19.

Visitors/New Members:

There were about 25 people in attendance at the end of the business meeting including 5 visitors.

The business meeting was adjourned at about 8:24 PM. **The next meeting is on March 19th, 2019, back in the Coykendall Science Building Auditorium at SUNY, New Paltz.**

The presentation that followed was about Stellarium by our own Eric Myers.

Submitted by James Rockrohr, March 14th, 2019.



Mars the Wanderer

By David Prosper

This article is distributed by NASA Night Sky Network

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

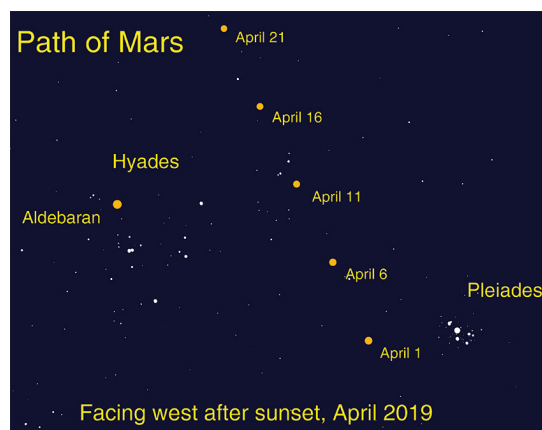
Visit nightsky.jpl.nasa.org to find local clubs, events, and more!

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

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 3rd 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.