

Minutes - November 12, 2025

President Gary Fitzpatrick called the meeting to order promptly at 10 a. and announced that the meeting's content would be re-ordered for the day. Instead of conducting club business first, as usual, the guest speaker went first, due to another scheduling commitment.

GUEST SPEAKER

President Gary introduced **Ashley Ojala**, executive director of the Colorado National Monument Association, or CNMA. She said the association, a non-profit that operates under the National Park Service, aims to protect and celebrate the monument -- a "national treasure right in our backyard." While the area was established as a national monument in 1911, she noted that it was inhabited by humans for 11,000 years before that. With a show of hands, many Newcomers members indicated that they were familiar with the monument and had hiked there and/or driven the Rim Rock Drive. The CNMA's mission includes helping to fund initiatives that educate people about the monument's unique history, geology and wildlife and to promote responsible stewardship and preservation of the land. The association uses money it raises -- primarily from retail sales on its website and at the Saddlehorn Visitor Center gift shop - - to fund science internships and programs such as Resilience Ranger, Monument on Tap, and Community Artist in the Park. Retail sales also pay for visitor maps of the monument and Junior Ranger resource materials. She invited Newcomers to help CNMA celebrate its new office space at the Confluence Center of Colorado, 2600 Dos Rios Drive, on December 9 (Colorado Gives Day) from 8:30-10:30 a.m. She also invited anyone who's interested in volunteering to go to coloradonma.org and fill out the contact form.

CLUB BUSINESS

Before starting the business portion of the meeting, **President Gary** observed that it was very well attended, with 90-some people present and the Grand Valley Event Center parking lot packed. Then he called for additions or changes to the October meeting minutes. Hearing none, he asked for motions to approve. **Tanya Davis** so moved, **Ruth Anna** seconded and the minutes were approved by acclamation.

Treasurer Bill Gates reported that the Newcomers checking account balance is \$5,241.80, with \$.37 interest, and the certificate of deposit is at \$5,386.19. He reminded the group that we're now entering the part of the year when expenses are highest, due to the upcoming holiday party.

President Gary thanked **Tanya Davis** and her Hospitality Committee for the awesome assortment of autumnal treats. She shared credit for the spread with her committee helpers this month -- **Debbie**

DeRoo, Dale Gates, Alberta Husch, Carla Sherrick and Lisa Seitz. Between bites, the group applauded their contributions to the meeting. When there was a call for November birthdays, **Tanya Davis'** name popped up again; her birthday is November 29.

Karen Dreher of We Care said she sent two get-well cards in the past month -- one to **Brad Pearson**, who had open heart surgery, and another to **Kay Rollins**, who had hip replacement. **President Gary** commented that Kay is recovering well; she attended Newcomers Happy Hour just a few weeks after her surgery.

Jean Greenfield of the Membership Committee said several guests were in attendance: Garry and Christine Grzesiak from Clover, Wisconsin; Daniel Olave from Aspen; and Carole Langae and Caroline Keefe, both from Littleton. **President Gary** welcomed them all, noting "We hope you'll keep coming. We'd like to get to know you."

President Gary said that, as discussed during the October meeting and included in the newsletter, the Newcomers executive committee has proposed a change to the membership dues structure, subject to a vote of members. Currently, annual dues are \$15 for singles and \$25 for couples. Under the proposed change, the singles amount would remain the same, but the couples amount would increase to \$30 a year. The result: a more equitable structure, consisting of an annual dues amount of \$15 per person, whether single or part of a couple. **President Gary** called for motions to approve this change. **Ken Seitz** so moved and **Ruth Anna** seconded. The new dues structure was approved by acclamation from the members present and will go into effect on January 1, 2026.

Dale Gates, Newcomers newsletter editor, said that she volunteered for the editorship when Carolyn White stepped down. "Carolyn is a pro and I'm not, so I greatly appreciate the help I've been getting from **Jessica Ipnar**," she said. "She has helped to review lots of community resources and identify events and activities appropriate for the newsletter. That saves me about four days of research work each month and helps tremendously." She also thanked people who meet the newsletter deadline when contributing content.

President Gary thanked **Mike Avery** for his work managing the club's website and Facebook page. **Robin Chisholm**, a new Newcomers member, has agreed to take over these responsibilities and will welcome photos of club activities to keep both refreshed. Welcome to Robin! Jorde Matthews, the graphic and web designer who recently developed consistent graphics for the club and updated the Newcomers website, will redesign the newsletter to match the overall look.

The monthly raffle was conducted, generating \$93 in proceeds for the club.

CLUB EVENTS

Bill Gates, co-chair of the Tour and Lunch Club, said the November 18 tour of the Western Colorado Museum, 462 Ute Avenue, still has a few openings on the sign-up sheet. Lunch at the Goat and Clover will follow. There will be no tour in December because of the holidays.

Terie Furtney and **Barb Hofecker** gave an update on the 2025 Newcomers holiday party on December 4 from 5:30-8:30 pm at the Grand Valley Event Center, 2400 Consistory Court (same building where monthly Newcomers meetings take place). The firm deadline for making reservations is November 20, since the caterers need to be paid by then. The party will feature a moderately-spicy Hispanic-themed meal, plus a photographer who will take pictures of members in front of a holiday back drop. Tea and water will be provided; alcoholic beverages are bring-your-own. They also thanked the volunteers who got together for a centerpiece-making event, producing 20 festive centerpieces for party decorations and a fund-raising auction.

Douglas Grodt, who leads monthly "easy hikes for seniors," said the November 13 hike will take place at Flume Trail in McGinnis Canyon. Anyone interested in getting notices about future hikes can email him at newcomerhikers@gmail.com, to be added to his massive email distribution list.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Joan Robinson, who has volunteered to work on the Salvation Army Giving Tree for several years, said the project is back for Christmas 2025. The tree displays tags, each one representing a child or a family in need. When you take a tag, you agree to purchase a holiday gift from the person's wish list and deliver it unwrapped in a gift bag-- either to the Salvation Army headquarters in Grand Junction (1235 N. 4th Street) or to Joan's home in Fruita -- by December 12. Joan also accepts cash or checks (made out to her) so she can do the shopping and delivering on members' behalf. "This year in particular, many families are struggling," she said. "It's so worthwhile if we can make the holidays special for people who otherwise wouldn't have one."

Susan Fournier announced that the next Armchair Travelers program is set for November 17 at 5:30 pm at the Fruita branch library. Zebulon Miracle, local historian and head of the Roice Hurst Humane Society, will give a presentation on the Green River area and the founding of Dinosaur Monument. On December 4 at 6:30 pm at the Mesa County central library, Jeffrey Johnson will present his experiences in Nepal and the Himalayas. There will be no presentation in January. Armchair Travelers is provided from September-May through a partnership between Newcomers Club and the Mesa County Public Libraries, and is free and open to the public. The November 6 presentation on Iceland was especially popular; more than 110 people attended -- enough to require extra chairs.

Susan Norton and **Susan Fournier** gave details of the upcoming annual Holiday Art and Craft Fair at the Art Center of Western Colorado, 1803 N. 7th St. The fair will run from November 21 (members only on

that date) through November 23 and will feature fine art and crafts from 30-plus vendors, baked goods prepared by Art Center members and a "Not So Starving Artists" section with diverse offerings at affordable prices. There also is a raffle with exceptional prizes. "With everything going on in the world right now, art is one way people can express themselves and connect with others, without judgment," **Susan Norton** said.

Susan Norton also announced that season tickets to next year's spring-fall Music in the Grapevines concerts are currently available on artcenterguild.com. Individual tickets will be sold starting in April, but season tickets cover all five concerts plus credit card fees for \$93.

Stan Zygmunt, Newcomers member who volunteers for the New Dimensions Lifelong Learning Institute, said the fall session is wrapping up. The class list for the spring session will be available online beginning on January 14. Registration will take place from January 19-26 and classes will run from February 2-March 20. Also, on December 11 at noon, Midday with New Dimensions will feature Dr. Peter Booth, Assistant Director of the Art Center of Western Colorado and expert on Southwest history. He will be presenting "Noble Ships of the American Desert." Midday with New Dimensions offers one-hour noontime lectures at Mesa County Libraries' central branch. The program results from a partnership between New Dimensions and the Mesa County Libraries system.

Lois Leach, Secretary