**Minutes -- September 11, 2024**

**President Gary Fitzpatrick** called the meeting to order at 10 a.m., noting that everyone who speaks to the group will need to speak loudly and clearly, since the microphone isn't working.

Before starting the meeting's official business, **Pres. Gary** asked the group to think back 23 years to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack that devastated the nation, but also brought people together as Americans, regardless of their differences. He hopes, he said, that unity like that can be restored, without relying on another tragedy to make it happen.

Proceeding to business items, **Suzan Fournier** moved to approve the August meeting minutes as published in the club newsletter. **Tanya Davis** seconded, and the minutes were approved by acclamation.

In Treasurer Bill Gates' absence, **Pres. Gary** reported that the club has $2,538.58 in checking, $2,585.74 in its money market account and $5,149.73 in its CD. He also noted that there are significant upcoming expenses -- including the annual holiday party -- as is typical during the fourth quarter.

**Sue Slaughter,** who has managed the holiday party for several years, said that while party planning is in its early stages, Tuesday, December 3, has been selected as the date. As in past years, the party will begin with a social gathering at 5:45 p.m., followed by dinner. The goal is to keep the meal's cost to $30 or less per person; since the club subsidizes party fees, the goal likely will be met. The menu has not yet been determined, but the tradition of having attendees bring their own beverage will continue. **Tanya Davis**, in charge of party table decorations, said anyone who wants to make a decoration (they're all homemade) should let her know at tanyat123@bresnan.net. Every year partygoers vote on their favorite decoration, with a prize for the winner. This year, the person whose table decoration gets the most votes will receive a gift certificate to a not-yet-selected local business. Pres. Gary thanked both Sue and Tanya for their work on the holiday project. He also thanked Tanya and her group for the treats she provided for today's meeting, which are always exceptional.

Four people indicated that they celebrate their birthday in September and received a round of happy-birthday applause.

**Pres. Gary** announced get well cards sent to club members, on behalf of We Care's **Linda Ash**. She sent a card to **Ed Hokanson**, while Susan Norton sent a card to Linda's husband, **Wayne Ash**, who recently had shoulder surgery.

**Jean Greenfield** of the Membership Committee reported one new member -- **Chris Jesse** -- plus four meeting guests (and potential new members) -- **April West** from California, **Dara Whitmore** from West Virginia and **Paula Nyman** from Maryland. **Pres. Gary** joked that, with people coming to the Grand Valley from many different locations, maybe the first phases of the club's marketing outreach program, spearheaded by **Patty Perrin,** are paying off already. Patty added that the club business cards with a QR code link to the website have been well received; Pres. Gary agreed that they're a very useful tool. Patty said the campaign's next phase is underway and involves outreach to local realtors, plus media publicity.

**Stan Zygmunt,** a New Dimensions Lifelong Learning Institute volunteer, reminded the group that registration for the fall term has started at www.newdimensionsgj.org. He said there are more than 80 courses available, covering a wide variety of topics. Class dates and times vary; the first courses will begin September 30. He added that Midday with New Dimensions, a program that offers shortened versions of classes over the lunch hour, will feature Peter Booth on October 10 at the Mesa County Library's Central location, discussing "Folk Tales of the Southwest." Booth is Advancement Director for the Art Center of Western Colorado, a former local museum professional, a cultural expert on the American West, and an all-around knowledgeable, animated speaker.

**Suzan Fournier** reported that the Tour and Lunch Club's first outing after summer break will be a 30-40-minute walking tour in Colorado National Monument, led by a U.S. Park Service ranger. It will take place on September 25 at 9:15. Next up, TLC will offer an October 23 tour of the Mesa County Workforce Center. The sign-up sheet for the October tour will be available at the October Newcomers coffee meeting. Suzan is part of a new four-member committee planning monthly tours on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

Suzan also said that the Armchair Travelers program, a joint project of Newcomers Club and Mesa County Libraries, will host an October 3 presentation at the Central Library by Dr. Barbara

Zind, a retired physician and humanitarian, who has spent time in Palestine, helping with the public health crisis there. However, her Armchair Travelers presentation will focus on Jordan, where she also has traveled. Armchair Travel programs will expand to other library branches in the coming months -- two in Clifton and two in Fruita.

**Douglas Grodt** of the Hiking Club announced a September 12 hike to the Mica Mine, which goes through the canyon leading to the mining area.

**Mike Avery**, the club's website manager, said the newly redesigned web page has received a great response. If you haven't seen it yet, he suggested taking a few minutes to look it over, since it's easily navigable and includes expanded information -- including a more extensive calendar of Newcomers activities. For instance, he said, the calendar shows Armchair Traveler programs scheduled through next February. If any other activity group leaders would like to have their schedules shown there, just provide the information to Mike on mavery@otherwhen.com.

**Ken Seitz** reminded the group of the Wine Club's next event on September 19 from 4-6 at the Art Center. Spanish wines and appetizers will be served, at $25 per person. **Pres. Gary** thanked **Ken and Lisa Seitz** and their team for their work on the successful Labor Day picnic.

**Vice President Tom Politzer** announced that, while emails about upcoming Happy Hour sessions are intended to go to all members, some folks said they're not getting them. If you're not receiving Happy Hour notices, please confirm your email address by notifying Tom at tpolitzer@msn.com. He also said that several new locations are being added to the Happy Hour rotation, including Ristorante Pantuso, Smokin' Oak in Clifton and Base Camp Brewery in Grand Junction.

The meeting's guest speaker was **Alisha Wenger**, Executive Director of Grand Junction's Community Food Bank. The food bank, which only serves Mesa County, has been operating for 46 years, serving thousands of households whose members often don't know where their next meal is coming from. This situation is known as "food insecurity." Last year, she said, the food bank served 12,700 people -- roughly 8 percent of the county's population -- with an emphasis on providing nutritious food and counseling on how to utilize resources such as the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. Less than 2 percent of the people served were unhoused. The food bank offers a range of options -- from home delivery of shelf-stable food and fresh items to

a mobile fresh food trailer to a "choice pantry" where people can shop in a grocery store-like setting. Cooking demonstrations using healthy recipes also are available, along with tasting sessions. The food bank also "rescues" food that would otherwise be thrown out from local grocery stores and restaurants -- and even from private home gardens. Recently, with help from a federal grant, Community Food Bank purchased the now-vacant 7th Street Deli and plans to transform it into 7th Street Community Cafeteria. Alisha said that lots of varied volunteer opportunities are available; anyone interested can call 970-640-0336 or go to www.foodbankgj.org under "volunteering".

**Molly Fitzpatrick** and her friend **Laura Lenka** conducted the monthly raffle, which raised $72 for the club.

-- Lois Leach, Secretary