



Mid-Hudson Astronomical Association

February, 2022

Website: www.midhudsonastro.org

President : Jack Chastain
Secretary: Jim Rockrohr
Newsletter Editor: Rick Versace
Publicity: Tim Denman
Speakers: Alexandra Passas

Directors: Alex Passas, Karl Loatman, Steve Carey, and Willie Yee

groups.io Group: mhaa.groups.io

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

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**The next meeting is February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, on Zoom. Check MeetUp for details and link. Link will be sent to all those that RSVP.**

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February Speaker

On Tuesday February 15 Alex Passas, Speaker Director & board member of the Mid Hudson Astronomical Association, will interview MHAA member China Blue who is a sound based visual artist who incorporates science and often astronomy into her work. She even uses lasers as well. Attendees will hear the discussion and explore her unusual art journey. There will be opportunities to ask questions.

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# Minutes of the monthly meeting of the Mid Hudson Astronomical Association, January 18, 2022

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

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

## Officer's Reports:

**President:** Jack Chastain was present.

- Our monthly indoor meetings will be online only for the foreseeable future.
- Discussed progress on online star parties. Still need some helpers to manage Zoom windows, etc. See Jack or Eric Myers or Tim Denman.
- Also looking for volunteers with imaging cameras to zoom from star parties.

**Vice President:** Dave Sherman was not present.

- No report

**Secretary:** Jim Rockrohr was present.

- Nothing to report.

**Treasurer:** Eric Myers was present.

- See the newsletter for the latest information.
- Received 2 renewals.
- Eric will present the 2022 budget at the next meeting as required by the By-Laws.
- Eric is soliciting input from people who want to make repairs/upgrades to the club-owned scopes.
- Discussion about possible outreach to libraries, etc., to repair their 'scopes.

**Publicity:** Tim Denman was present.

- He sent out publicity for this meeting.
- He will be publicizing the next star party.
- Tell Tim if you see/hear anything in the local media about our events.

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

- No report.

**Webmaster:** Steve Dittmar was present.

- (see below)

**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 this year and has booked presenters through April.
- Alex got a tip to contact astronauts through the Johnson Space Center for appearances.

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

- See newsletter.
- Now sending out automated membership renewal letters by email.

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

- Willie will be ordering outreach awards for people who did 2 or more events in 2021. Send him names.

## Webmaster Presentation (Steve Dittmar)

- A presentation on how to get support (\$) from non-members.
  - o Create a QR code that links to our Paypal or Venmo account and display it at our events.
  - o "Give with Bing" donates search rewards to the charity of your choice; we need to get on their list.

- Amazon Smile is a similar program that donates a percentage of your purchases to the charity of your choice.
- To take advantage of the Bing or Amazon programs we need to get registered with the IRS.

#### Old Business:

- The last club star party was clouded out.
- There will be no winter annual dinner due to lack of interest due to COVID.
  - There may be interest in a summer outdoor picnic get together.
- Jack is looking for help updating the MHAA history document.
- We will be receiving a donation of a Celestron C6 telescope.

#### New Business:

- The club's 8" Dob, 13" Dob and 8" Meade telescopes are available to members. Contact Jack.

#### Upcoming Events

- **Next Club Star Party:** February 4, 2022, at Lake Taghkanic State park. See MeetUp and YOU MUST RSVP with car make, model and license plate number to attend.
- **NEAF is 4/9-10 at Rockland Community College.**
- **College Hill Park in Poughkeepsie.** Star party on February 6. See Jack.
- **Vassar College Star party:** March 2
- **Timor Park in Union Vale:** Date TBD.

#### Observing Reports:

- None

The business meeting was adjourned at 8:01 PM. There were 29 Zoom windows open at the end of the business meeting. **The next meeting is February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, on Zoom. Check MeetUp for details and link. Link will be sent to all those that RSVP.**

The presentation that followed was by Frank Hughes, retired Chief of Spaceflight Training for NASA: "Celestial Navigation Then, Cislunar Navigation in the Future".

Submitted by James Rockrohr, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

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MHAA Treasurer's Report for February 2022

As of 13 February 2022 we have \$3990.50 in our bank account and \$649.74 in our PayPal account, with the Treasurer holding \$40 in petty cash. This past month we received \$74.52 in dues for new or renewed memberships. I anticipate that our monthly Zoom subscription of \$14.99 will be paid out of our PayPal account on Tuesday.

This month I paid for our annual event insurance, which was \$696.00 (it went up a fair amount). I reimbursed Willie Yee \$14.00 for outreach award pins, and I reimbursed myself \$106.86 for 6 months of Meetup.com, which is automatically charged to my credit card.

At the February meeting I will present a proposed budget for the next year, along with a summary of our expenses and income for the past year. Our finances are healthy, so I plan to ask that we allocate more money to telescope repairs and upgrades, as well as some publicity. Any other suggestions are welcomed, since this club belongs to the members.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eric Myers
Treasurer

MHAA Membership Report for February 2022

As of 13 February, 2022 MHAA has 56 members in good standing, and 18 lapsed memberships, of which 3 expired over a year ago. Since my report from last month we have had 4 membership renewals, and gained 1 new regular annual member.

I now have an automated script that runs once a week to send out reminders to those whose membership will expire in the next month, and those whose membership has expired. While it runs once a week, it won't send a reminder to anyone if they have already received one in the past month, so that they don't feel like they are being spammed or nagged.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eric Myers
Acting Membership Coordinator

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**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.gov](https://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov) to find local clubs, events, and more!

## Hang Out with the Twins of Gemini

David Prosper

The night skies of February are filled with beautiful star patterns, and so this month we take a closer look at another famous constellation, now rising high in the east after sunset: Gemini, the Twins!

If you're observing Orion, as discussed in last month's article, then Gemini is easy to find: just look above Orion's "head" to find Gemini's "feet." Or, make a line from brilliant blue-white Rigel in the foot of Orion, through its distinct "Belt," and then on through orange Betelgeuse. Keep going and you will end up in between the bright stars Castor and Pollux, the "heads" of the Gemini Twins. While not actually related – these stars aren't bound to each other, and are almost a magnitude apart in brightness – they do pair up nicely when compared to their surrounding stars. Take note: more than one stargazer has confused Gemini with its next-door neighbor constellation, Auriga. The stars of Auriga rise before Gemini's, and its brightest star, Capella, doesn't pair up as strikingly with its second most brilliant star as Castor and Pollux do. Star-hop to Gemini from Orion using the trick above if you aren't sure which constellation you're looking at.

Pollux is the brighter of Gemini's two "head" stars - imagine it has the head of the "left twin" - and located about 34 light-years away from our Solar System. Pollux even possesses a planet, Pollux b, over twice the mass of Jupiter.

Castor - the head of the "right twin" - by contrast, lies about 51 light-years distant and is slightly dimmer. While no planets have been detected, there is

still plenty of company as Castor is actually a six-star system! There are several great deep-sky objects to observe as well. You may be able to spot one with your unaided eyes, if you have dark skies and sharp eyes: M35, a large open cluster near the "right foot" of Gemini, about 3,870 light-years away. It's almost the size of a full Moon in our skies! Optical aid like binoculars or a telescope reveals the cluster's brilliant member stars. Once you spot M35, look around to see if you



**Gemini: The Twins**  
*Castor and Pollux are Gemini's most prominent stars, and often referred to as the "heads" of the eponymous twins from Greek myth. In Chinese astronomy, these stars make up two separate patterns: the Vermillion Bird of the South and the White Tiger of the North. What do you see? The Night Sky Network's "Legends in the Sky" activity includes downloadable "Create Your Own Constellation" handouts so you can draw your own star stories: [bit.ly/legendsinthesky](https://bit.ly/legendsinthesky) Image created with assistance from Stellarium.*

can spot another open cluster, NGC 2158, much smaller and more distant than M35 at 9,000 light-years away. Another notable object is NGC 2392, a planetary nebula created from the remains of a dying star, located about 6,500 light-years distant. You'll want to use a telescope to find this intriguing faint fuzzy, located near the "left hip" star Wasat.

Gemini's stars are referenced quite often in cultures around the world, and even in the history of space exploration. NASA's famed Gemini program took its name from these stars, as do the appropriately named twin Gemini North and South Observatories in Hawaii and Chile. You can discover more about Gemini's namesakes along with the latest observations of its stars and related celestial objects at [nasa.gov](https://www.nasa.gov).

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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

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## Directions To The Star Party Site

[Lake Taghkanic State Park](https://www.nys.gov/locations/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](https://www.meetup.com)). 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](https://www.midhudsonastro.org).