

Minutes September 10, 2025

CLUB BUSINESS

After asking members to sit only on the north and west sides of the auditorium, **President Gary Fitzpatrick** called the meeting to order at 10 am. He explained that the new seating arrangement is designed to make sure everyone can see the projected images for the guest speaker's presentation, using a new "alternate screen" -- the south wall of the auditorium. The pull-down screen at the front of the room, normally used for projected images, hasn't been rolling down, so the club is showing its resourcefulness.

President Gary called for additions or changes to the August meeting minutes. Hearing none, he asked for motions to approve. **Ken Seitz** so moved, **Stacie Hawkins** seconded and the minutes were approved by acclamation.

Treasurer Bill Gates reported that the club's checking account balance stands at \$4,706.82, with \$.37 interest, and the CD is at \$5,341.05. He also noted that balances will begin to decline, as bills for the Labor Day picnic are paid and expenses for the upcoming holiday party are incurred.

President Gary congratulated **Tanya Davis**, head of the Hospitality Committee, on the great selection of autumn-themed treats. In turn, Tanya thanked others on the committee who helped -- **Lisa Seitz, Jean Greenfield, Alberta Husch** and **Dale Gates**. **President Gary** also called for members with September birthdays, and a few raised their hands.

Karen Dreher, who has newly assumed responsibility for We Care, said that she sent greeting cards to **Larryne Zygmunt**, whose brother passed, to **Rick Murdica**, who recently had surgery, and to **Becky Chesnut**, who will soon have surgery. Karen also mentioned that she volunteers for KAFM 88.1/96.9, the Grand Valley's only local community radio station. On September 11, the station will feature a concert by Rebecca Folsom in the Radio Room, a community space inside the KAFM studio building; tickets are \$20.

Jean Greenfield of the club's Membership Committee said that one new member, David Hull, was attending the meeting. He recently moved from the Denver area.

Stacie Hawkins and **Molly Fitzpatrick** conducted the monthly raffle, and reminded members to bring in usable items -- things they may not want any longer, but others would -- as raffle items.

CLUB EVENTS

Douglas Grodt, who in his words organizes "easy hikes for old people," said the September 11 hike on the Grand Mesa is a go. The hikers will attempt to find Lost Lake and, if they're successful, will rename it "Thursday Newcomers Hikers Lake." Douglas will send logistical details to his large email list of hikers. Anyone who wants to be added to the list should contact Douglas at newcomerhikers@gmail.com.

Lisa Seitz said the Newcomers Labor Day picnic went well and attracted 93 people in not-so-bad weather. **President Gary** thanked **Ken and Lisa Seitz** for their time and effort in making the picnic happen, along with other volunteers -- including **Stacie and Chuck Hawkins** (Chuck is now the official Lord of the Shade Tarp), **Scott and Patty Perrin** and **Kris and Don Ami**. Lisa also said it's not too early to save September 7 on your 2026 calendar; that's the date of next year's Labor Day picnic, planned for the same time and place. Lisa also said that the next Wine Club tasting event will be on Thursday, November 13, from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Art Center of Western Colorado. The group will be sampling South African wines. As usual, cost is \$25 per person; November 6 is the deadline for signing up.

Terie Furtney said that she and **Barb Hofecker** will organize this year's holiday party, which will take place on Thursday, December 4 and will feature Mexican food. At this point, Terie said they are looking at caterers -- and, in the future, possibly venues other than the Masonic Lodge/Grand Valley Event Center's ballroom. She said ideas from members for both are welcome, although decisions have to be made in a timely fashion. In the meantime, Terie and Barb will host a gathering on Saturday, November 8, where interested members can help make table centerpieces, which will then be sold at the holiday party. The sale proceeds will be used to buy new decorations (likely through after-holiday sales), which will be stored and used for next year's party

Suzan Fournier said that the first Tour and Lunch gathering of the season will be September 18 at 11 a.m. at the Atomic Legacy Cabin on Orchard Mesa, with lunch following at Dragon Treasure. The cabin chronicles the history of uranium mining and processing on Colorado's Plateau, plus Grand Junction's unique contribution to the Manhattan Project and the Cold War. In October, Susan said, a tour of an alpaca farm is planned; details coming soon.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Suzan Fournier also announced that the Armchair Travelers program's October 2 presentation at the Mesa County Public Libraries' Central Library will feature Colleen Jorgenson describing her eight-day tour of the Galapagos Islands in a small boat. Presentations are free and open to the public. They start at 6:30 p.m. and end at 7:30, just before the library closes. On October 16, also at 6:30 p.m., long-time journalist Steve Reed will give a presentation on Argentina at the Clifton Branch Library. Armchair Travelers is provided through a partnership between Newcomers Club and Mesa County Public Libraries.

Stan Zygmunt, Newcomers member who volunteers with New Dimensions Lifelong Learning Institute, said that the class catalog for the fall-winter session -- offering 90 classes on varying topics -- is now online. Registration has begun and will continue through September 17; classes run at varying dates and times between September 29 and November 14. Stan was especially thrilled about a brand-new class involving a tour of Spirit Engineering, a local company with an aircraft manufacturing plant in Grand Junction. The company designs and produces high-quality light-sport planes that also are affordable for the average pilot -- including one design that uses automobile fuel instead of aviation fuel and has fold-up wings for easy transport. Stan also is teaching two New Dimensions classes himself -- one on flying electric remote control aircraft, the other on the Uintah toll road's history. Finally, he mentioned that the next Midday with New Dimensions presentation, titled Anatomy of a Thunderstorm, takes place on October 9 at the Mesa County Central Library and features an experienced storm-warning coordinator and incident meteorologist.

GUEST SPEAKER

Shenna Hayden, executive director of Museums of Western Colorado, described the museums' 75-year history and the ongoing mission of "inspiring and connecting community" through educational programs, exhibits and events at its three locations -- Museum of the West, Dinosaur Journey and Cross Orchards. The organization has been fully accredited by the American Association of Museums since 1971, recognition that it's following best professional practices. Last year, the museums attracted 52,000 visitors; this summer, that number reached 13,000 -- most from outside the local community. That's had an estimated \$1.2 million impact on the local economy's tourism business. Looking ahead, Hayden said the museums are working to: 1) increase the number of local students visiting and 2) build on current exhibits by making them more fun and interactive. "I'm all about making museums places where people can make noise and have hands-on learning experiences," Hayden said. An example: she mentioned the popularity of animatronic dinosaurs at Dinosaur Journey. She also stressed the wide variety of volunteer opportunities at all three sites and brought a list -- everything from gardening or driving the miniature train at Cross Orchards to helping prepare fossils at Dinosaur Journey to serving as a docent at special events.

Lois Leach

Secretary