# MHAA

## Mid-Hudson Astronomical Association

# February, 2025

**Website:** www.midhudsonastro.org

**groups.io Group:** mhaa.groups.io

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

**Vice President:** Dave Sherman
**Treasurer:** Eric Myers
**Membership Coordinator:** TBD
**Webmaster:** Steve Dittmar
**Outreach:** Michael Goldstein
**College Liaison:** Dr. Amy Bartholomew

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

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**The next meeting is February 18th, 2025, 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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## February Speaker

**"Dark Skies in the Mid-Hudson Valley and Catskills"**

MHAA member Michael Goldstein will present a talk to members and the public about his recent efforts to identify and catalog dark sky locations in the area that are accessible to local astronomers.

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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/

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# Minutes of the monthly meeting of the Mid Hudson Astronomical Association, January 21, 2025

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 passed unanimously with the correction that Willie Yee WAS present.

**Officer's Reports:**

**President:** Jack Chastain was present.
- "We are NOT a 501(c)3 organization."
  - Per Jack's interpretation.
  - Need to submit a 1023 EZ form and pay a fee.
  - We are 95% of the way there.
- Do we want to change from Slack for club communications?
  - Slack is changing the rules.
  - Will only hold data for 90 days.
  - Other options are "Noysi" and "Discord".
  - Let Jack or Eric know your thoughts.

**Vice President:** Dave Sherman was present.
- Nothing to report.

**Recording Secretary:** Jim Rockrohr was present.
- Nothing to report.

**Publicity:** Tim Denman was not present.
- (No report).

**Newsletter:** Rick Versace was not present.
- (No report).

**Treasurer:** Eric Myers was present.
- See newsletter for latest numbers. Doing fine.
- Per the Bylaws the 2025 budget will be presented next month.
  - The 2024 budget is in the newsletter for reference.
  - Should we add some projects? Suggestions:
    - Purchase a Seestar S50 to lend out to members?
    - Start a project to lend a Seestar S50 to libraries along with training?
    - Buying and installing a weather station at Lake Taghkanic that can be accessed remotely.

**Outreach:** Mike Goldstein was present.
- Olana **star party** on 1/31/2025 (cloud date 2/1), 6-10 PM. See Mike.

**Speakers:** Bart Henin was present.
- February: Mike Goldstein: "Dark Skies in the Mid Hudson Region and Catskills."

- March: “PiFinder”
- Others booked to July.

**Membership:** Eric Myers (acting) was present
- Needs help.
- Now have a subscription option for membership.

**Solar System Ambassador:** Willie Yee was present.
- Night Sky Network outreach awards for 2024:
  - Eric Myers
  - Jack Chastain
  - Steve Dittmar
  - Rick Versace
  - Willie Yee
- FYI JPL did not burn down in the LA fires.
  - 100 JPL people lost their homes, however.

**Webmaster:** Steve Dittmar was present
- Normal maintenance and updates.
- Calendar needs work (see the January Newsletter).

**Old Business:**
- **Last club star party** – short meeting but good sky.

**New Business:**
- (none brought up)

**Events:**
- (Not discussed at this meeting.)

**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:**
- Lunar occultation of Mars on January 13.

The business meeting was adjourned at 8:01 PM. There were 10 Zoom windows open at the end of the business meeting and approximately 10 people were in the auditorium. **The next meeting is February 18th, 2025, 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 member Scott Ewart: “My Adventures in Telescope Making.”

Submitted by James Rockrohr, February 15, 2025.

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## MHAA Treasurer’s Report for February 2025

As of 116 February 2025 we have $5,831.72 in our bank account and $2,840.45 in our PayPal account, with the Treasurer holding $50.00 in petty cash. Our monthly payment for Google gSuite on the first of the month was again $31.14, and we paid $15.99 on the 15th for Zoom Pro for one month.

This month we took in $173.00 in dues for 7 renewing members and $24.60 for one new member, along with $25.00 for a sweatshirt. We received a donation of $100 from a teacher who commended us for our participation in an event at Cairo-Dunham schools, and we received $750 after participating in a daytime solstice event at Olana on December 21st.

At this month's business meeting I will present a proposed budget for the next fiscal year, starting with a base budget for continued operations, and then potential added projects for the new year.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eric Myers
Treasurer

## MHAA Membership Report for February 2025

As of 16 February 2025 the club has 103 members in good standing, of which 3 are students Since the last report there have been 7 membership renewals, and 1 new members has joined us. The new process of having people join via our website is working well.

We have 120 people subscribed to our email list at mhaa.groups.io, which includes both current and expired members, along with other friends of the club who want to keep up on what we do but are not members. We have 2793 "members" on Meetup.com who follow us there to keep up on the events we announce there, primarily the monthly meetings and star parties, but also other public events that we post there. We have 1125 followers for our Facebook page (US only). We have 221 followers of our Instagram account (where we have not posted anything for many months).

Respectfully Submitted,
Eric Myers
Acting Membership Coordinator

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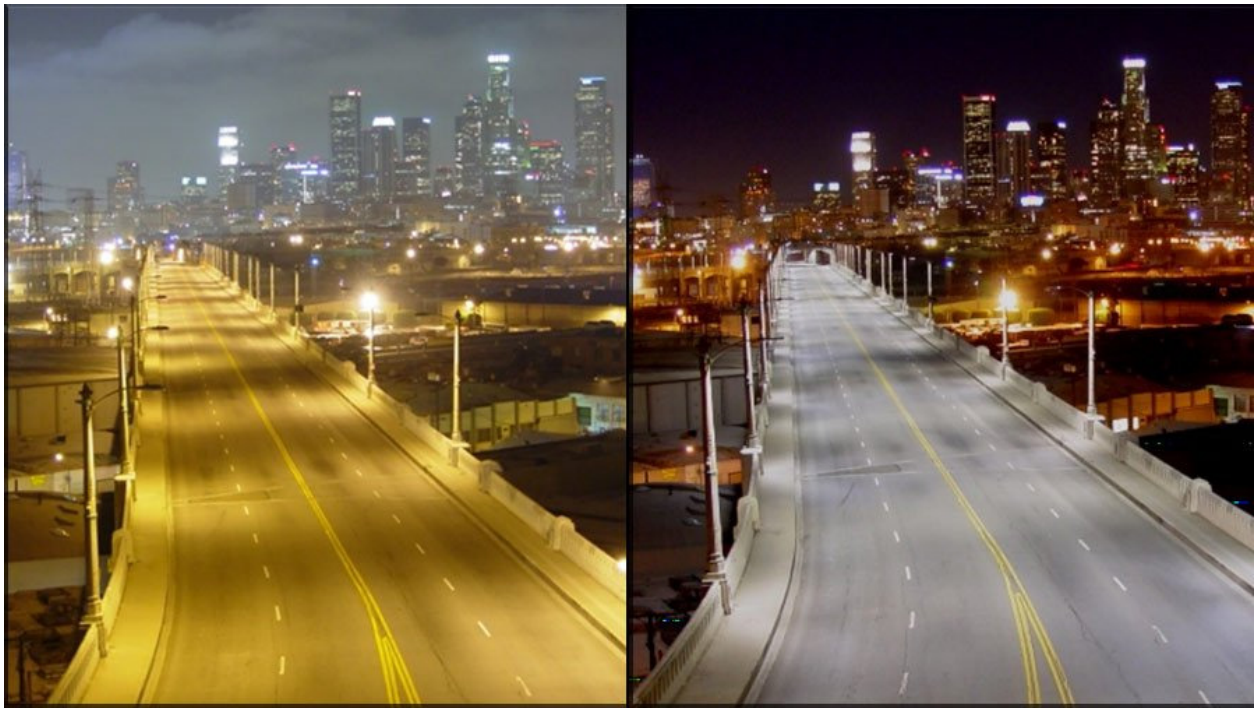
**This article is distributed by NASA's Night Sky Network (NSN).**
The NSN program supports astronomy clubs across the USA dedicated to astronomy outreach. Visit nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov to find local clubs, events, and more!

By Dave Prosper
Updated by Kat Troche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Before and after pictures of replacement lighting at the 6th Street Bridge over the Los Angeles River. The second picture shows improvements in some aspects of light pollution, as light is not directed to the sides and upwards from the upgraded fixtures, reducing skyglow. However, it also shows the use of brighter, whiter LEDs, which is not generally ideal, along with increased light bounce back from the road. Image Credit: The City of Los Angeles

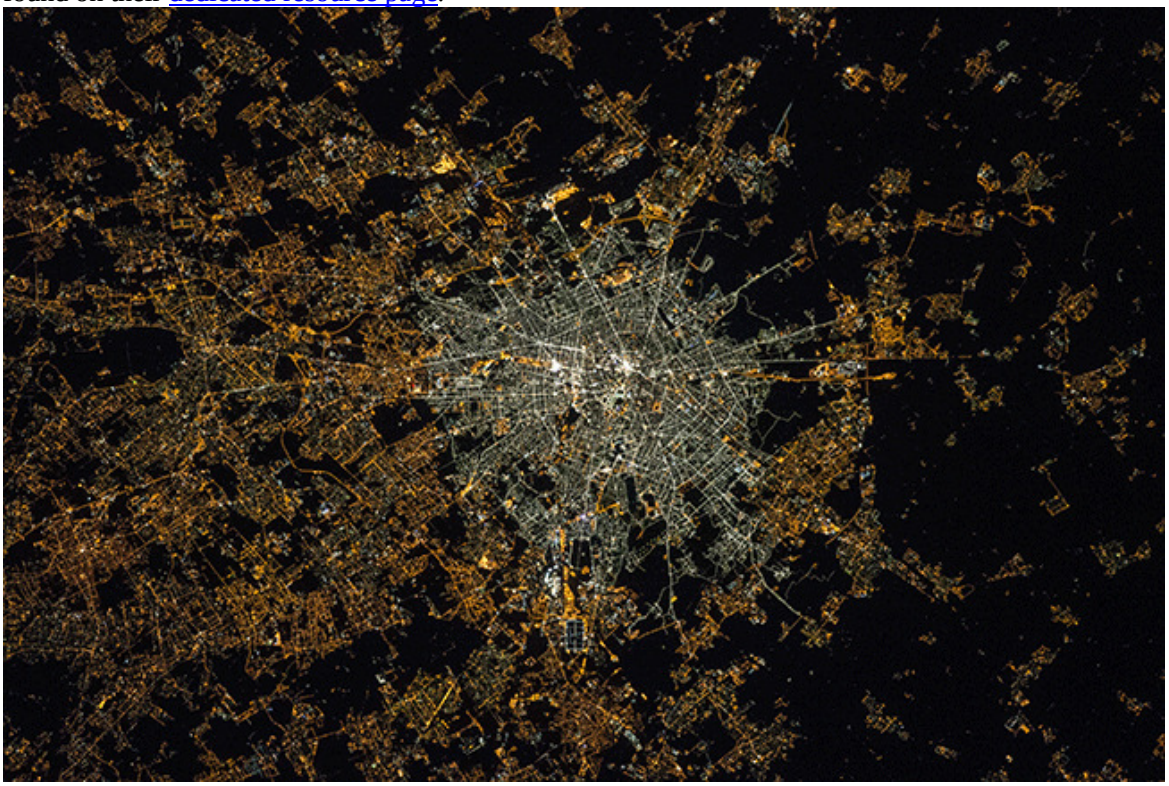
Light pollution has long troubled astronomers, who generally shy away from deep sky observing under full Moon skies. The natural light from a bright Moon floods the sky and hides views of the Milky Way, dim galaxies and nebula, and shooting stars. In recent years, human-made light pollution has dramatically surpassed the interference of even a bright full Moon, and its effects are now noticeable to a great many people outside of the astronomical community. Harsh, bright white LED streetlights, while often more efficient and long-lasting, often create unexpected problems for communities replacing their older streetlamps. Some notable concerns are increased glare and light trespass, less restful sleep, and disturbed nocturnal wildlife patterns. There is increasing awareness of just how much light is too much light at night. You don't need to give in to despair over encroaching light pollution; you can join efforts to measure it, educate others, and even help stop or reduce the effects of light pollution in your community.

Amateur astronomers and potential citizen scientists around the globe are invited to participate in the Globe at Night (GaN) program to measure light pollution. Measurements are taken by volunteers on a few scheduled days every month and submitted to their database to help create a comprehensive map of light pollution and its change over time. GaN volunteers can take and submit measurements using multiple methods ranging from low-tech naked-eye observations to high-tech sensors and smartphone apps.

Globe at Night citizen scientists can use the following methods to measure light pollution and submit their results:

- Their own smartphone camera and dedicated app
- Manually measure light pollution using their own eyes and detailed charts of the constellations
- A dedicated light pollution measurement device called a Sky Quality Meter (SQM).
- The free GaN web app from any internet-connected device (which can also be used to submit their measurements from an SQM or printed-out star charts)

Night Sky Network members joined a telecon with Connie Walker of Globe at Night in 2014 and had a lively discussion about the program's history and how they can participate. The audio of the telecon, transcript, and links to additional resources can be found on their dedicated resource page.



Light pollution has been visible from space for a long time, but new LED lights are bright enough that they stand out from older streetlights, even from orbit. Astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti took the above photo from the ISS cupola in 2015. The newly installed white LED lights in the center of the city of Milan are noticeably brighter than the lights in the surrounding neighborhoods. Image Credit: NASA/ESA

The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) has long been a champion in the fight against light pollution and a proponent of smart lighting design and policy. Their website provides many resources for amateur astronomers and other like-minded people to help communities understand the negative impacts of light pollution and how smart lighting policies can not only help bring the stars back to their night skies but also make their streets safer by using smarter lighting with less glare. Communities and individuals find that their nighttime lighting choices can help save considerable sums of money when they decide to light their streets and homes "smarter, not brighter" with shielded, directional lighting, motion detectors, timers, and even choosing the proper "temperature" of new LED light replacements to avoid the harsh "pure white" glare that many new streetlamps possess. Their pages on community advocacy and on how to choose dark-sky-friendly lighting are extremely helpful and full of great information. There are even local chapters of the IDA in many communities made up of passionate advocates of dark skies.

The IDA has notably helped usher in "Dark Sky Places", areas around the world that are protected from light pollution. "Dark Sky Parks", in particular, provide visitors with incredible views of the Milky Way and are perfect places to spot the wonders of a meteor shower. These parks also perform a very important function, showing the public the wonders of a truly dark sky to many people who may have never before even seen a handful of stars in the sky, let alone the full glorious spread of the Milky Way.

More research into the negative effects of light pollution on the health of humans and the environment is being conducted than ever before. Watching the nighttime light slowly increase in your neighborhood, combined with reading so much bad news, can indeed be disheartening! However, as awareness of light pollution and its negative effects increases, more people are becoming aware of the problem and want to be part of the solution. There is even an episode of PBS Kid's SciGirls where the main characters help mitigate light pollution in their neighborhood!

Astronomy clubs are uniquely situated to help spread awareness of good lighting practices in their local communities to help mitigate light pollution. Take inspiration from Tucson, Arizona, and other dark sky-friendly communities that have adopted good lighting practices. Tucson even reduced its skyglow by 7% (as of 2018) after its own citywide lighting conversion, proof that communities can bring the stars back with smart lighting choices.

*Originally posted by Dave Prosper: November 2018*
*Last Updated by Kat Troche: January 2025*

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## Star Party Schedule

| Date | Arrival Time | Civil Dusk |
|---|---|---|
| Jan 24 2025 | 5:00 PM | 17:29 EST |
| Feb 28 2025 | 5:30 PM | 18:11 EST |
| Mar 28 2025 | 7:00 PM | 19:44 EDT |
| Apr 25 2025 | 7:30 PM | 20:17 EDT |
| May 23 2025 | 8:00 PM | 20:49 EDT |
| Jun 20 2025 | 8:30 PM | 21:08 EDT |
| Jul 25 2025 | 8:30 PM | 20:53 EDT |
| Aug 22 2025 | 7:30 PM | 20:14 EDT |
| Sep 19 2025 | 7:00 PM | 19:25 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 Taghanic 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 ticketted 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.