

## MINUTES - APRIL 8, 2026

### CLUB BUSINESS

**President Gary Fitzpatrick** called the meeting to order at 10 am, noting that the recently-remounted wall clock says it's a few minutes after 9 am. "At least it's back on the wall," he said. He asked if there were any changes to the March meeting minutes, as posted on the club's website and printed in the newsletter. Hearing none, he called for motions to approve the minutes as is. **Ruth Anna** entered the motion; **Susan Fournier** seconded. The minutes were approved by acclamation.

**President Gary** also thanked **Tanya Davis** of the Hospitality Committee for the spring-themed goodies which were, as usual, first class. He also called for a show of hands of people with April birthdays and congratulated the handful who responded.

**Treasurer Bill Gates** reported that the club's checking account has \$9,160.14, with \$.76 in interest. The reserve account has \$5,475.37.

**Jean Greenfield** from the Membership Committee announced that the club had one new visitor today, who decided to become a member. She is **Sinclair Fogelberg** from New York.

**Karen Dreher** of We Care reported that she sent a sympathy card to **Lisa Seitz** on the death of her mother and a get well card to **Jerry Norton** following his shoulder surgery. Since Jerry has had several other surgeries, he commented that "Time will tell if this one works."

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**Newsletter Editor Dale Gates** thanked those who have sent photos of Newcomers activities to her for newsletter publication. She also reminded folks to take photos when they're out and about with Newcomers and send them to her ([dale.gates1@gmail.com](mailto:dale.gates1@gmail.com)) and to **Robin Chisholm** ([rchisholm@mac.com](mailto:rchisholm@mac.com)) so she can post them on the club's website.

**Stacie Hawkins** and **Molly Fitzpatrick** conducted the monthly raffle, which included many new donations from members.

### CLUB EVENTS

**Jean Greenfield** said that the next Tour and Lunch event — and the last one before tours resume in September — will take place on Wednesday, April 22. Those who sign up will meet at the Highlands

Distillery, 782 24 Road, at 10:45 am for a one-hour tour, followed by lunch, also at the distillery. The sign-up sheet was available at the meeting and still has openings. Contact Jean at [jeangreenfield65@gmail](mailto:jeangreenfield65@gmail) if you want to sign up.

Jean added that she is stepping down from her participation on the Tour and Lunch team. Since **Suzan Fournier** also has stepped down recently, more volunteers are needed to keep the program going.

**Douglas Grodt**, who leads monthly easy hikes for seniors, said the next hike is Thursday, April 9, along the Creek Canyon trail — part of the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area. "There's lots of shade on the trail and wildflowers are starting to bloom," he said. Douglas maintains a large email distribution list of members interested in hikes. If you'd like to be added to the list, contact Douglas at [newcomerhikers@gmail.com](mailto:newcomerhikers@gmail.com).

**Ken Seitz** said that the next Wine Club tasting event will take place on Thursday, June 18, from 4-6 pm at the Art Center of Western Colorado. Those who sign up and pay the \$25 per-person fee will be tasting wines from Eastern Europe. Payment checks should be made out to Newcomers Club of Grand Junction, *not* to Ken or Lisa Seitz as individuals. Looking ahead, Ken mentioned that Newcomers' annual Labor Day Barbecue will be held -- surprise! -- on Labor Day, Monday, September 7. It will feature the same caterer as last year, but with a slightly different menu.

**Deane Drury** said he would like to convene an informal authors and writers forum, with the objective of developing a resource guide for up-and-coming people who like to write. A wide range of writers would be invited to participate -- from those whose work has been published to those who have written articles for professional journals to newspaper reporters and editors to advertising copy writers to speech writers to people who write columns about travel, food and entertainment. The only folks excluded, he said, would be those who write clever comments in bathroom stalls. **President Gary** will provide additional information on the proposed forum in the coming weeks.

## **COMMUNITY EVENTS**

**Suzan Fournier**, the Newcomers Club representative who works with the Mesa County Library System on the Armchair Travel program, said that the next presentation -- and the last one before September -- will be Thursday, May 7, at the Central Library, 443 North 6th Street. Newcomers member **Brett Verlen** will showcase her travels in Southern Africa.

Suzan added that she needs additional help in recruiting and assisting presenters for Armchair Travel, which offers monthly programs from September through May. "We need a couple of people to step up and volunteer — for both Tour and Lunch and Armchair Travel," **President Gary** commented.

**Stan Zygmunt**, who volunteers with New Dimensions Lifelong Learning Institute, said the team is already working on classes for the fall-winter term. Meanwhile, Midday with New Dimensions will offer a free one-hour noontime "Ute Talks with Roland McCook" class on Thursday, May 9. It will be held at Mesa County Public Library's Central Branch. McCook, an Uncompahgre Ute member of the Northern Ute Tribe, will discuss his journey from a reservation in northeast Utah to Washington, D.C., where he worked with the Bureau of Land Management, Fire Management and the Smithsonian Institute.

**Terri Ahern** told the club that Stan has been nominated by New Dimensions as Volunteer of the Year at Beaconfest, the BEACON's annual Boomer and Senior Expo on April 16 at the convention center. While voting for the award has concluded, Terri reminded folks to attend Beaconfest to support Stan.

#### **GUEST SPEAKER**

**Elizabeth Fogarty**, director of Visit Grand Junction, described her group's role as a destination marketing and management organization. "We're marketing to people *outside* of Mesa County, so you really shouldn't see our work," she explained. "Through our strategies and programs, we welcome people to Grand Junction so they can visit, spend money and then go home." A key starting point involves building a brand for Grand Junction that sets it apart from other destinations and that, by harnessing community involvement, represents the area's personality. "We've asked local residents in many different ways what they love about Grand Junction, operating on the principle that if you love living here, you can better attract visitors." Community input is backed up by data science, making use of 171 different data sources about where people like to go and how that affects travel, hospitality and sports industries. Unlike most city groups, Visit Grand Junction is *not* supported by sales tax revenue, but instead by the 4.25% of local lodging tax revenue it receives each year. That investment is paying off, Fogarty said, because tourism in Grand Junction isn't declining as it is in other Colorado communities. "It's growing steadily, and that's what we like," she said. "We're obsessed with avoiding over-tourism, so this community can preserve its quality of life."

--Lois Leach, Secretary