



**June, 2024**

**Website:** [www.midhudsonastro.org](http://www.midhudsonastro.org)

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

**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

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**The next meeting is June 18<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.**

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### **June Speaker**

JNew York City astronomy writer and friendly neighborhood astronomer Irene Pease will present a talk "Into the Unknown: The Voyager Interstellar Mission"

Launched two generations ago, the Voyagers have become our most distant explorers, venturing into the unknown of interstellar space. Equipped with a suite of scientific instruments, and cutting-edge technology from the late 1970s, they embarked on a historic journey to explore the outer planets and beyond. From encounters with the giant planets that yielded groundbreaking discoveries, to their exits from the heliosphere, Voyager 1 and Voyager 2 have reshaped our understanding of the solar system and our cosmic origin.

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Online link to the MHAA 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, May 21, 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 April meeting as published in the newsletter with two corrections were unanimously approved.

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

**President:** Jack Chastain was present.

- The Tech meetings continue
  - Can now add members to web site.
  - There may still be some emails from the old system.
  - Web page updates
  - Trying to meet every 2 weeks

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

- Nothing to report.

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

- Nothing to report
- Thanks to Tim Denman for filling in at the April meeting.

**Publicity:** Tim Denman was present.

- Announcements in local paper.
- Albany Times Union will publicize our star parties, but not our monthly meetings in New Paltz: greater than 50 miles from Albany.

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

- (No report)
- Dates for the "next meeting" were wrong in the last newsletter.

**Treasurer:** Eric Myers was present.

- See latest newsletter for numbers.
- Google Suite cost going up a couple of dollars/month.
- Money is available in budget for fixing/upgrading club equipment and telescopes. See Eric with ideas.

**Outreach:** Mike Goldstein was present.

- No report

**Speakers:** Bart Henin was present.

- June and July are booked.
- Assistance would be appreciated.

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

- Needs some help.
- Migrating to new system.

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

- Willie resurrected the eclipse map from 2017.
  - o Add a pin if you saw the eclipse
- NASA Starliner launch postponed again. New date TBD.

**Webmaster:** Steve Dittmar was present

- Working on membership stuff.
- Adding a library tool for equipment, videos, etc.

### Old Business:

- Received a donation of a **Coulter Odyssey 8**. Dobson style mount.
- Also a **Teeter 10"**, **F4** Dobson with GPS, etc. It looks to be in good shape.
  - o See Jack if you're interested.
- **NEAF:** "Not too bad".
  - o Scott won a 4" Baader Solar Filter. He's donating it to the club since it doesn't fit any of his scopes.
  - o Tim won a nice pair of binoculars.
  - o Jack picked up some stuff for the club.
- Last **Walkway Over the Hudson:** Cloudy. Had 3-1/2 people from the club.
- **Last club star party** cancelled due to weather.
- **Canopus Lake** star party cancelled due to weather. To be rescheduled.

### New Business:

- o Next **Walkway Over the Hudson** event is 6/21. Meet at East Side at 7 PM for transportation.
- o **Club picnic** on 8/17. See Scott or Alex for details and to help.

### Events:

- **Club Star Party** – 6/7. Be sure to RSVP.
- **Girl Scouts** star party in Rhinebeck – 6/7. See Rick Versace.
- **Dragon Park at West Point** – 6/14. See Eric.
- **Walkway Over the Hudson** - 6/21. See Eric.
- **Birthday Event** – 6/22, Saugerties. See Jack.
- **Kingston Sailing Club** – date TBD. Evening event on the river. See Jack.
- **Canopus Lake** event to be rescheduled. See Rick Versace.

### 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:

- Auroras: Not too many members have seen them. Need camera to bring them out. Member pics will be posted as they come in.
- Active solar spot coming back around the sun may create more Auroras in the near future.

The business meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM. There were 21 Zoom windows open at the end of the business meeting and approximately 14 people were in the auditorium. **The next meeting is June 18<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 by Jack Chastain, President of MHAA, "Bad Science: Bad Astronomy".

Submitted by James Rockrohr, June 15, 2024.

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### **MHAA Treasurer's Report for June 2024**

As of 19 June 2024 we have \$4,334.48 in our bank account and \$2,837.51 in our PayPal account, with the Treasurer holding \$40 in petty cash. Our monthly payment for Google gSuite was again \$38.93 this month. We paid \$15.99 on the 15th for Zoom Pro for one month. This month we took in \$100.26 in dues for 4 renewing members, and \$24.60 for 1 new member. I have been informed by Meetup that the price for their services will be going up to \$178.99 every 6 months, starting with our next payment in July. This is an increase of \$72.13, or 67%.

There has been some discussion about the club purchasing a Seestar smart telescope, which costs about \$500. The annual budget we passed in March set a limit of \$300 on purchases of new equipment (and another \$300 for repairs). So far this fiscal year we have spent \$124.00 on new eyepieces for existing club equipment. This means that it will require a vote of the membership to approve such a purchase.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Eric Myers  
Treasurer

### **MHAA Membership Report for June 2024**

As of 16 June 2024 the club has 91 paid members in good standing, of which 5 are students. This month we gained 2 new members, one of them a student, with 4 renewals, while there are 9 lapsed memberships.

Last week Jack Chastain and I made more progress on using the new website for managing membership, including adding or updating member data to the database there. (Right now the main membership list is kept in a spreadsheet on our Google site.). We still need to understand how to allow people to either renew membership on-line or off-line, and how new members can join either on-line or off-line. We also need to understand how to deal with some members using auto-renew and others renewing manually every year. Some members may get an email about creating an account on the website, though we are trying to migrate existing members to the site without requiring them to do anything. If you get such an email and have any questions please contact me. We have about half of the list of members migrated to the new database, and the other half will go over quickly.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Eric Myers  
Acting Membership Coordinator

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## New Telescope

MHAA has received a beautiful Unitron 142 Refractor from Paul Klymko. The scope (mostly assembled after receipt, just to see what it was like) is shown, less one "auxiliary" OTA (visible in the garage) and the super-cool UNIHDX eyepiece holder/selector (I didn't yet know how that worked!).

This scope is complete, including an older style GEM mount, tripod, hex-style eyepiece holder (just rotate in the desired eyepiece!) and I can't wait to have a look through it when the clouds finally clear up. Maybe I will take it out soon for a solar image, as it has a solar projection kit as well.

Thank you, Paul, for an outstanding addition to our MHAA Telescope collection!



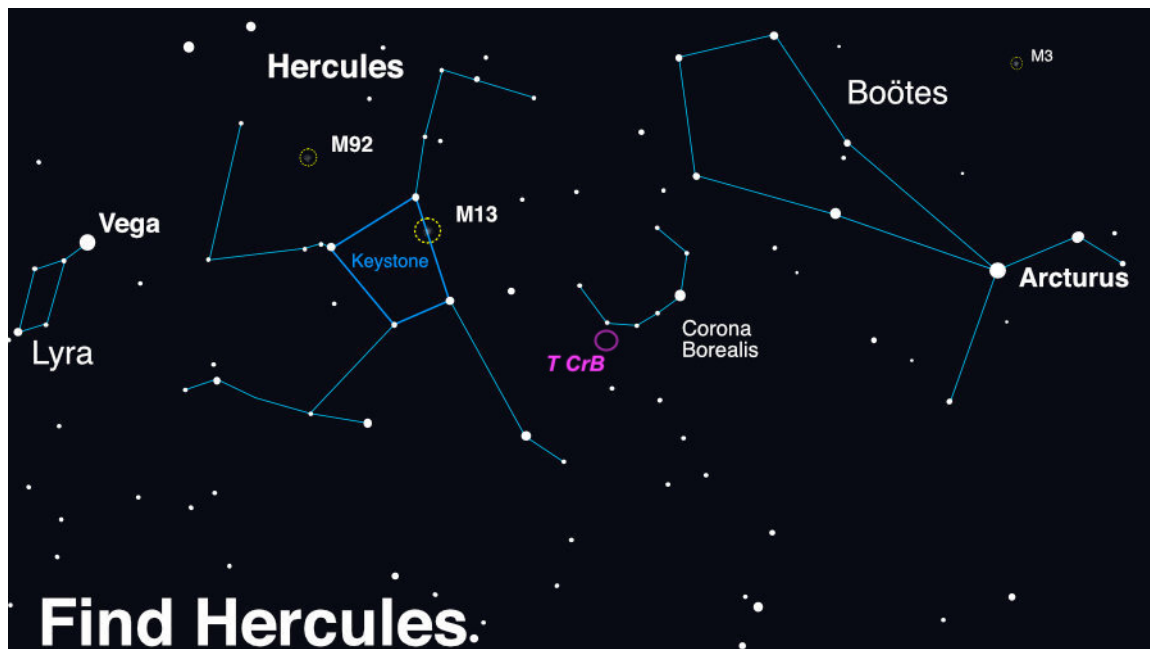
This article is distributed by NASA's Night Sky Network (NSN).

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!

## July's Night Sky Notes: A Hero, a Crown, and Possibly a Nova!

By Vivian White

High in the summer sky, the constellation Hercules acts as a centerpiece for late-night stargazers. At the center of Hercules is the "Keystone," a near-perfect square shape between the bright stars Vega and Arcturus that is easy to recognize and can serve as a guidepost for some amazing sights. While not the brightest stars, the shape of the hero's torso, like a smaller Orion, is nearly directly overhead after sunset. Along the edge of this square, you can find a most magnificent jewel - the Great Globular Cluster of Hercules, also known as [Messier 13](#).



Look up after sunset during summer months to find Hercules! Scan between Vega and Arcturus, near the distinct pattern of Corona Borealis. Once you find its stars, use binoculars or a telescope to hunt down the globular clusters M13 (and a smaller globular cluster M92). If you enjoy your views of these globular clusters, you're in luck - look for another great globular, M3, in the nearby constellation of Boötes. Image created with assistance from Stellarium: stellarium.org

Globular clusters are a tight ball of very old stars, closer together than stars near us. These clusters orbit the center of our Milky Way like tight swarms of bees. One of the most famous short stories, [Nightfall](#) by Isaac Asimov, imagines a civilization living on a planet within one of these star clusters. They are surrounded by so many stars so near that it is always daytime except for once every millennium, when a special alignment (including a solar eclipse) occurs, plunging their planet into darkness momentarily. The sudden night reveals so many stars that it drives the inhabitants mad.

Back here on our home planet Earth, we are lucky enough to experience [skies full of stars](#), a beautiful [Moon](#), and regular [eclipses](#). On a clear night this summer, take time to look up into the Keystone of Hercules and follow this sky chart to the Great Globular Cluster of Hercules. A pair of binoculars will show a faint, fuzzy patch, while a small telescope will resolve some of the stars in this globular cluster.



A red giant star and white dwarf orbit each other in this animation of a nova similar to T Coronae Borealis. The red giant is a large sphere in shades of red, orange, and white, with the side facing the white dwarf the lightest shades. The white dwarf is hidden in a bright glow of white and yellows, which represent an accretion disk around the star. A stream of material, shown as a diffuse cloud of red, flows from the red giant to the white dwarf. When the red giant moves behind the white dwarf, a nova explosion on the white dwarf ignites, creating a ball of ejected nova material shown in pale orange. After the fog of material clears, a small white spot remains, indicating that the white dwarf has survived the explosion. NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center

*Bonus!* Between Hercules and the ice-cream-cone-shaped Boötes constellation, you'll find the small constellation Corona Borealis, shaped like the letter "C." Astronomers around the world are watching T Coronae Borealis, also known as the "Blaze Star" in this constellation closely because it is [predicted to go nova sometime this summer](#). There are only 5 known nova stars in the whole galaxy. It is a rare observable event and you can take part in the fun! The Astronomical League has issued a [Special Observing Challenge](#) that anyone can participate in. Just make a sketch of the constellation now (you won't be able to see the nova) and then make another sketch once it goes nova.

Tune into our mid-month article on the [Night Sky Network](#) page, as we prepare for the Perseids! Keep looking up!

## Star Party Schedule

| Date        | Arrival Time | Civil Dusk |
|-------------|--------------|------------|
| 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  |
| Nov 29 2024 | 4:30 PM      | 16:55 EST  |
| Dec 27 2024 | 4:30 PM      | 17:01 EST  |
| Jan 24 2025 | 5:00 PM      | 17:29 EST  |
| Feb 28 2025 | 5:30 PM      | 18:11 EST  |

### 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).