



West Valley Astronomy Club

Virtual & Physical Combination Monthly Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2021

Location of Meeting: Online Zoom Meeting

Board Members & Volunteers Present: Bob Randle (President), John Cline (Vice President), John Hiatt (Secretary), Bob Colvert (Treasurer), Janie Randle (Membership Director), Debbie Bleikamp (Contest Director) Paul Bleikamp (Events Director), along with other volunteers, club members and visitors (27 in total).

The regular meeting of WVAC was called to order at 7:00 pm by Bob Randle

1 - Opening Remarks: Bob Culvert Introduced himself and thanked everyone in attendance. He then presented a brief agenda for the talk.

2 - Introduction: Bob Colvert introduced the Speaker, Will Oldroyd. Will is a graduate student at NAU studying Astronomy and Planetary Science. He grew up in Provo, Utah and graduated from Brigham Young University in Physics and Astronomy with minors in Math, Geology, and Spanish. Will's main research focuses on searching for a mysterious undiscovered giant planet—called Planet X—hidden in the distant outer solar system. Some of the most exciting parts of this research are using supercomputers to visualize how the planets are connected through gravity and using some of the biggest telescopes on Earth (or off of it) to discover new worlds. When he's finished with school, Will plans on becoming a professor so he can continue studying the universe and share new discoveries with others. In his spare time, Will enjoys hiking and playing board games with his wife and son.

After giving a brief history of astronomy, Will discussed in detail the "GAP" between Pluto and the Kuiper Belt objects and some of the most distant dwarf planets discovered. The GAP is a primary focus of his research, using computer simulations of orbital interactions to try to pin down the location of Planet "X" in our solar system. The animations presented in the talk were very helpful. After its discovery, a flyby to Planet X similar to the mission to Pluto could take between 50 to 300 years.

3 - Club Business: Bob Randle mentioned that Mary Anne Balzer was doing a great job on getting members to pay their dues for 2021. Also, the club currently has 63 paid members. Mary Anne mentioned that we now have some out of state members that are enjoying the online presentations!

4 - Upcoming Club Activities. The next Star Party is Saturday, February 13th, sunset is at 6:11 pm. If you are interested in attending, check for updates at the WVAC website:
<https://wvac.net/events/star-party>

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Minutes submitted by John Hiatt, via email on February 2, 2021.

Minutes approved by: _____ Date _____
Bob Randle (WVAC President)