



# Mid-Hudson Astronomical Association

## December, 2021

**Website:** [www.midhudsonastro.org](http://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](https://mhaa.groups.io)

**Vice President:** Tim Denman  
**Treasurer:** Eric Myers  
**Membership Coordinator:** Eric Myers  
**Webmaster:** Steve Dittmar  
**Outreach:** Joe Macagne  
**College Liaison:** Dr. Amy Bartholomew



The next meeting is December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, on Zoom . Check MeetUp for details and link. Link will be sent to all those that RSVP. Next meeting will be on Zoom only due to recent Covid surge.

### MHAA Officers election time!

December is when we elect our officers for the following year. This year, we have both in-person voting at our meeting as well as on-line voting for those who do not wish, or are unable, to attend.

"Members Only" voting, please - by which we mean those who are paid-up members of the Association (being a "member" of the Meetup group is insufficient - Sorry!)

The Online Voting system (courtesy of our Webmaster, Steve Dittmar) can be accessed at the following link - which also gives a preview of Steve's upcoming MHAA Web Site changes!: <https://mhaa.midhudsonastro.org/2022officerpoll/>

Nominations to be submitted to Eric Myers ([EricMyers47@gmail.com](mailto:EricMyers47@gmail.com)) by 1600 Dec 21 (meeting date) in order to be added to the online form if needed.

The slate this year:

President: Jack Chastain

Vice President: David Sherman

Treasurer: Eric Myers

Recording Secretary: James Rockrohr

Newsletter Editor: Rick Versace

Publicity: Tim Denman

Directors (only 4): Steve Carey, Karl Loatman, Joe Macgagne, Alex Passas, Willie Yee

All positions will also have a "write in" option, as well as an "Abstain" line. The total vote count will be submitted to the current President before the close of the Business portion of the meeting and announced to the Association before the meeting is closed. Newly elected officers take position following the close of the December Meeting.

Thank you all for an outstanding 2021 with MHAA. May our successes of the year continue into 2022!

Jack Chastain - President



## **Minutes of the monthly meeting of the Mid Hudson Astronomical Association, November 16, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by President Jack Chastain on the online application Zoom AND to a live group at the Coykendall Auditorium on the SUNY New Paltz campus.

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

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

**President:** Jack Chastain was present.

- Discussed progress on online star parties. Still need some helpers to manage Zoom windows, etc. See Jack or Eric Myers or Tim Denman.

**Vice President:** Tim Denman was present.

- Nothing to report

**Secretary:** Jim Rockrohr was present.

- Nothing to report.

**Treasurer:** Eric Myers was present.

- See the newsletter for the latest information.

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

- Sent out publicity for this meeting.

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

- No report.

**Webmaster:** Steve Dittmar was not present.

- Jack reports that Steve is ready to roll out the new web site.

**Membership:** Rick Versace was not present. Eric reported:

- 1 new member this month.
- Working on putting out membership renewal letters.

**Outreach:** Joe McCagne was not present.

- We need someone to assist Joe.

**Upcoming Programs:** Alexandra Passas was present.

- Alex now has lots of leads for next year.
- December meeting will be our traditional member presentations.

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

- James Webb telescope scheduled for launch on 12/18.

### Old Business:

- The last club star party was great.
- Mohonk presentations:
  - First weekend was clouded out. We gave Stellarium presentations indoors.
  - Second weekend had clear skies. Had 2 scopes on Friday night and 4 on Saturday night.
  - Last presentation is coming up on 11/19-20.
- Saugerties High School last Friday: Sky cleared up nicely. However fog and dew settled in around 7 PM.
- Need imagers to put views on Zoom for the virtual star parties. See Jack or Eric.

### New Business:

- Nominations for officers are open.
  - Jack and Eric are the nominating committee.
  - Need a candidate for Vice President.
- Do we want to do an annual dinner this year?
  - Where? The Lakeside restaurant was suggested.
  - When?
  - Let Jack know.
- Jack has been updating the club's history document. Looking for more input from members.
- We need a "technical meeting" to discuss various technical issues (zoom, virtual star parties, etc.) rather than taking time in this meeting. See Jack.
- Mike Capurso, club member and SUNY astronomy student was recently killed in a car accident. After discussion it was moved and seconded to donate \$100.00 to St. Jude's Hospital in his name. The motion passed unanimously.
- We will be adding a club star party to the calendar on December 31<sup>st</sup> at Lake Taghkanic State park.
- The club's 8" Dob, 13" Dob and 8" Meade telescopes are available to members. Contact Jack.

### Upcoming Events

- **Comet Leonard:** appearing in the morning sky and will be brightening through December.
- **Lunar Eclipse:** 11/18-19. Near total (98%). The longest eclipse this century.
- **Mohonk Mountain House:** Looking for speakers on the last "Astronomy Weekend"; November 19 & 20. Contact Jack if you want to help.
- **Next Club Star Party:** December 3<sup>rd</sup> at Lake Taghkanic State park. See MeetUp and YOU MUST RSVP with car make, model and license plate number to attend.
- **Town of Kent:** requesting a star party on 12/10. Contact Jack to help.
- **Opus 40:** 12/15. Contact Jack if you can help.

### Observing Reports:

- None

The business meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM. There were 33 Zoom windows open at the end of the business meeting and about 8 people in the auditorium in New Paltz. **The next meeting is December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, on Zoom and at SUNY. Proof of vaccination and masks will be required at the SUNY location. Check MeetUp for details and link. Link will be sent to all those that RSVP. (Update: Next meeting will be on Zoom only due to recent Covid surge)**

The presentation that followed was by Chris Mlodnicki: "Mayan Astronomy".

Submitted by James Rockrohr, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021.



### MHAA Treasurer’s Report for December 2021

As of 15 December 2021 we have \$4510.72 in our bank account and \$387.71 in our PayPal account, with the Treasurer holding \$40 in petty cash. This month we received \$900 from the Mohonk Mountain House for a series of events we did for them, as well as \$350.04 in dues for new or renewed memberships. Our annual stargazing permit for Lake Taghkanic State Park has been renewed, at a cost of \$25, and \$14.99 was just paid out of our PayPal account for our monthly Zoom subscription.

As decided by a vote of the members attending last month’s meeting, a donation of \$100 was made to St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital in honor of our former member Michael Capurso, who died in a car accident on November 8th. (It was announced at his funeral that St. Judes was his favorite charity and he was a frequent contributor.)

We carry event insurance for our public activities, including the star parties at Lake Taghkanic. While that won’t need to be renewed until January, I have received a notice from the company that the premium will go up by \$178.00, with no reason offered except for “rate increase.”

Respectfully Submitted,  
Eric Myers  
Treasurer



### MHAA Membership Report for December 2021

As of 16 December 2021 MHAA has 46 members in good standing, and 31 lapsed memberships, of which 8 expired over a year ago. Since my report from last month we have had 10 membership renewals, and gained two new regular members and one student member.

A large number of memberships expire this month. I’m now able to send out email reminders for renewals, though I’m still working on improving the software.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Eric Myers  
Treasurer



This article is distributed by NASA Night Sky Network

### The James Webb Space Telescope: Ready for Launch!

David Prosper

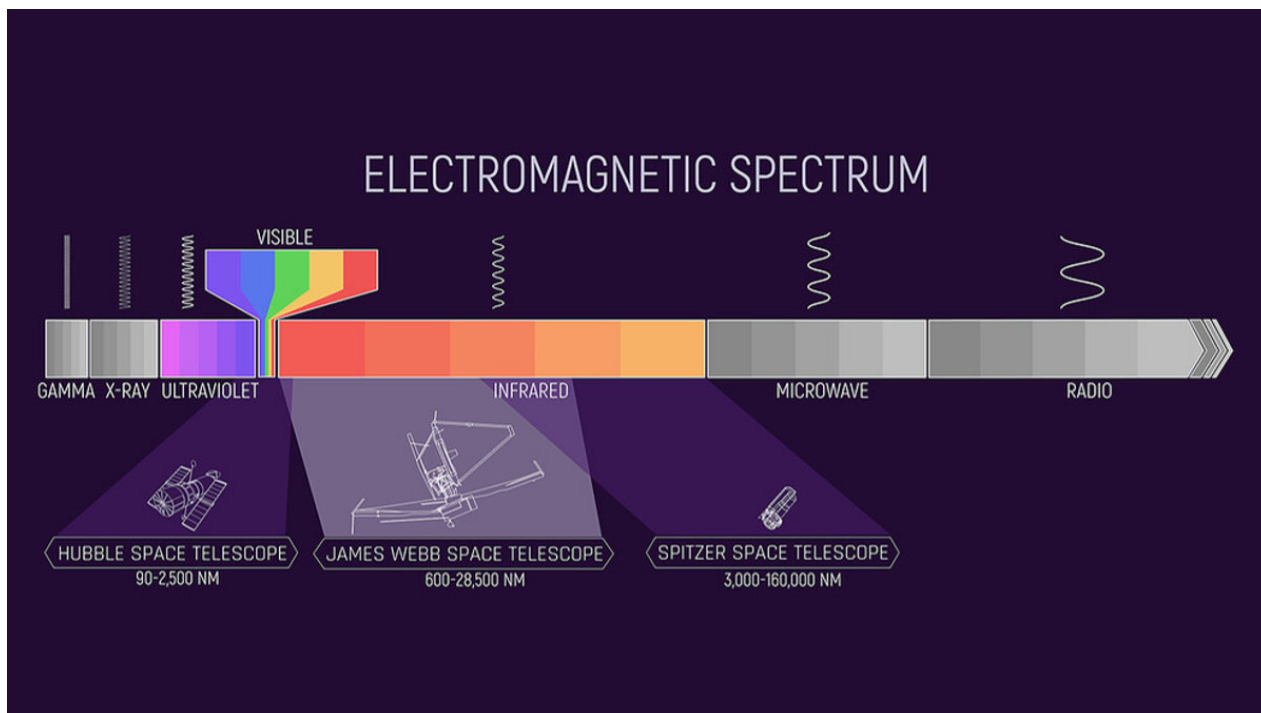
NASA’s James Webb Space Telescope is ready for lift-off! As of this writing (November 15), the much-anticipated next-generation space telescope is being carefully prepared for launch on December 18, 2021, and will begin its mission to investigate some of the deepest mysteries of our universe.

The development of the Webb began earlier than you might expect – the concept that would develop into Webb was proposed even before the launch of the Hubble in the late 1980s! Since then, its design underwent many refinements, and the telescope experienced a series of delays during construction and testing. While frustrating, the team needs to ensure that this extremely complex and advanced scientific instrument is successfully launched and deployed. The Webb team can't take any chances; unlike the Hubble, orbiting at an astronaut-serviceable 340 miles (347 km) above Earth, the Webb will orbit about one million miles away (or 1.6 million km), at Lagrange Point 2. Lagrange Points are special positions where the gravitational influence between two different bodies, like the Sun and Earth, “balance out,” allowing objects like space telescopes to be placed into stable long-term orbits, requiring only minor adjustments - saving Webb a good deal of fuel.

Since this position is also several times further than the Moon, Webb's sunshield will safely cover the Moon, Earth, and Sun and block any potential interference from their own infrared radiation. Even the seemingly small amount of heat from the surfaces of the Earth and Moon would interfere with Webb's extraordinarily sensitive infrared observations of our universe if left unblocked. More detailed information about Webb's orbit can be found at [bit.ly/webborbitinfo](https://bit.ly/webborbitinfo), and a video showing its movement at [bit.ly/webborbitvideo](https://bit.ly/webborbitvideo).

Once in its final position, its sunshield and mirror fully deployed and instruments checked out, Webb will begin observing! Webb's 21-foot segmented mirror will be trained on targets as fine and varied as planets, moons, and distant objects in our outer Solar System, active centers of galaxies, and some of the most distant stars and galaxies in our universe: objects that may be some of the first luminous objects formed after the Big Bang! Webb will join with other observatories to study black holes - including the one lurking in the center of our galaxy, and will study solar systems around other stars, including planetary atmospheres, to investigate their potential for hosting life.

Wondering how Webb's infrared observations can reveal what visible light cannot? The “Universe in a Different Light” Night Sky Network activity can help - find it at [bit.ly/different-light-nsn](https://bit.ly/different-light-nsn). Find the latest news from NASA and Webb team as it begins its mission by following #UnfoldTheUniverse on social media, and on the web at [nasa.gov/webb](https://nasa.gov/webb).



*Webb will observe a wide band of the infrared spectrum, including parts observed by the Hubble - which also observes in a bit of ultraviolet light as well as visible - and the recently retired Spitzer Space Telescope. Webb will even observe parts of the infrared spectrum not seen by either of these missions! Credits: NASA and J. Olmstead (STScI)*

## 2022 Star Party Schedule

February 4	5:00 PM
March 4	5:30 PM
April 1	7:00 PM
April 29	8:00 PM
May 27	8:30 PM
July 1	8:30 PM
July 29	8:00 PM
August 26	7:30 PM
September 23	6:30 PM
October 28	6:00 PM
November 26	4:30 PM
December 23	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).