



February, 2024

Website: www.midhudsonastro.org

groups.io Group: [mhaa.groups.io](https://groups.io/g/mhaa)

President : Jack Chastain

Secretary: Jim Rockrohr

Newsletter Editor: Rick Versace

Publicity: Tim Denman

Speakers: Alexandra Passas(?)

Vice President: Dave Sherman

Treasurer: Eric Myers

Membership Coordinator: Eric Myers

Webmaster: Steve Dittmar

Outreach: Joe Macagne(?)

College Liaison: Dr. Amy Bartholomew

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



The next meeting is February 20th, 2024, on Zoom and in person. Check MeetUp for details and link. Zoom link will be sent to all those that RSVP.



February Speaker

SUNY New Paltz students present M101 Research

On Tuesday, February 20 at 8 PM, SUNY New Paltz students Stoker Stoker and Dylan Sczerba will report on their telescopic observations over the past year of a supernova in M101.

On May 19th, 2023, a star 21 million light-years away in the M101 galaxy went supernova, dying in a brilliant burst of light. With the blessing and advice of their advisor, Dr. Amy Bartholomew, the students used the resources of SUNY New Paltz's Smolen Observatory and techniques learned in their Observational Astronomy class to image this supernova,

named SN 2023ixf, in five different photometric filters on as many clear nights as they could over the course of six months. They then analyzed the 100+ images taken to produce light curves for SN 2023ixf that show how its brightness changed over time.

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Online link to the MHAAs monthly Business Meeting Agenda:

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

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"Astronomy at Lake Taghkanic State Park"

<http://spy-hill.net/myers/astro/ltsp/>

Thanks Eric Myers

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## Minutes of the monthly meeting of the Mid Hudson Astronomical Association, January 16, 2024

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 December meeting as published in the newsletter were unanimously approved.

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

**President:** Jack Chastain was present.

- Tech meeting Thursday, 1/18, at 8PM on Zoom. Contact Jack for more information.

**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.
- Will be renewing Google and MeetUp accounts.
- Annual Budget will be presented at the next meeting.
- Park permit renewal in progress.

**Outreach:** (need a coordinator)

- o No report
- o Eric mentioned that Phoebe Herratz is now a NASA SSA.

**Speakers:** Bart Henin was not present.

- Assistance would be appreciated.

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

- No new news.
- Renewal emails going out.

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

- Nothing to report.
- Moon mission is delayed to 2026.

**Webmaster:** Steve Dittmar was present

- No report
- Need to renew our Domain name soon.

### **Old Business:**

- Last club star party went well.
  - o Andromeda visible with naked eye.

### **New Business:**

- **Holiday party** – Cancelled for this year due to lack of coordinator.
- Lake Taghkanic park permit in progress.

### **Events:**

- **Club Star Party** – 2/9. Be sure to RSVP.
- **Life Long Learning class** – 8 weeks In April. Contact Jack

### **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 7:55 PM. There were 20 Zoom windows open at the end of the business meeting and approximately 6 people were in the auditorium. **The next meeting is February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, on Zoom and in person. Check MeetUp for details and link. Zoom link will be sent to all those that RSVP.**

The presentation that followed was “Telescopes 101”, a question and answer session aimed at new telescope owners.

Submitted by James Rockrohr, February 17, 2024.

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MHAA Treasurer’s Report for February 2024

As of 18 February 2024 we have \$3,822.08 in our bank account and \$2914.03 in our PayPal account, with the Treasurer holding \$73 in petty cash. Our monthly payment of \$32.44 for Google gSuite was paid on the 1st of the month, and \$15.99 was paid for Zoom on the 15th.

This month we paid \$812 for insurance for the coming year’s activities, and \$25 for NY State Parks stargazing permit. We also paid \$106.86 for 6 months of Meetup.com. In the past month we had 6 renewed membership, for \$149.86, and welcomed 3 new members, for \$75.66.

Next month I anticipate an expense of about \$170 for a finder, collimator, moon filter, and eyepiece for a club telescope that I have in my possession to get it ready to pass on to someone else.

As directed by the club by-laws, I will present a proposed budget for the coming year to be voted on at the February meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eric Myers
Treasurer

MHAA Membership Report for February 2024

As of 18 February J 2024 the club has 82 paid members in good standing, of which 4 are students. This month we gained 1 new member, with 8 renewals, while there are currently 10 lapsed memberships, of which 2 are long-time members who have not renewed in over a year, and 1 has only expired in the last month. There are 6 more memberships which will lapse in the next month if not renewed.

Our Slack workspace has 81 “regular” members, which does not include 31 deactivated accounts or 40 invitations sent out but not used. Of those 81 regular members, 29 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, which is for both members and non-members interested in our activities, now has 110 subscribers. We have over 2540 followers on our site on Meetup.com (they call them “members,” but they are not paid MHAA members). On Facebook our page has 1043 followers (in the United States — the few others are probably fake accounts), and our Instagram account has 131 followers.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eric Myers
Acting Membership Coordinator

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## MHAA Tech Session Notes

### Attendees:

Steve Dittmar  
Eric Myers  
Michael Goldstein  
Jack Chastain

### Agenda:

[18Jan2024.docx](#)

### Notes:

New Slack channel created: Tech. This channel may be used for notes and comments on items addressed by the Tech group.

Some agenda items discussed, others put off for later.

Main concentration of attendees was the need to get the Membership Database on the website up to an accurate level and checked for accuracy. To accomplish this, we need for Steve to allow a few of us the ability to add users (manually) to the DB. We are still working on that.

A “Treasurer's Dashboard” is needed, allowing the Treasurer (and also the Membership Coordinator, currently a single person but need to split this off) to quickly view status of members and other important items (such as Dues Paid in a particular term, etc?)

The above may require an addition to Wordpress, may require expense.

Web Page Maintenance may be able to be shared between Steve and a few other individuals, with Steve having overall responsibility. Michael will be looking over the site and making recommendations.

Schedule:

The group plans to meet every other week as needed. As of this writing, two meetings had to be moved out due to schedule conflicts. Open to a schedule re-arrangement from every other Thursday to accommodate the schedule that fits best with others.

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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 to find local clubs, events, and more!

Constant Companions: Circumpolar Constellations, Part I

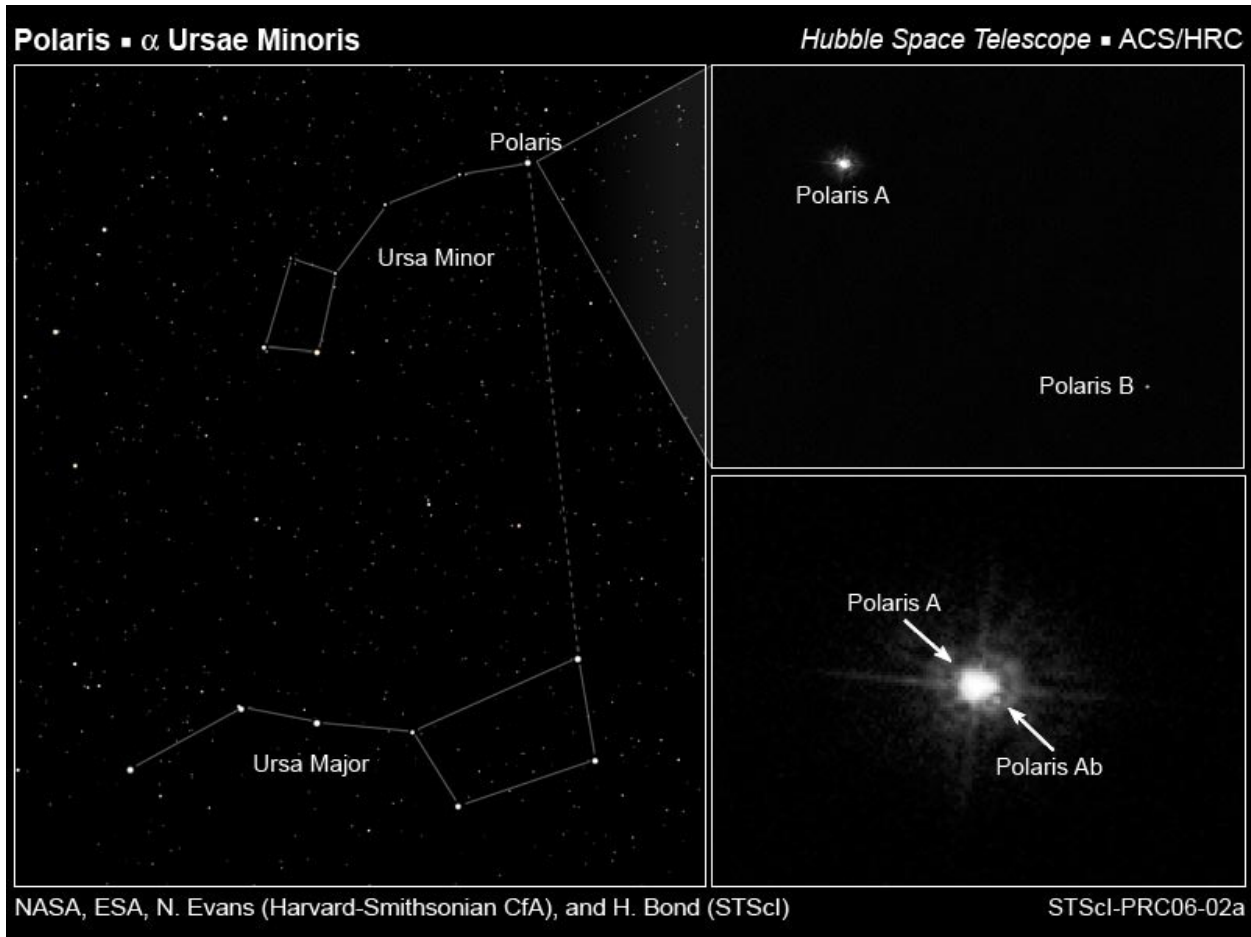
By Kat Troche

Winter in the northern hemisphere offers crisp, clear ([and cold!](#)) nights to stargazers, along with better views of several circumpolar constellations. What does circumpolar mean when referring to constellations? This word refers to constellations that surround the north and south celestial poles without ever falling below the horizon. Depending on your latitude, you will be able to see up to nine circumpolar constellations in the northern hemisphere. Today, we'll focus on three that have gems within: **Auriga, Cassiopeia, and Ursa Minor**. These objects can all be spotted with a pair of binoculars or a small to medium-sized telescope.



The counterclockwise circumpolar constellations Auriga, Cassiopeia, and Ursa Minor in the night sky, with four objects circled in yellow labeled: Pinwheel Cluster, Starfish Cluster, Owl Cluster, and Polaris. Credit: Stellarium Web

- **The Pinwheel Cluster:** Located near the edge of Auriga, this open star cluster is easy to spot with a pair of binoculars or small telescope. At just 25 million years old, it contains no red giant stars and looks similar to the Pleiades. To find this, draw a line between the stars Elnath in Taurus and Menkalinan in Auriga. You will also find the **Starfish Cluster** nearby.
- **The Owl Cluster:** Located in the 'W' or 'M' shaped constellation Cassiopeia, is the open star cluster known as the **Owl Cluster**. Sometimes referred to as the E.T. Cluster or Dragonfly Cluster, this group of stars never sets below the horizon and can be spotted with binoculars or a small telescope.



A black and white image from the Hubble Telescope of the Polaris star system, showing three stars: Polaris A, Ab, and Polaris B. Credit: NASA, ESA, N. Evans (Harvard-Smithsonian CfA), and H. Bond (STScI)

- **Polaris:** Did you know that [Polaris is a triple star system](#)? Look for the North Star on the edge of Ursa Minor, and with a medium-sized telescope, you should be able to separate two of the three stars. This star is also known as a [Cepheid variable star](#), meaning that it varies in brightness, temperature and diameter. It's the closest one of its kind to Earth, making it a great target for study and [conceptual art](#).

Up next, catch the King of the Planets before its gone for the season with our upcoming mid-month article on the [Night Sky Network](#) page through NASA's website!

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## Star Party Schedule

| Date        | Arrival Time | Civil Dusk |
|-------------|--------------|------------|
| Mar 8 2024  | 6:00 PM      | 18:21 EST  |
| Apr 5 2024  | 7:30 PM      | 19:53 EDT  |
| May 3 2024  | 8:00 PM      | 20:27 EDT  |
| Jun 7 2024  | 8:30 PM      | 21:02 EDT  |
| Jul 5 2024  | 8:30 PM      | 21:07 EDT  |
| Aug 2 2024  | 8:00 PM      | 20:43 EDT  |
| Aug 30 2024 | 7:30 PM      | 20:00 EDT  |
| Sep 27 2024 | 6:30 PM      | 19:10 EDT  |
| Nov 1 2024  | 5:30 PM      | 18:17 EDT  |

### 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).