



West Valley Astronomy Club

Monthly Meeting Minutes

March 3, 2026

Meeting: Beardsley Recreation Center - 12755 W Beardsley Rd, Sun City West, AZ 85375 – Agave Room #4

Board Members and Volunteers Present: Bob Randle (President), Paul Bleikamp (Vice President), Bob Colvert (Treasurer), John Hiatt (Program Director & Library Telescope Coordinator), Larry Matney (Outreach Director), Josh Burtrom (Star Party Coordinator), Bud and Betsy Johnson (Secretary), & members & visitors **(Total Present: 66)**.

1 - Opening Remarks: This meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by President Bob Randle. He said that we need to have at least 15 members sign up and pay for the Lowell Observatory trip on April 16, and then we can start finding rides and motel rooms. The cost for Lowell admission is \$27.00 per person.

2 – Presentation: John Hiatt introduced tonight's speaker, Astrophysicist Rogier Windhorst, professor of physics and astronomy at Arizona State University. His research has led to new understanding of how the universe first began. Tonight he spoke about the Cosmic Circle of Life, as seen through the eyes of Albert Einstein. The Webb telescope was launched in December, 2021, and Professor Windhorst explained the complementary roles of both the Hubble and Webb telescopes: the Webb telescope collects 6 times more light than Hubble, pointing out the power of two telescopes. In the Cosmic Circle of Light, hydrogen and helium were the only two elements made in the Big Bang; all other elements were made in the formation of stars. He showed Hubble and Webb views of columns of gas and dust; deep inside the gas and dust, stars (and also planets around the sun-like stars) are forming. The formation of stars is messy—a lot of gas and dust; and when a star starts throwing off its outer layers when it is expiring, new stars will form from the expelled gas and dust. Our sun will expire in about 5 billion years. So, there is ubiquitous dust throughout the universe. And, in the Cosmic Circle of Life, planets and people are literally made from star dust!

3 – Other Business: John showed the new library telescope on the side of the room. Bob Randle thanked everyone for coming tonight, and said to tell him if you'd like to sign up for a field trip to Lowell; we need 5 more people to get a group to go. Check the WVAC site for any updates.

4 – Door Prizes: None tonight. **50-50 Prizes:** There were two prizes tonight.

5 - Future Meetings: The next meeting will be on Tuesday, April 7, at 7 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm. Minutes submitted by Bud and Betsy Johnson, via email, **March 3, 2026.**

Minutes approved by: _____ Date _____

Bob Randle (WVAC President)