



# West Valley Astronomy Club

Monthly Meeting Minutes

**May 7, 2024 Picnic/Potluck**

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

The potluck started at 6 pm in the meeting room. The Club's Lunt Hydrogen Alpha solar telescope with a Helio Find tracker was set up in the parking lot for all to take a look. While we ate, we enjoyed a slide show of members' pictures of the Solar Eclipse in April. Bob had also included images of the SpaceX flight, which were visible here at the last Star Party, 30 seconds after launch out of California. He also showed a video of the ISS streaking across the sun!

**1 - Opening Remarks:** This, the last regular meeting of WVAC until September, was called to order at 7:00 pm by President Bob Randle. (Total present: 50)

**2 - First Speaker:** John Hiatt, Outreach Director, explained that there is a binary star system located in the Corona Borealis Constellation, which has a recurring Nova in the Milky Way Galaxy (last seen about 80 years ago!) The binary system includes a white dwarf and an aging red giant star. The red giant casts off its rays directly on the orbiting white dwarf, resulting in a thermonuclear blast which will be visible to the naked eye. In September, WVAC will make an email announcement as to approximately when the Nova will peak in brightness, and members may gather in the parking lot at Beardsley to observe it.

**3 - Second Speaker:** Kevin Schindler on Lowell Observatory's new Kemper Foundation Astronomy Discovery Center (ADC). Mr. Schindler gave a history of Lowell Observatory, beginning in 1894. Lowell has been prominent in research studies, star motion studies, mapping on the moon with Apollo astronauts, to name a few. Pluto was discovered in 1930 at Lowell Observatory; there is still a move to have Pluto be the "Official Planet of the State of Arizona!" The ADC was started a few years ago, with an official opening to occur on November 16. The 3-story complex includes galleries, computer stations, a main theater for live presentations and/or screen projections, classrooms, rooms for private functions and conferences, an outside patio, and on the top level, a planetarium with no roof! Mr. Schindler ended his presentation with a video tour of the building. This addition will allow triple the number of visitors to Lowell each year, the goal being to make astronomy fun for everyone, and to inspire people to look up.

**4 - Future Meetings:** The next meeting will be on Tuesday, September 3, 2024, at 7 pm.

**5 - Other business:** Bob Randle asked if there were any telescope owners who brought them tonight for the workshop; there was one; Bob told him to stay on after the meeting and they would check it out.

Door prizes tonight were T-shirts, binoculars and flashlights, donated by NASA Ambassador Cori Charles. Thanks, Cori!

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm. Minutes submitted by Bud and Betsy Johnson, via email on **May 8, 2024.**

Minutes approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Bob Randle (WVAC President)