

West Valley Astronomy Club

Monthly Meeting Minutes

Feb 6, 2024

Meeting Location: Beardsley Recreation Center - 12755 W Beardsley Rd, Sun City West, AZ 85375 - #1 Chicory Room

Board Members & Volunteers Present: Bob Randle (President), Paul Bleikamp (Vice President), Bob Colvert (Treasurer & Program Director), John Hiatt (Outreach Director), Janie Randle (Membership Director), Peggy Ann Tweedy (Hospitality Director), Larry Matney (Star Party Coordinator), Amin Patani (Astro-photography Leader), Bud and Betsy Johnson (Secretary), along with other volunteers, club members and visitors (**= 56 total present**).

1 - Opening Remarks: The regular meeting of WVAC was called to order at 7:00 pm by President Bob Randle, who thanked everyone in attendance.

2 - Speaker: Bob Colvert introduced tonight's speaker, Dr. Charles J. Law, who is a postdoctoral researcher and NASA Sagan Fellow at the University of Virginia, having previously completed both his undergraduate studies and PhD in Astrophysics at Harvard University. He uses observations from radio telescopes such as ALMA (Atacama Large Millimeter Array) to characterize the chemical environments in which young planets are forming. He explained how protoplanetary disks form from clouds of gases collapsing due to gravity, which become planets by collecting dust (From Dust to Pebbles to Planetesimals to Planets!). Eventually, all gas and dust is gone, and a star has its family of planets. In the last 20 years, exoplanet detections have risen to 5000+, because of the use of interferometry and millimeter wavelengths. Another advance for research, the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) can see the gases around Earth-like planets and complex molecules, using infrared techniques.

3 - Bob Randle gave Larry Matney and Cori Charles their awards for their help in the Club. Tonight there were 2 new members, Craig and Ron; and 3 visitors, Lorena, Robert, and Greg.

4 - The solar telescope is in Janie and Bob's home; there has been no sun, so no looking. This telescope can be used by members after training.

5 - The door prize tonight is a group of nice astronomy magazines – a revolving prize, to be returned to the Club for re-use!

6 – There are now 87 paid members in the Club. Bob asked the members to tell other members who haven't yet paid their dues to please do so.

7 - Other Business: Tonight at 5:30 there was an Astro-Imaging meeting before the regular WVAC meeting. There will be a WVAC Star Party this Saturday, so check this site; we will keep you posted if the rains make it too muddy.

8 – Future Outreach Activities : Two Solar Views – March 19 and March 23, at the Peoria Library. There will be a Star Party at the Surprise Regional Library on April 15. John said that already they have had 75 volunteer hours and 400 attendees!

9 – The next meeting will be March 5 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Minutes submitted by Bud & Betsy Johnson, via email on February 7, 2024

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