

## Minutes -- October 8, 2025

### CLUB BUSINESS

**President Gary Fitzpatrick** called the meeting to order at 10 am and asked for comments or corrections to the September meeting minutes, as published in the newsletter. Since there weren't any, he asked for motions to approve the minutes. **Tanya Davis** so moved, **Ruth Anna** seconded and the minutes were approved by acclamation.

**Treasurer Bill Gates** reported that the club's checking account balance stands at \$3,851.07, with \$.35 in interest, and the reserve account stands at \$5,292.93. "We're doing fine," he concluded. He also reminded the group that, when writing a check for a Newcomers activity, it should be made out to Grand Junction Newcomers Club -- even if a specific individual is collecting the money. It causes problems, he said, in depositing a check to the Newcomers Club checking account when it's made out to a person.

**President Gary** thanked **Tanya Davis** and her Hospitality team for the exceptional treats. They all represent the themes of "Halloween, autumn and joy," Tanya said.

**Karen Dreher**, who's handling We Care condolence and get well cards for Newcomers members, said she sent a sympathy card to **Douglas Grodt**, whose son passed away following a short illness. Douglas regularly organizes age-appropriate monthly hikes for Newcomers.

The Membership committee's **Jean Greenfield** announced two new members -- Nancy Wissler, who recently moved here from Bradenton, Florida, and David Hull, who moved from the Denver area. She also said a guest who deserves the award for longest distance traveled was in attendance -- Tommy Hjort from Sweden. He is a long-time friend of Ruth and Larry Anna, having met them years ago when they all shared a taxi ride from the Bismarck, North Dakota airport.

**President Gary** said that Newcomers Club's executive committee is proposing a change to the membership dues structure. Currently, annual dues are \$15 for singles and \$25 for couples. Under the proposed change, singles would still pay \$15 a year, while the couples amount would increase to \$30 -- basically, \$15 per person for all members. "We've heard from some members who have concerns about the current dues structure," he said. "This change, if approved by club members, would create a more equitable situation and also help cover anticipated increased costs for future club events." Notice of the proposed dues change was published in the October newsletter. A vote on the proposal will take place at the November Newcomers coffee meeting.

**Chuck Hawkins** and **Molly Fitzpatrick** conducted the monthly raffle, with proceeds going to support the club.

## **CLUB EVENTS**

On behalf of Ken and Lisa Seitz, **Tom Politzer** reminded the group that the next Wine Club tasting event will take place on November 13 from 4-6 pm at the Art Center of Western Colorado, 1803 N. 7th. It will feature tastes of South African wines. Cost is \$25 per person and the deadline for reservations is November 6. Checks should be made out to Grand Junction Newcomers Club and sent to Ken Seitz, 2675 Autumn Book Ct.

**Bill Gates** of the Tour and Lunch group said the next tour will take place on October 14, with a tour of the GLC Alpaca Place, 908 23 Road in Fruita. Because it will take place from 2-4 pm -- later in the day than the usual before-lunch tour time -- there will be no lunch following the alpaca farm visit. In November, club members who sign up will be treated to a behind-the-scenes look at the Museum of the West, 462 Ute Avenue. More details and the sign-up sheet will be available at the November 12 Newcomers coffee meeting.

## **COMMUNITY EVENTS**

**Bill Gates** announced that the Armchair Travelers program will feature a November 6 presentation titled "Icelandic Beauty in the Fall" by travelers John Frosty and Dee Ramsel. Their talk will highlight everything from Iceland's waterfalls to whales to the northern lights. The program begins at 6:30 pm at the Mesa County Public Libraries' Central Library Community Room. Also, on November 17 at 5:30 pm at the Fruita Branch Library, there will be a presentation by Zebulon Miracle, local historian, Roice Hurst Humane Society CEO and executive director of Mesa County's United Way. He will discuss the Green River in northwest Colorado and the formation of the Dinosaur National Monument. Armchair Travelers is provided through a partnership between Newcomers Club and Mesa County Public Library.

**Ruth Anna**, Newcomers member who volunteers with Friends of Mesa County Libraries, said that the Library Foundation will celebrate Banned Books Week with a conversation on censorship. Colorado author and Garfield County Library Executive Director James La Rue will lead the conversation, focusing on his 2023 book, *On Censorship: A Public Librarian Examines Cancel Culture*. Tickets are required and are available through the Mesa County Public Library website. Ruth Anna also announced Friends of the Libraries' "Big Annual Book Sale" on October 15-18 at the First Congregational Church, 1425 N. 4th Street -- across from Grand Junction High School. The sale will run from 9 am-6 pm on October 15, 16 and 17 and from 9 am-3 pm on October 18. In addition to books, the sale will include audiobooks, CDs, DVDs and large-print materials. Proceeds go to support the library system's diverse programs.

**Stan Zygmunt**, Newcomers member who volunteers with New Dimensions Lifelong Learning Institute, said the fall-winter session is in full swing. He asked if any Newcomers folks at the meeting had attended a fall New Dimensions class yet, and several hands went up. Since 90 classes were offered, there are

lots of options -- including two that Stan is teaching. He noted that the next Midday with New Dimensions presentation, titled "Anatomy of a Thunderstorm and Other Fun Facts," will take place at noon on October 9 at Mesa County Public Library's Central Library. Jeffrey Colton, a warning coordination meteorologist for the National Weather Service, will talk about the conditions that contribute to thunderstorm formation and how they can escalate into emergency events.

### **GUEST SPEAKER**

Because there was no scheduled speaker, **Stan Zygmunt** was recruited to give a shortened version of his previous New Dimensions class on towns of the Uintah Railway. Stan is a retired engineer who has developed an intense interest in gilsonite, a naturally-occurring form of asphalt, and the railway constructed to transport it from mines in northwest Colorado. Stan has become an expert on the subject - - dubbed "Mr. Gilsonite" by some. Gilsonite was found in commercial quantities only in the Uintah Basin north of the Book Cliffs, where it was mined starting in 1888. It was a profitable commodity, originally used in varnish, lacquer and paint. Demand for gilsonite grew when it was considered by Adolphus Busch, co-founder of Anheuser Busch Brewing Company, as a way to seal beer barrels. In order to move greater quantities of gilsonite to market, the Uintah Railway was built in only one year, from 1903-1904. It was "the world's crookedest and steepest railway," gaining 2,000 feet between Baxter Pass and Atchee and rising at an unusually steep 7.5% grade. A series of towns were formed to support the mines, starting with Mack, the railway headquarters and transfer station. Other towns in the chain were Carbonera, Atchee, Baxter Pass, Lake McAndrews, Wendella, Dragon Junction, Dragon Camp and Watson. Uintah Railway workers were well-paid and well-treated for the times, and their jobs were envied.

*Lois Leach, Secretary*