



## October, 2024

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

**President :** Jack Chastain  
**Secretary:** Jim Rockrohr  
**Newsletter Editor:** Rick Versace  
**Publicity:** Tim Denman  
**Speakers:** Bart Henin

**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:** Michael Goldstein  
**College Liaison:** Dr. Amy Bartholomew

The next meeting is October 15<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.

### October Speaker

#### “Astrospheric ”

Steve Dittmar of the Mid-Hudson Astronomical Association

Planning a night for stargazing can be tough in the Northeastern US. We often find ourselves at the mercy of some of the 4 or 5 different types of air masses that take turns mixing over top of us, not to mention the complications introduced by the Catskills and Adirondacks, the jet stream, lake effect, and even forest fires from thousands of miles away. General weather apps focus on answering simple everyday questions: Do I need an umbrella? Will I need a jacket? Few organize a one-screen view of the variety of data that is useful for astronomy at the depth and resolution you want for it to be applicable to the random remote locations you might travel to. Enter, Astrospheric.

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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/itsp/>

Thanks Eric Myers

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**Minutes of the monthly meeting of the Mid Hudson Astronomical Association,  
September 17, 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 August meeting as published in the newsletter were unanimously approved with the following changes:

- Meetup is now \$184.00 for 6 months
- Google is \$31.14 per month
- Seestar telescope came with a tripod and case. Additional items purchased for the new Seestar telescope include:
  - a solar filter,
  - lens cover, and
  - 2” filter holder.

**Officer’s Reports:**

**President:** Jack Chastain was present.

- Nothing to report.

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

- Nothing to report.

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

- Nothing to report.

**Publicity:** Tim Denman was present.

- Still working to get announcements into the Albany Times Union.

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

- (No report).

**Treasurer:** Eric Myers was present.

- See newsletter for latest numbers.
- Received a \$200 donation (minus PayPal 3% fee) from Wildflower Farms.

**Outreach:** Mike Goldstein was present.

- Working with **Olana** for a star party on 11/22 (11/23 rain date) and a winter solstice event on 12/21 from 1-4 PM. Expect 30-40 people. Need at least 3 solar scopes.
- Working with **Catskill Visitor Center** in Mount Tremper for a sun/star party in October.
- Possible star party with school on 12/3.

**Speakers:** Bart Henin was present.

- October will be Steve Dittmar on the Astrospheric App.
- Speakers booked through January.

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

- Needs some help.
- 2 new members, no renewals this month.
- Membership transferred to new web system.

**Solar System Ambassador:** Willie Yee was not present.

- (No report.)

**Webmaster:** Steve Dittmar was present

- Starting on Version 2.0 of web site.
- Tech meeting next Thursday.

### Old Business:

- **Last club star party** was cancelled due to weather.
- **Innesfree star party** had a good turnout and a pretty good sky. 4 telescopes.
- **IOMN at SUNY** had a very good turnout
  - Lots of students and kids.
  - The Smolen telescope was resurrected.
  - Lots of Dobs.
- Several **impromptu astro-photo group events** at Lake Taghkanic.
  - Members only.

### New Business:

- **Peak Lunar eclipse** on September 17.
- **Club elections** at December meeting.
  - Need a nominating committee appointed at October meeting.

### Events:

- **Next club star party** – 9/27. Remember to RSVP.
- **Olana** - 11/22. See Mike Goldstein.
- **Saugerties High School** – 12/6, see Jack
- **Olana Sun party** – 12/21 (Sunday), see Mike Goldstein.
- **Sam's Point** – date TBD.
- **Kingston Sailing Club** – date TBD. Evening event on the river. See Jack.

### Reminders:

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

### Observing Reports:

- (none mentioned)

The business meeting was adjourned at 8:01 PM. There were 19 Zoom windows open at the end of the business meeting and approximately 10 people were in the auditorium. **The next meeting is October 15<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 presentations that followed were by Eric Myers: “Seestar Telescope”, and Joe Rao, AMS, NWA, and Meteorologist at the Hayden Planetarium: “A Comet is Coming! (Maybe)”.

Submitted by James Rockrohr, October 13, 2024.

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### **MHAA Treasurer’s Report for October 2024**

As of 14 October 2024 we have \$4,725.98 in our bank account and \$2607.52 in our PayPal account, with the Treasurer holding \$37.00 in petty cash. This month we took in \$50.44 in dues for 2 new members, and \$74.20 in dues for 3 renewing members. Our monthly payment for Google gSuite was again \$31.14 this month, and we will pay \$15.99 on the 15th for Zoom Pro for one month.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Eric Myers  
Treasurer

### **MHAA Membership Report for October 2024**

As of 14 October 2024 the club has 108 members in good standing, of which 3 are students. This month we gained 3 new memberships, with 3 membership renewals. The membership roster is now entirely maintained within the new database.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Eric Myers  
Acting Membership Coordinator

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

## October's Night Sky Notes: Catch Andromeda Rising!

By Dave Prosper

Updated by Kat Troche

If you're thinking of a galaxy, the image in your head is probably the Andromeda Galaxy! Studies of this massive neighboring galaxy, also called M31, have played an incredibly important role in shaping modern astronomy. As a bonus for stargazers, the Andromeda Galaxy is also a beautiful sight.



Have you heard that all the stars you see at night are part of our Milky Way galaxy? While that is mostly true, one star-like object located near the border between the constellations of Andromeda and Cassiopeia appears fuzzy to unaided eyes. That's because it's not a star, but the Andromeda Galaxy, its trillion stars appearing to our eyes as a 3.4 magnitude patch of haze. Why so dim? Distance! It's outside our galaxy, around 2.5 million light years distant - so far away that the light you see left M31's stars when our earliest ancestors figured out stone tools. Binoculars show more detail: M31's bright core stands out, along with a bit of its wispy, saucer-shaped disc. Telescopes bring out greater detail but often can't view the entire galaxy at once. Depending on the quality of your skies and your magnification, you may be able to make out individual globular clusters, structure, and at least two of its orbiting dwarf galaxies: M110 and M32. Light pollution and thin clouds, smoke, or haze will severely hamper observing fainter detail, as they will for any "faint fuzzy." Surprisingly, persistent stargazers can still spot M31's core from areas of moderate light pollution as long as skies are otherwise clear.

*Spot the Andromeda Galaxy! M31's more common name comes from its parent constellation, which becomes prominent as autumn arrives in the Northern Hemisphere. Surprising amounts of detail can be observed with unaided eyes when seen from dark sky sites. Hints of it can even be made out from light polluted areas. Use the Great Square of Pegasus or the Cassiopeia constellation as guides to find it. Credit: Stellarium Web*

Modern astronomy was greatly shaped by studies of the Andromeda Galaxy. A hundred years ago, the idea that there were other galaxies beside our own was not widely accepted, and so M31 was called the "Andromeda Nebula." Increasingly detailed observations of M31 caused astronomers to question its place in our universe – was M31 its own "island universe," and not part of our Milky Way? Harlow Shapley and Heber Curtis engaged in the "Great Debate" of 1920 over its nature. Curtis argued forcefully from his observations of dimmer than expected nova, dust lanes, and other oddities that the "nebula" was in fact an entirely different galaxy from our own. A few years later, Edwin Hubble, building on Henrietta Leavitt's work on Cepheid variable stars as a "standard candle" for distance measurement, concluded that M31 was indeed another galaxy after he observed Cepheids in photos of



Andromeda, and estimated M31's distance as far outside our galaxy's boundaries. And so, the Andromeda Nebula became known as the Andromeda Galaxy.

While M31's disc appears larger than you might expect (about 3 Moon widths wide), its "galactic halo" of scattered stars and gas is much, much larger – as you can see here. In fact, it is suspected that its halo is so huge that it may already mingle with our Milky Way's own halo, which makes sense since our galaxies are expected to merge sometime in the next few billion years! The dots are quasars, objects located behind the halo, which are the very energetic cores of distant galaxies powered by black holes at their center. The Hubble team studied the



composition of M31's halo by measuring how the quasars' light was absorbed by the halo's material. Credits: NASA, ESA, and E. Wheatley (STScI)

These discoveries inspire astronomers to this day, who continue to observe M31 and many other galaxies for hints about the nature of our universe. One of the Hubble Space Telescope's longest-running observing campaigns was a study of M31: the Panchromatic Hubble Andromeda Treasury (PHAT). Dig into NASA's latest discoveries about the Andromeda Galaxy, on their [Messier 31](#) page.

*Originally posted by Dave Prosper: September 2021  
Last Updated by Kat Troche: September 2024*

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## 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).