

## Minutes -- January 8, 2025

### CLUB BUSINESS

**President Gary Fitzpatrick** called the meeting to order shortly after 10 am, welcoming members and guests to the first coffee meeting of 2025. No December meeting was held, so there were no meeting minutes to approve. **Pres. Gary** thanked **Tanya Davis** and **Lisa Seitz** of the Coffee Committee for the exceptional treats that started the year with a wintery theme. He also called for applause for members celebrating January birthdays.

**Treasurer Bill Gates** reported on the club's finances: \$1,783.91 in checking (\$.37 of which was third-quarter interest), \$557.87 in the money market account (\$.16 in interest) and \$5,248.77 in the certificate of deposit (\$57.11 in interest). He summarized by saying, "We are solvent, heading into another year." **Pres. Gary** added that about \$2,500 was withdrawn from the CD to pay for the club's 2024 marketing and outreach program and noted that updates on the program's progress will be discussed at a future meeting.

**Linda Ash** of We Care reported that, unlike in previous months, she sent several greeting cards to club members. Sympathy cards went to **Martha Potyondy** and **Larrayne Zygmunt** on the deaths of their respective mothers and to **Rosemarie Rinaldi** on the death of her husband Frank. Get well cards went to **Jean Greenfield**, who was hospitalized with pneumonia; **Gary Fitzpatrick**, who was hospitalized after a fall and resulting concussion; and **Mike and Beth Avery** who both underwent surgery.

**Larrayne Zygmunt** of the Membership committee said that several guests were present at the meeting and two -- Madonna Hayes and Penny Polowchena -- became new members.

### CLUB EVENTS

**Joan Robinson** thanked Newcomers members for taking part in the annual Salvation Army Giving Tree program by providing Christmas gifts for 39 local kids who would not otherwise receive them. Some Newcomers donated cash -- \$800 in total -- which Joan used to purchase gifts from the kids' wish lists. Others purchased a gift and delivered it unwrapped to the Salvation Army's GJ headquarters. "It's really heartwarming to see the generosity of the people in this room," Joan said. "It makes a difference in our community."

**Ken Seitz** announced that the next Wine Club event will take place January 16 from 4-6 p.m. at the Art Center. Per-person cost is \$25 to taste a selection of Southern Italian wines. Registration deadline is January 13, although Fisher's Liquor Barn has asked for longer lead times to better prepare for future

wine-tasting events. For that reason, registration deadlines will come sooner, starting with the March event.

**Douglas Grodt**, who leads senior-appropriate two-hour hikes on Thursdays, announced a January 9 hike along the Ridges development, with overlooks of Monument Road and Colorado National Monument.

**Suzan Fournier** announced that on January 22 the Tour and Lunch Club program will tour Valor Tactical Innovation, a manufacturer of military-grade equipment and a prime Department of Defense contractor. The tour will begin at 10 am at 1328 Winters Avenue. Due to the nature of its products, Valor Tactical requires that anyone touring their facility provide proof of citizenship -- such as a birth certificate or passport -- and wear closed-toe shoes and full-coverage clothing. Tours are limited to 10 people or so, although more groups may be added if enough people sign up. In February, Suzan added, TLC will go to the Palisade Insectary; a sign-up sheet for that tour will be available at the February coffee meeting.

**Suzan** also noted that the next Armchair Traveler meeting will be February 6 at 6:30 pm at Mesa County Central Library, featuring Jenny Casad and Kali Sacharski, showcasing Utah landscapes they have explored. Two years ago, they gave an Armchair Traveler presentation on camping near national parks, featuring spectacular photos and drone footage. Becky Chesnut, who for several years has helped recruit presenters for the Armchair Traveler program, is stepping down and would like to encourage anyone interested in travel to step up. (Since Armchair Traveles is a partnership between Newcomers Club and Mesa County Public Libraries, the library handles marketing and communication while Newcomers Club helps identify and vet presenters.) Becky thought it was fun to learn about people's travels before the official presentations.

## **COMMUNITY EVENTS**

**Lynne O'Connell**, Newcomers member and Grand Junction Symphony Orchestra Board President, noted that gift bags containing items from several local non-profits -- the symphony, Western Colorado Art Center, Eureka McConnell Science Museum and Mesa County Public Libraries -- will be offered to Newcomers members who are genuinely new (not simply renewed). Bags will be created for those on the Newcomers monthly list of newbies and will be available for pick-up at the Grand Junction Symphony office, 412 Main St. The bags are clear plastic and therefore comply with the Avalon Theatre's security requirements. Bags will be offered for a 9-month trial period and may be continued if enough people pick up their gift bags.

**Stan Zygmunt**, also a Newcomers member and volunteer for New Dimensions Lifelong Learning Institute, said it is almost ready for the winter-spring term. More than 80 classes will be available -- nearly half of them new. For \$75 per person per term, any Grand Valley resident 50 or older can sign up for an unlimited number of classes. The winter-spring class schedule can be viewed online beginning January 15 at 8 am; registration will take place January 20-24; classes will run from February 3-March 23. Stan noted the great variety of class topics, including "The Life and Times of the Humble Potato."

Also, there will be a New Dimensions at Midday session at noon on January 14 at the Central Mesa County Public Library. Charles Latshaw, Music Director for the Grand Junction Symphony Orchestra, will talk about what a symphony conductor actually does.

**Susan Norton**, who volunteers for the Western Colorado Art Center's music programs, announced that a "Hot Tub Jazz" concert will be held on January 25 at 7:30 p.m. It is the brainchild of Carolyn White, in memory of her husband and former Newcomers president Bob Noble. Susan said many of the performers are members of the Grand Junction Symphony or one of its offshoot organizations.

**Ruth Anna** thanked Newcomers for continuing to bring empty egg cartons to her so she can deliver them to the Community Food Bank. The cartons are used to safely store eggs from local chicken owners and, according to Ruth, "The back of my car is loaded with cartons."

### **GUEST SPEAKER**

**Steven Bowers**, KKCO-TV's Chief Meteorologist, summarized his 18-year career as a television weathercaster -- first in Meridian, Mississippi, then in Colorado Springs and for the past three years in Grand Junction. With a Bachelors Degree in meteorology, Bowers is a self-described "weather nerd." He spends a few hours each day combing through weather data and developing his own weather forecast. "Forecasting is really my thing," he said. Then he talks through his forecast on camera, without reading from a script or teleprompter, while standing in front of a green screen instead of an actual weather map. "My goal is to talk to viewers as I would if I were sitting across the kitchen table from them." Bowers noted that, once he moved to Colorado, he had to grow accustomed to the impact that mountains have on weather -- everything from changing wind direction to diverting potential moisture when a downslope wind dries up all the humidity. Grand Junction is situated in a relatively calm weather area, he noted, because it's in a valley, partly protected from incoming systems. For example, he looked up Mesa County's weather history and found only nine tornadoes in the past 30 years -- most of them small. In Mississippi, Bowers said, "Nine tornadoes is a slow night."

--Lois Leach, Secretary