



Mid-Hudson Astronomical Association

April, 2021

Website: www.midhudsonastro.org

President : Jack Chastain

Secretary: Jim Rockrohr

Newsletter Editor: Rick Versace

Publicity: Tim Denman

Speakers: Alexandra Passas

Directors: Joe Macagne, Steve Carey, Willie Yee, Karl Loatman

groups.io Group: mhaa.groups.io

Vice President: Tim Denman

Treasurer: Eric Myers

Membership Coordinator: Rick Versace

Webmaster: Steve Dittmar

Outreach: Joe Macagne

College Liaison: Dr. Amy Bartholomew

The next meeting is April 20th, 2021, on Zoom. Check MeetUp for details and link. Link will be sent to all those that RSVP

Speaker for April

Asteroids, Meteoroids, Meteors, and Meteorites

Fort Worth astronomer Chris Mladnicki will be the guest speaker at 8PM directly after the virtual meeting of the Mid Hudson Astronomical Association. His topic will be "Asteroids, Meteors, Meteoroids, and Meteorites". The talk will be an overview of meteorites, where they come from, what they tell us, and what they do and don't look like.



Lectures Opportunity

submitted by Alex Passas

I recently discovered an online source of astronomy lectures. The Amateur Astronomers Association offers online lectures at 7 PM on the second Tuesday of each month. Their website is aaa.org. If you open that up you go to events then calendar and click on the word lecture on the second Tuesday. Scroll down to register. Have fun!

Minutes of the monthly meeting of the Mid Hudson Astronomical Association, March 16, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by President Jack Chastain on the online application Zoom.

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

Officer's Reports:

President: Jack Chastain was present.

- Discussed online star parties. Need some helpers to manage Zoom windows, etc. See Jack or Eric Myers.

Vice President: Tim Denman was present.

- Discussed publicity, see below.

Secretary: Jim Rockrohr was present.

- Nothing new to report.

Treasurer: Eric Myers was present.

- See the newsletter for the latest information.
- The Zoom bill has been paid.

Publicity: (Need a volunteer. Tim Denman is covering.)

- No press on live star parties until Covid restrictions lifted.

Newsletter: Rick Versace was present.

- Nothing new to report.

Webmaster: Steve Ditmar was present.

- Busy working on the new web design.

Outreach: Joe McCagne was not present.

Upcoming Programs: Alexandra Passas was present.

- April: Chris Mlodnicki: "Asteroids, Meteoroids, Meteors and Meteorites"

Membership: Rick Versace was present.

- Took over from Eric Myers.
- Reports will start next month.

Solar System Ambassador: Willie Yee was present.

- April 9: Soyuz launch to ISS without Americans.

Old Business:

- The last club star party was windy and cold.
 - About 30-35 people attended.
 - Scopes included a 24" DOB!
 - Eric worked with the "star cam" IR camera. It can see brighter stars. Eric will continue working with it to put it online.
 - Discussion of Zoom "Break-out rooms" to showcase multiple scopes, etc.
- Jack reviewed the list of club scopes and other equipment available to paid members.

New Business:

- Dutchess County Science Fair at end of March. Need volunteers.
- It was mentioned that there may be a possible new viewing sight in the Town of Shawangunk. It is an old airport.

Upcoming Events

- **Next Club Star Party:** April 9 at Lake Taghkanic State park. See MeetUp and YOU MUST RSVP with car make, model and license plate number to attend.

Observing Reports:

- Karl Loatman reported Jupiter in the morning sky. Unfortunately it is too light to see Saturn when it is up.
- SUNY New Paltz recently had its first open observatory night since the start of the pandemic.

Visitors/New Members:

There were about 36 Zoom windows in attendance at the end of the business meeting.

The business meeting was adjourned at 7:59 PM. **The next meeting is April 20th, 2021, on Zoom. Check MeetUp for details and link. Link will be sent to all those that RSVP.**

The presentation that followed was by Steve Dittmar of our club: “Beginner to Intermediate Astrophotographer”.

Submitted by James Rockrohr, April 16th, 2021.



MHAA Treasurer’s Report for March 2021

As of 17 April 2021 we have \$3173.30 in our bank account and \$311.30 in our PayPal account, with the Treasurer holding \$55 in petty cash. Our monthly payment of \$14.99 for Zoom was just paid out of the PayPal account. This month I received dues from three members, and an additional \$25 gift from a returning member. This month I also wrote checks for \$50 and \$25 to be awards for the Dutchess County Regional Science Fair, but they have not yet been cashed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eric Myers

Treasurer



This article
is distributed by NASA Night Sky Network

Watch the Lion: Celestial Wonders in Leo

David Prosper

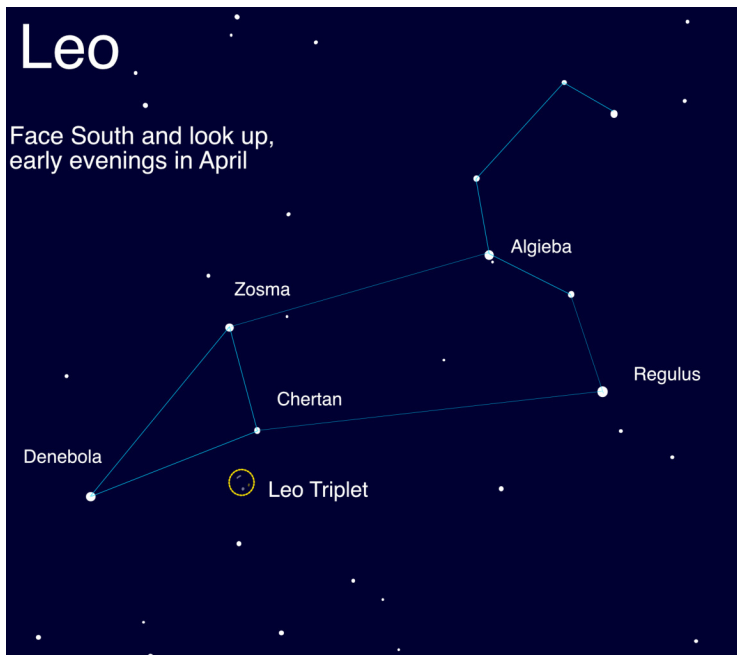
Leo is a prominent sight for stargazers in April. Its famous sickle, punctuated by the bright star Regulus, draws many a beginning stargazer’s eyes, inviting deeper looks into some of Leo’s celestial delights, including a great double star and a famous galactic trio.

Leo’s distinctive forward sickle, or “reverse question mark,” is easy to spot as it climbs the skies in the southeast after sunset. If you are having a difficult time spotting the sickle, look for bright Sirius and Procyon - featured in last month’s article – and complete a triangle by drawing two lines to the east, joining at the bright star Regulus, the “period” in the reverse question mark. Trailing them is a trio of bright stars forming an isosceles triangle, the brightest star in that formation named Denebola. Connecting these two patterns together forms the constellation of Leo the Lion, with the forward-facing sickle being the lion’s head and mane, and the rear triangle its hindquarters. Can you see this mighty feline? It might help to imagine Leo proudly sitting up and staring straight ahead, like a celestial Sphinx.

If you peer deeper into Leo with a small telescope or binoculars, you'll find a notable double star! Look in the sickle of Leo for its second-brightest star, Algieba - also called Gamma Leonis. This star splits into two bright yellow stars with even a small magnification - you can make this "split" with binoculars, but it's more apparent with a telescope. Compare the color and intensity of these two stars - do you notice any differences? There are other multiple star systems in Leo - spend a few minutes scanning with your instrument of choice, and see what you discover.

One of the most famous sights in Leo is the "Leo Triplet": three galaxies that appear to be close together. They are indeed gravitationally bound to one another, around 30 million light years away! You'll need a telescope to spot them, and use an eyepiece with a wide field of view to see all three galaxies at once! Look below the star Chertan to find these galaxies. Compare and contrast the appearance of each galaxy - while they are all spiral galaxies, each one is tilted at different angles to our point of view! Do they all look like spiral galaxies to you?

April is Citizen Science Month, and there are some fun Leo-related activities you can participate in! If you enjoy comparing the Triplets, the "Galaxy Zoo" project (galaxyzoo.org) could use your eyes to help classify different galaxies from sky survey data! Looking at Leo itself can even help measure light pollution: the Globe at Night project (globeatnight.org) uses Leo as their target constellation for sky quality observations from the Northern Hemisphere for their April campaign, running from April 3-12. Find and participate in many more NASA community science programs at science.nasa.gov/citizenscience. Happy observing!



The stars of Leo: note that you may see more or less stars, depending on your sky quality. The brightness of the Leo Triplet has been exaggerated for the purposes of the illustration - you can't see them with your unaided eye.



our view of the three galaxies in the Leo Triplet won't look as amazing as this image taken by the VLT Survey Telescope, unless you have a telescope with a mirror 8 feet or more in diameter! Still, even a small telescope will help your eyes pick up these three galaxies as "faint fuzzies": objects that seem blurry against a background of pinpoint stars. Let your eyes relax and experiment with observing these galaxies by looking slightly away from them, instead of looking directly at them; this is called averted vision, a handy technique that can help you see details in fainter, more nebulous objects. Image Credit: ESO, INAF-VST, OmegaCAM; Acknowledgement: OmegaCen, Astro-WISE, Kapteyn I.

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## 2021 Star Party Schedule

|              |         |
|--------------|---------|
| January 15   | 4:30 PM |
| February 12  | 5:30 PM |
| March 12     | 6:00 PM |
| April 9      | 7:30 PM |
| May 14       | 8:00 PM |
| June 11      | 8:30 PM |
| July 9       | 8:30 PM |
| August 6     | 8:00 PM |
| September 10 | 7:00 PM |
| October 8    | 6:30 PM |
| November 5   | 5:30 PM |
| December 3   | 4:30 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:

- ♦ 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).