



## November, 2023

**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:** Alex Passas, Karl Loatman, Steve Dittmar, and Willie Yee

**groups.io Group:** [mhaa.groups.io](https://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 November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, on Zoom and in person. Check MeetUp for details and link. Zoom link will be sent to all those that RSVP.**

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### **November Speaker**

Dr. Eric Myers

### **Stellarium 101**

This month's Mid-Hudson Astronomical Association (MHAA) presentation will be an introduction to Stellarium for beginners, starting with installing it on the computer, going through the basic controls for view, time, and location, as well as turning on and off labels on objects like constellations and planets and grids and other guiding markers.

Online link to the MHAA monthly Business Meeting Agenda:

<http://mhaa.midhudsonastro.org/agenda>



## **Minutes of the monthly meeting of the Mid Hudson Astronomical Association, October 17, 2023**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by President Jack Chastain in the Coykendall Auditorium at SUNY New Paltz, NY, and on the online application Zoom.

The minutes of the September meeting as published in the newsletter were unanimously approved after a correction that Willie Yee was present at the meeting.

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

**President:** Jack Chastain was present.

- Thanks to Dave Sherman for chairing the meeting last month.
- Officer nominations are needed soon.

**Vice President:** Dave Sherman was present.

- Nothing to report

**Recording Secretary:** Jim Rockrohr was present.

- Nothing to report

**Publicity:** Tim Denman was present.

- Nothing to report.

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

- o (No report)

**Treasurer:** Eric Myers was present.

- See latest newsletter for numbers.

**Outreach:** (need a coordinator)

- o No report

**Speakers:** Alex Passas was present.

- Speakers booked through January.
- December is member talks
- January is "Telescopes 101"
- Alex is resigning her post. We need a replacement.
  - o Technically the Vice President is "chair of the speaker committee".

**Membership:** Eric Myers (acting) was present

- Eric and Steve Dittmar need to fix competing email notices.

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

- This Saturday is IOMN (International Observe the Moon Night).
- Willie giving his "27 Moons of the Solar System" talk at the Rockland Astronomy Club.

**Webmaster:** Steve Dittmar was present

- Fixing bugs.

### Old Business:

- Last club star party cancelled due to weather.
- You can get an individual park permit through the web site.
- Be sure to get on MeetUp to get notices regarding our star party status and RSVP for the star parties.

### New Business and Events:

- Elections coming.
- Holiday party – need a coordinator.

### Past Events:

- **Innesfree:** Saturday 9/23. Nice outing
- **Opus 40:** Saturday, 9/23, Clouded out
- **Mohonk:** Wednesday, 9/27, 9 PM, 12 people, 4 telescopes.
- **Stone Mountain Farm, New Paltz:** 9/30, Clouded out.

### Upcoming Events:

- **Millerton Star Party:** 10/20 See Dave Sherman
- **West Point at Dragon Park.** 10/20 See Eric.
- **Next club star party:** Friday, 11/10
- **Saugerties High School:** 11/3, see Jack
- **Innes Hotel:** 11/8 Accord.
- **Kent Star Party:** 11/11
- **West Point:** 11/17
- **Grasslands event:** TBD

### Reminders:

- Paid members get access to club equipment (telescopes, imagers, trackers) and club DVD/VHS video library. See Jack.
  1. Do we have a list of equipment available for loan? Yes, see the website or Jack.
- Paid members can also get access to the club Slack channels. Contact Jack or Eric for access.

### Observing Reports:

- (none reported).

The business meeting was adjourned at 8:03 PM. There were 11 Zoom windows open at the end of the business meeting and approximately 28 people were in the auditorium. **The next meeting is November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, on Zoom and in person. Check MeetUp for details and link. Zoom link will be sent to all those that RSVP.**

The 2 presentations that followed were by Claire O'Connor, "Can We Distinguish Between Cosmic String Cusps and Colliding Black Holes", and Phoebe Heretz, "A New Metallicity Diagnostic for Low Resolution Surveys of Star Forming Galaxies."

Submitted by James Rockrohr, November 13, 2023.

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### **MHAA Treasurer's Report for November 2023**

As of 19 November 2023 we have \$4406.93 in our bank account and \$2,664.48 in our PayPal account, with the Treasurer holding \$48 in cash. Our monthly payment of \$16.22 for Google gSuite was paid on the 1st of the month, and our monthly payment of \$15.99 for Zoom was paid on the 15th, as usual. This month we received \$274.96 for dues from 6 new members and 5 renewing members, and we received a donation of \$200 from the Mohonk Mountain House for an event in early October.

When we voted on our budget for the year back in February we neglected to approve purchasing solar eclipse glasses for next April. I would like to ask for a vote at the next business meeting to approve spending up to \$200 to make such a purchase.

There was some recent discussion in our Slack workspace lamenting that anything posted there is hidden after 90 days. This is because we have the Free service. We could gain access to older postings and files if we paid for the Pro service, which is \$7.25 per person per month (if billed by the year). We have 79 people in our workspace, but only 31 of them are listed as “active” for billing purposes. That means we would need to pay \$224.75 per month for that service, though it would be more if more people became active in the Slack workspace.

There has also been some discussion of changing our subscription plan on Meetup.com. We have been paying \$106.86 every 6 months for the basic service (this may go up slightly soon), which allows for up to three separate group pages, even though we only use one. We have been allowing a local Star Trek fan group to use one of our spare groups, but they no longer need it. It might be nice to offer a spare to another local astronomy group to help them out, but it is not clear that there is interest in this. If we change to Meetup Pro the cost is \$180 every 6 months. The main thing we would gain from this is that it would give us access to the email addresses of people who RSVP to attend our events. Right now we can send messages to them via Meetup, but we do not know their email addresses. The Meetup Pro plan would also allow us to have more than three different groups (but we really only need one). The Pro plan would also give us access to a service to send email using Mailchimp, but we already have something like that available for free from [groups.io](https://groups.io), for those who have joined our mailing list there (MHAA members or not). It should be noted though that the email list on [groups.io](https://groups.io) is not the same as a list of people who have RSVP'd on Meetup to attend one of our events. We would not get email addresses of people who just “follow” us on Meetup but do not RSVP to attend an event.

I hope this information about Slack and Meetup is helpful for further discussions about changes in services.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Eric Myers  
Treasurer

### **MHAA Membership Report for November 2023**

As of 19 November 2023 the club has 80 paid members in good standing, of which 4 are students. This month we gained 6 new members, with 5 renewals, while there are 5 lapsed memberships, of which 2 are long-time members who have not renewed in over a year. In addition, we have 12 lifetime members.

Our Slack workspace has 75 “regular” members (including Admins) which does not include 20 deactivated accounts or 38 invitations sent out but not used. Of those 71 regular members, 31 are classified as “active” this month for billing purposes (though we are not actually billed, since we use the Free service). Our mailing list on [groups.io](https://groups.io), which is for both members and non-members interested in our activities, now has 107 subscribers. We have over 2480 followers on our site on Meetup.com (they call them “members,” but they are not paid MHAA members), 1023 US followers for our Facebook page, and 113 followers on Instagram.

As we approach the new year many more memberships will be up for renewal, because we previously had all memberships run for the calendar year. Watch your email for a reminder. However, there have been some more “test” renewal messages from our new club website, but these don’t have up-to-date information about expiration dates. If the message does not have my name on it, then it’s just a test. If you are not sure if it’s legit or not just reply back, and if it goes to me I can let you know your status. At some point I hope to get together with our Webmaster to work out how we can coordinate membership information between the club website and the Datastore on Google.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Eric Myers  
Acting Membership Coordinator



**This article is distributed by NASA's Night Sky Network (NSN).**

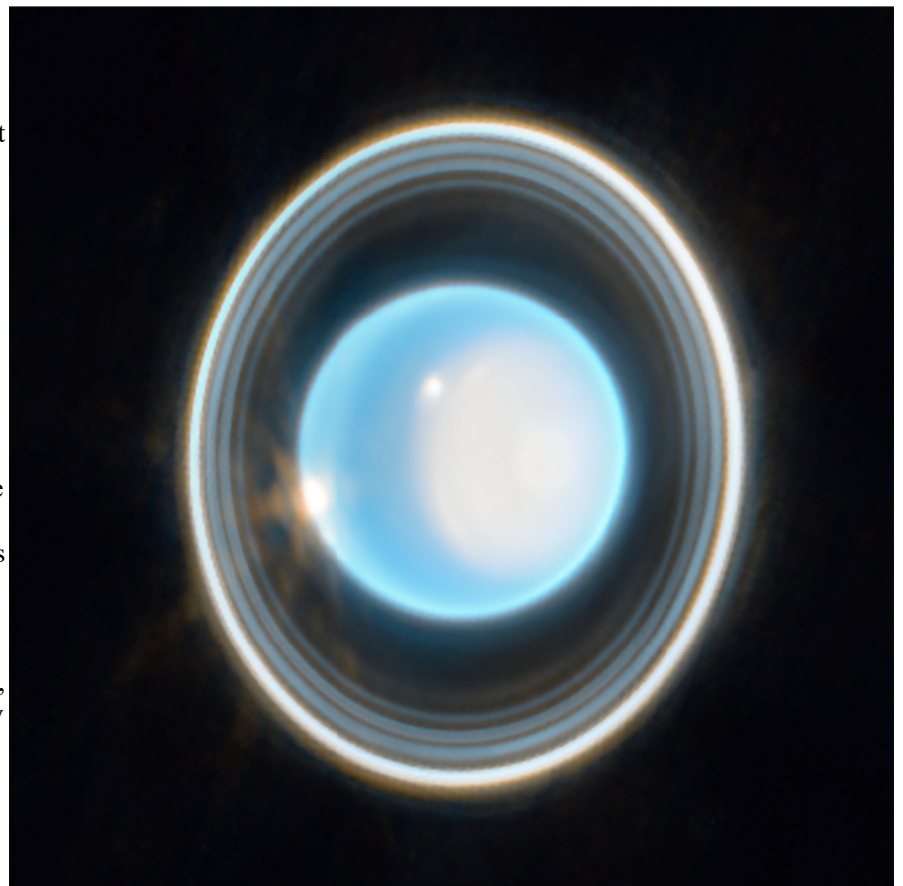
The NSN program supports astronomy clubs across the USA dedicated to astronomy outreach. Visit [nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov](https://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov) to find local clubs, events, and more!

## Spy the Seventh Planet, Uranus

By Liz Kruesi

You might be familiar with Saturn as the solar system's ringed planet, with its enormous amount of dust and ice bits circling the giant planet. But Uranus, the next planet out from the Sun, hosts an impressive ring system as well. The seventh planet was the first discovered telescopically instead of with unaided eyes, and it was astronomer extraordinaire William Herschel who discovered Uranus March 13, 1781. Nearly two centuries passed before an infrared telescope aboard a military cargo aircraft revealed the planet had rings in 1977.<sup>1</sup>

Since that discovery, multiple observatories have revealed more details of Uranus and its ring system. Most recently, the NASA-led JWST space observatory captured the planet and its rings in detail. This recent image combines just 12 minutes of exposure in two filters to reveal 11 of the planet's 13 rings. Even some of the planet's atmospheric features are visible in this image. Even with advanced imaging like that from JWST, much of Uranus remains a mystery, including why it orbits the Sun on its side. This is because only one spacecraft has ever visited this planet: NASA's Voyager 2, which flew by the distant planet in the mid-1980s.<sup>2</sup>



Planetary scientists are hoping to change that soon, though. Scientists recommended in a [report](#) released last year from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine that Uranus be the focus on the next big planetary science spacecraft mission. Such a large-scale mission would gain insight into this icy giant planet and the similar solar system planet, Neptune.

*Uranus hosts 13 faint rings, 11 of which are visible in this JWST image. The planet was 19.67 times the Earth-Sun distance from our planet (1.83 billion miles) when JWST captured exposures through two near-Infrared filters on February 6, 2023. The white region in the right side of Uranus is one of the planet's polar caps. This icy world orbits the Sun differently from the rest of the solar system's planets – Uranus rolls along on its side. [NASA, ESA, CSA, STScI; Image Processing: Joseph DePasquale (STScI)]*

1 For more about the infrared scope, <https://web.archive.org/web/20230429120852/https://www.nasa.gov/vision/universe/watchtheskies/kuiper.html>

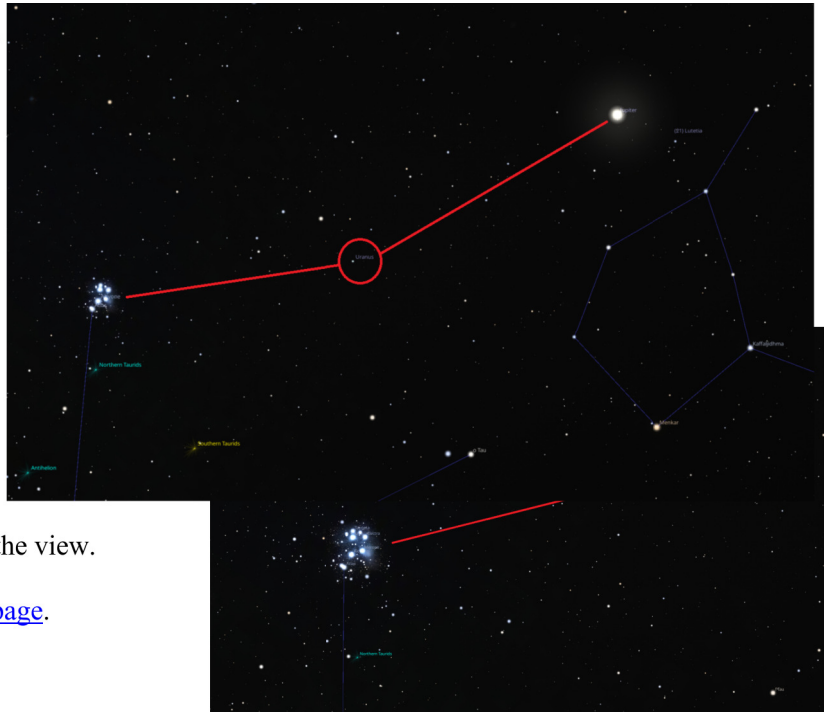
2 See more about the flyby at <https://www.nasa.gov/history/35-years-ago-voyager-2-explores-uranus/>

If you want to catch a view of Uranus with your own eyes, now is prime time to view it. This ice giant planet lies perfectly positioned in mid-November, at so-called “opposition,” when its position in its orbit places it on the other side of the Sun from Earth. That location means our star’s light reflects off Uranus’ icy atmosphere, and the planet appears as its brightest.

*Sky map picturing M45 and Uranus, Stellarium*

To find it, look overhead just after midnight on November 13. Uranus will lie about halfway between the brilliant planet Jupiter and the diffuse glow of the Pleiades star cluster (M45). While Uranus may look like a bright blinking star in the night sky, its blue-green hue gives away its identity. Binoculars or a telescope will improve the view.

For more about this oddball planet, visit NASA’s [Uranus page](#).



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## Star Party Schedule

Date	Arrival Time	Civil Dusk
Oct 13 2023	6:00 PM	18:44 EDT
Nov 10 2023	4:30 PM	17:07 EST
Dec 8 2023	4:30 PM	16:54 EST
Jan 5 2024	4:30 PM	17:09 EST
Feb 9 2024	5:00 PM	17:49 EST
Mar 8 2024	6:00 PM	18:22 EST
Apr 5 2024	7:30 PM	19:54 EDT
May 3 2024	8:00 PM	20:28 EDT

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## 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).