



West Valley Astronomy Club
--Beginnings--

West Valley Astronomy Club History

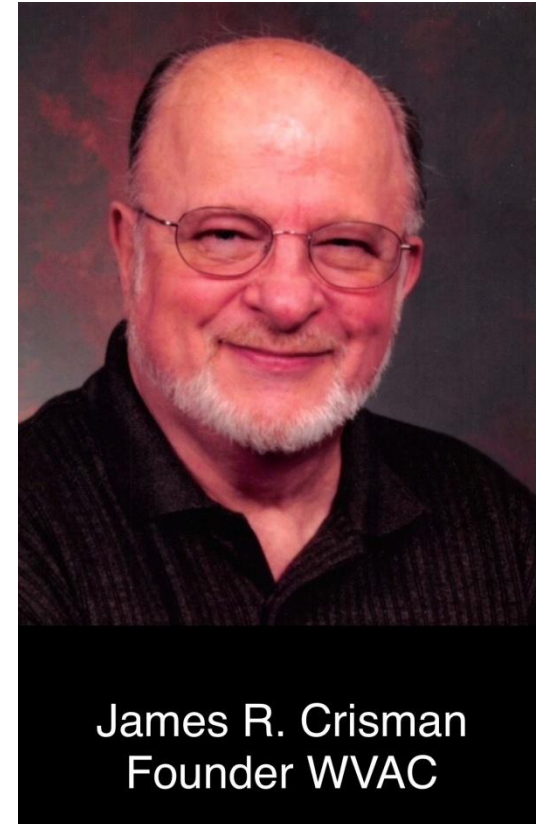
- **Beginnings:** Founded in 1986 by Jim and Vivian Chrisman
- Originally as the: *Astronomy Club of Sun City West*
- **We've had 3 Locations:**
 - 1) Sun Dome Plaza in SCW (1986)
 - 2) *Foundation Bldg* in SCW
 - 3) UU Church in Surprise
- **Early Meeting techniques:**
 - Internet not well developed yet
 - Telephone committee used instead of the internet
 - 35 mm slides presentation Media
- **Star Parties:**
 - "Dark Skies" Location was the *Vulture Mine Trail-head road*
 - No Go-To scopes yet – Used *Setting Circles* and *star hopping*
 - AstroPhotography used 35 mm Film(some CCD)
- **Move:**
 - Foundation* building ground rules changed and refreshments were no longer allowed.
 - A search was begun for a new location
 - In October 2006 we moved to the UU Church
- **Future locations?:**
- With a large increase in membership under our last two presidents, current president Bob Randle has begun to look for an even larger meeting room



**WVAC club origins and early history 1986 to
Present day**

1) Jim Crisman – Founder & 1st president (1986 - 2002)

- Crisman’s “Cottontail Observatory” in his Sun City West backyard.
- *Basic Astronomy course* Instructor at Rio Salado college
- A Tough Messier Marathon coach! (see his 45 page ‘Crisman 600’ check list)
- Minor Planet “*Crisman*” named after him at a Lowell Observatory ceremony.



Club member and founder (1986), Jim Crisman was honored at Lowell Observatory by having minor planet (127545) named *Crisman*, by the International Astronomical Union 2009

How many amateur astronomy clubs have a member whose name is assigned to an astronomical object?

Discovery Details

Dr Mellis discovered Minor Planet Crisman December 4 2002 at Kitt Peak Observatory. After its orbit had been determined reliably, it given a permanent designation number and a provisional designation. Then the discoverer is invited to suggest a name for the object. The discoverer writes a short citation explaining the reasons for assigning the name.

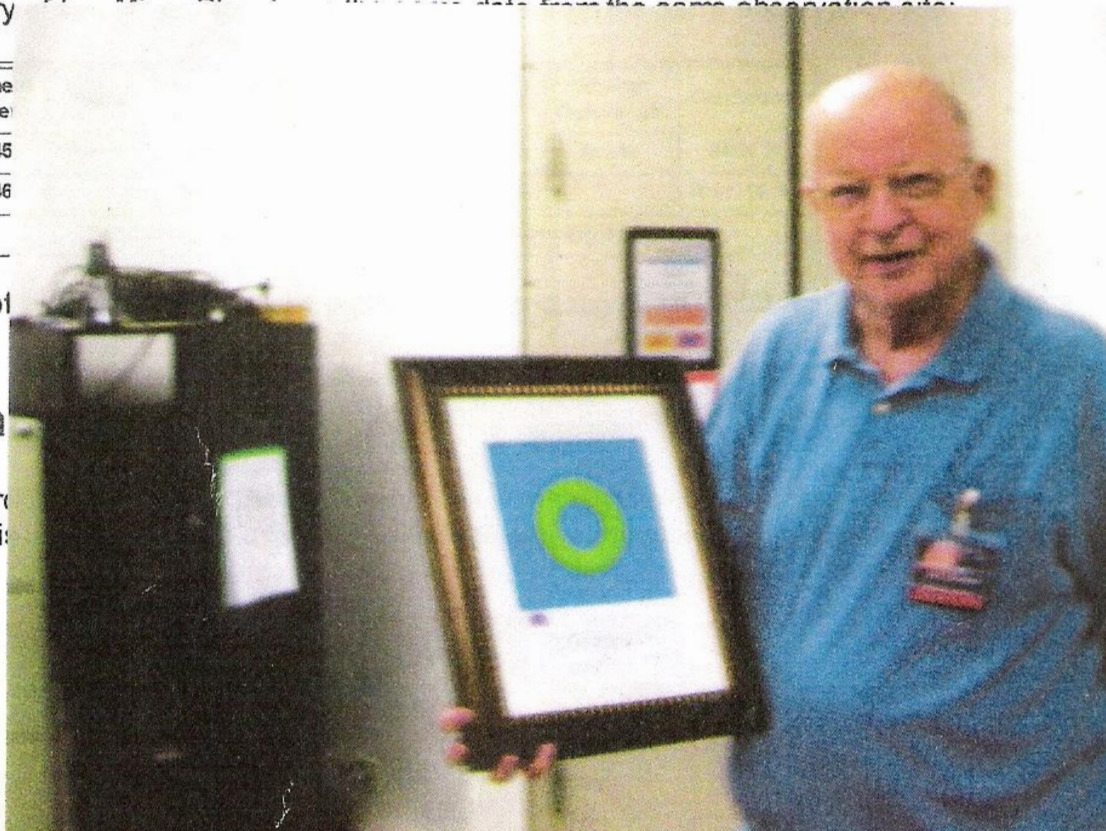
Here is the IAU listing of the discovery of Minor Planet Crisman. The data from the same observation site:

Permane Number
(127545)
(127546)

Dr. Marc Buie is a Lowell colleague of Jim Crisman and discovered the trans-Neptunian object.

Crisman, the Minor Planet

Minor Planet Crisman is a Main Asteroid located between Mars and Jupiter. Its material composition is



1) Jim Crisman (cont.)

- David Levy was our 1st recorded club speaker in 1990 (discoverer 23 comets)
- Jim's & Vivian's "Cotton Tail" Backyard Observatory in SCW
- Trips under President Jim: Lowell Observatory; Mirror Lab; Large Binocular Telescope (LBT); Challenger Space Center



Dr. Levy



Cotton Tail Observatory



LBT Mt Graham

Crisman 600 listings

- Jim's tedious listing (25 pages) of 600 objects to find using only Right Ascension (RA) and Declination numbers (Setting Circles) technique

05 HOURS IN RIGHT ASCENSION

<u>N.G.C.</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Con</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Mv</u>	<u>Epoch 2</u>
1778	-	AUR	O C	6'x3'	10*	8.5	05.08 +
IC 405	-	AUR	E N	18'x30'	Inc.6 ^m * "Flaming *"	Dim	05.16 +
1857	-	AUR	O C	9'	45*	8.5	05.20 +
1893	-	AUR	O C	12'	20*	8.0	05.22 +

Constellation
Auriga

RA (hours)



Crisman 600 viewing program

- Jim's Catalog contains 600 deep sky objects:
- 302 galaxies
- 125 Open/galactic clusters (OC)
- 82 Globular clusters (GC)
- 61 Planetary Nebulae (PN)
- 25 Emission Nebulae (EN)
- 3 Supernova Remnants (SNR)
- 2 Reflection Nebulae (RN)

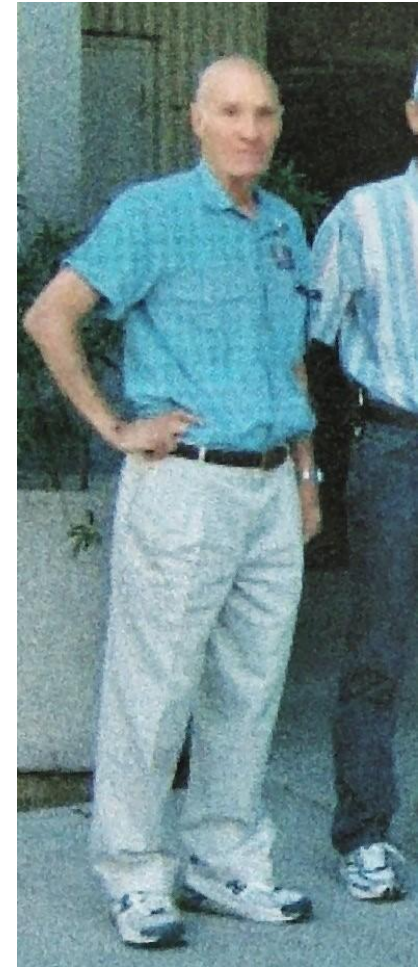


WVAC President History

1. Jim Crisman (1986 - 2003)
2. Ron Mobley (2003 to 2007)
3. John Cline (2006 to 2008)
4. Ed Whitfield (2008-2010)
5. Dr. James Smith (2011-2012)
6. Walt Schlam (2012-2017)
7. MaryAnne Balzer (2017-2019)
8. Bob Randle (2019- Present)

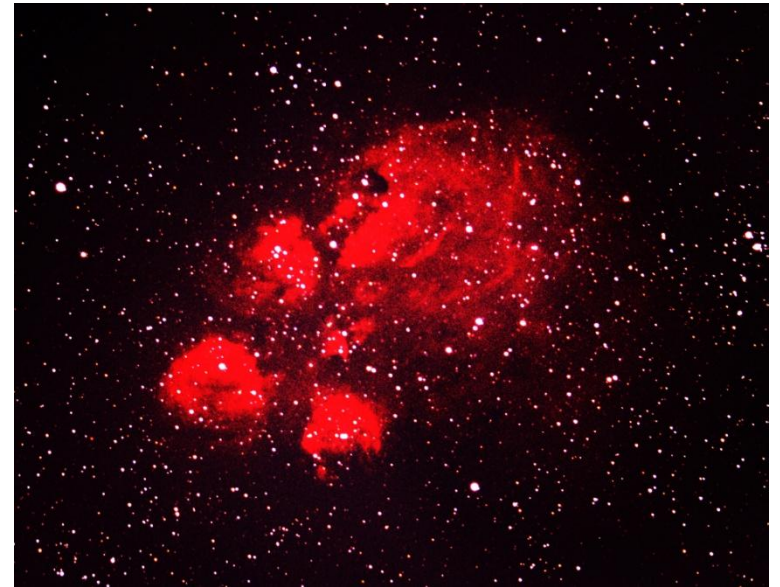
4) Ed Whitfield – Astro Photographer (film) 2008 - 2009

- Programs Chair
- Avid (solitary) Astro-photographer
- All night viewing location just south of Aguila AZ
- Permanent concrete tripod tip foot



4) Ed Whitfield (cont)

- Ed's Astrophotography
 - Ed used guide star navigation
 - Exposures took hours
 - Battery powered motor drive
 - 100's of full page Glossies from 35 mm slides



Cat's Paw Nebula in full color

Ed Whitfield (cont)

Summer
Sky



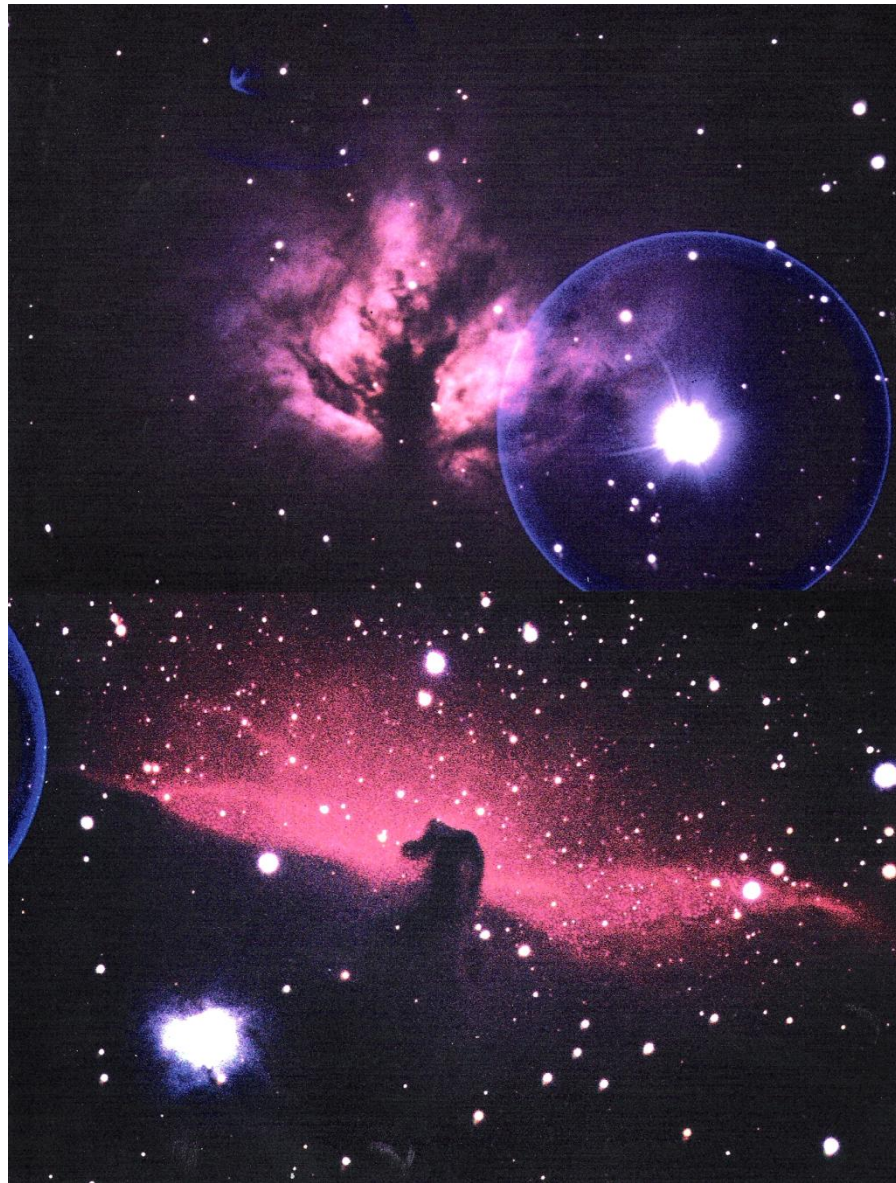
Winter
Sky



Ed Whitfield (cont)

Bubble Nebula
(Orion)

Horsehead Nebula
(Orion)



Steve Dermer - Outreach/Publicity

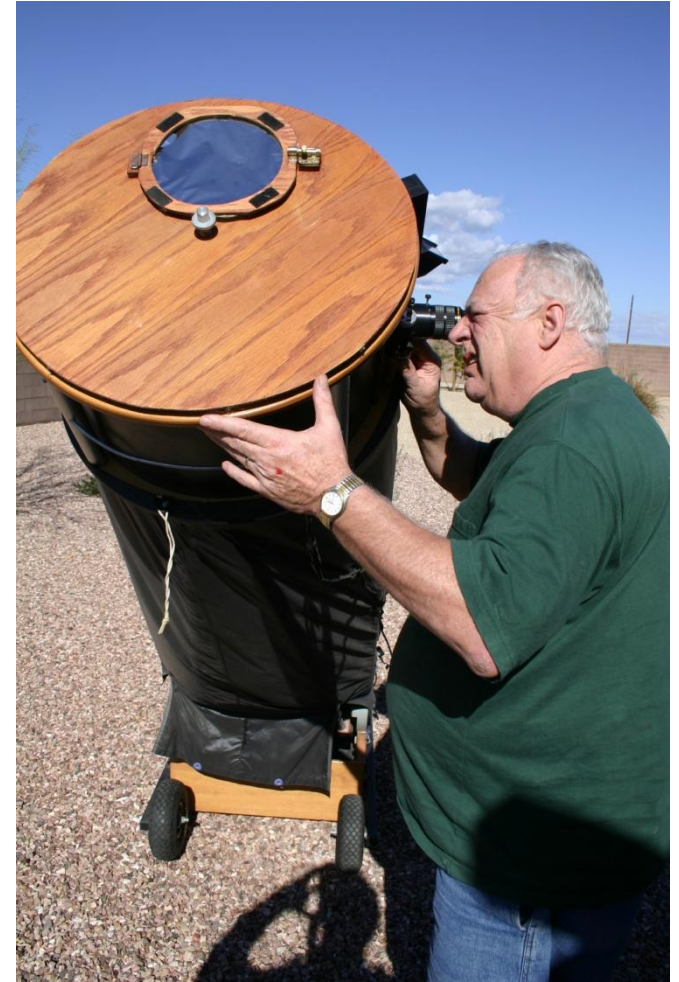
- Steve was in charge of promoting the club through the use of handouts, photographs & newspaper submissions,
- He Conducted *Dark Skies* (member Star Parties) outings at out new Morristown viewing site begun by Dr. Smith Aug 2009.
- Steve also is a key volunteer in Tony Laconte's (commercial) *Stargazing for Everyone*" viewing events. Countless children have peered through his Scope



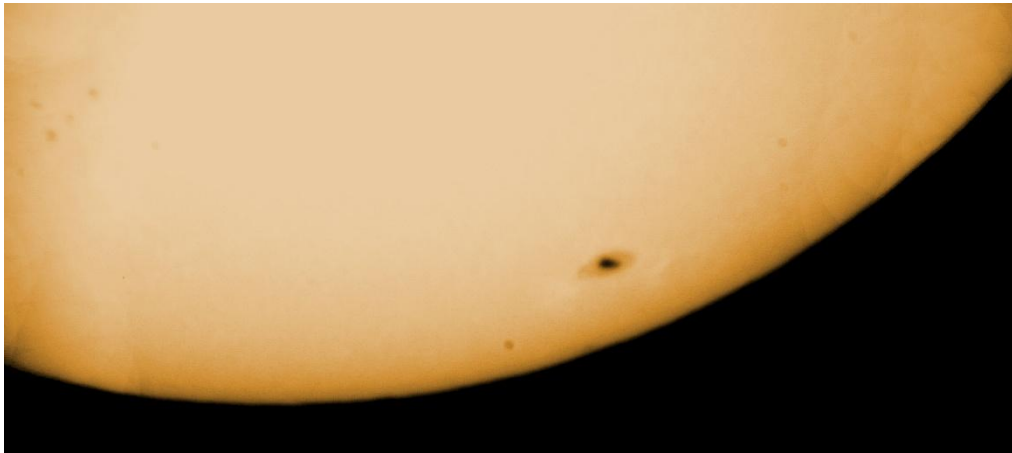
Steve
Dermer

Bernie Dufresne

- Former Prescott Valley Club member
- Owned the biggest (20" *Obsession*) telescope in the club.



Bernie Dufresne & his 20" Obsession



Sun Spot taken with my iPhone over eyepiece!

Ron Langlois

- Program Director many years
- Owned one of our first “Go-To” computerized telescopes



Remember to
save your night
vision!



Ron with his *Celestron 8”
Nexstar* telescope

Recent Presidents – Club Turnaround

- **MaryAnne Balzer – Past Pres.**
 - New website begun
 - Filled all vacant officers positions
 - Renewed interest in Club



- **Bob Randle – Current Pres.**
 - Complete revamping of website
 - Added new big presentation screen
 - Added new offices/officers





WVAC Club Positions as of 3/15/2025

President	Robert (Bob) Randle
Vice President	Paul Bleikamp
Treasurer	Bob Colvert
Secretary	Bud & Betsy Johnson
Membership	Robert (Bob) Randle
Programs Chairman	John Hiatt
Library Telescope Director	John Hiatt
Outreach Coordinator	Larry Matney
Field Trip Coordinator	Lana Slinkard
Hospitality	Deb Bleikamp
50/50	Deb Bleikamp
Star Party Coordinator	Josh Burtrum
Astrophotography Coordinator	Amin Patani
Night Sky Network Coordinator	Robert (Bob) Randle
WebMaster	Amin Patani
WebMaster	Robert Randle(Assistant)

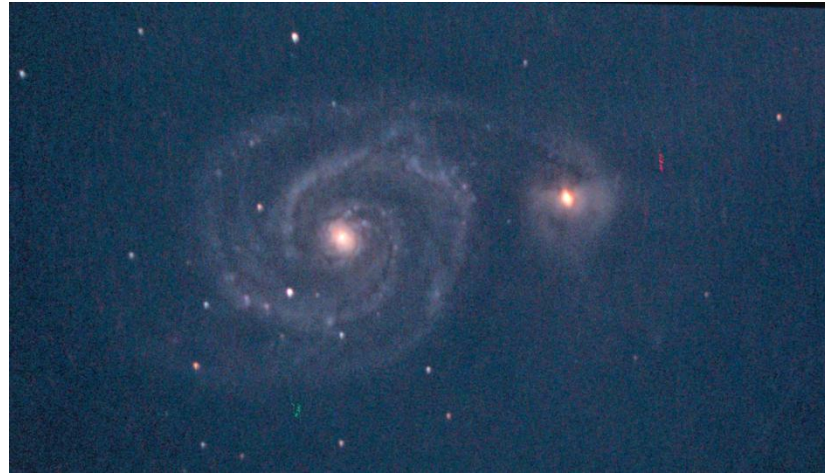
Walter Schmitt -

- Years of service
- Treasurer & Star Party Host
- Walt steps aside allowing for a new (position open) as StarParty Co-ordinator.



Walter and son Michael

Thanks



Robert Colvert - *Whirlpool Galaxy
M51 and NGC 5195*



Ryan Morrell - *Milky Way & desert Terrain*

Please visit our [Astroimaging/astrophotographers](#) for amazing images created by our members



West Valley Astronomy Club
Still Growing!

--The End--