

MINUTES - May 13,2026

CLUB BUSINESS

President Gary Fitzpatrick called the meeting to order at 10 am. He asked for changes to the April meeting minutes and, hearing no changes, called for motions to approve the minutes as posted on the club's website and printed in the newsletter. **Ken Seitz** so motioned and **Ruth Anna** and **Debbie DeRoo** simultaneously seconded. The minutes were approved by acclamation.

President Gary thanked the Hospitality Committee's **Tanya Davis** for the delicious spring-themed treats. He also sent birthday wishes to the four members in attendance with May birthdays.

Treasurer Bill Gates reported that the club's checking account has \$7,823.10, with \$.66 in interest. The reserve account has \$5,475.37.

The Membership Committee's **Jean Greenfield** announced one new member attending the meeting - **Karen Jacobson** from Athens, Georgia.

Karen Dreher, who manages the We Care program, said she sent two sympathy cards to members -- one to **Diana Mead** following the death of her husband, John, and another to **Jeanine Harris** after her sister's death. **Karen** reminded the group to email her (niagaraway@comcast.net) or text her (303-475-5776) to let her know if there are any Newcomers members with health issues or a death in the family, so she can send a card on behalf of the club.

Deane Drury, who last month invited interested Newcomers to help launch an informal writers and authors forum, said an initial meeting generated lots of ideas for potential future projects. Among the ideas: partnership with the Art Center of Western Colorado's annual holiday fair to promote books published by Newcomers authors and mentoring local students in writing skills.

Molly Fitzpatrick and **Nancy Wirtanen** conducted the monthly raffle, which included many new donations from members. **Molly** also showed members seated around the room a beautiful decorative gourd, hand-carved by **Wayne and Linda Ash**. **Alberta Husch** said that Wayne and Linda are donating this special gourd to Newcomers Club. **President Gary** said it would be offered through a special raffle in June.

CLUB EVENTS

In **Steve Likovich's** absence, **President Gary** said that the next Tour and Lunch Club event will take place on Tuesday, May 26, at Mesa County Solid Waste Management, which provides comprehensive residential and commercial waste disposal, including recycling, an organic composting facility and hazardous waste collection. Openings are available on the sign-up sheet for the tour; email Steve (sjlikovich@yahoo.com) to add your name.

Ken and Lisa Seitz reminded the group that the next wine tasting event is Thursday, June 18, from 4-6 pm at the Art Center of Western Colorado. Eastern European wines will be sampled for a cost of \$25 per person. Checks should be made out to the Newcomers Club and sent to Ken Seitz at 2675 Autumn Brook Court, Grand Junction, 81506. The cut-off date for making reservations and paying for them is June 11.

Lisa Seitz added that planning for the Newcomers Annual Labor Day BBQ is well underway. As usual, it will be held at the Grand Pavilion at Canyon View Park on Labor Day -- this year, September 7 -- beginning at 5 pm. More details will be coming soon, she said. **President Gary** thanked Ken and Lisa for their work on the picnic, noting that in spite of rising food costs, the amount spent by the club has been down a bit. "That's quite an accomplishment," he added.

Douglas Grodt, who leads hikes for Newcomers members, said the next hike will be Thursday, May 14, at Kindred Reserve. Unlike recent hikes, he said the May outing will be on level ground and relatively easy. Douglas maintains a large email distribution list of members interested in hikes. If you'd like to be added to the list, contact him at newcomershikers@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Karen Dreher, who volunteers for the non-profit KAFM Community Radio (88.1 FM), says that the station is offering concerts on the second Tuesday of each month. The June concert will be Mixed Bag Jazz.

Stan Zygmunt, who volunteers for New Dimensions Lifelong Learning Institute, said the spring term has concluded and the fall-winter term doesn't begin until September 28, so it's "the mid-year doldrums." Even so, he said that 40 classes on diverse topics have already been added to the fall calendar. In the meantime, Midday with New Dimensions will hold two sessions -- one on June 11 at Mesa County Library's Central Branch, featuring software engineer Tom Sawyer on Bitcoin - Origins and Ethos and the other on July 11 at the Clifton Branch, featuring Dr. Holly Oberle, assistant professor-International Relations at Colorado Mesa University discussing Lessons From Other Developing Democracies.

Terry Ahern, who volunteers at the Colorado National Monument, said that on May 24 from 9:30 am-4:30 pm she will present a then-and-now show of historical photos at the Monument's visitor center. It will include photos from the 1930s through the 1960s and will be part of the monument's 115th anniversary. Later in the season, she also will lead three easy Americans with Disabilities-compliant hikes.

Susan Fournier, who represents Newcomers in working with Mesa County Public Libraries on the Armchair Travel program, thanked the group for their support of Armchair presentations. "Many of you attend those presentations and offer ideas for future ones, and it's appreciated," she said. Susan added that **Esther Schneller** has stepped up to help recruit and assist presenters when the program resumes in September.

Lynn Kubik, who volunteers with the Plateau Chapter of the Colorado Native Plant Society, announced that a series of events will take place from May 22-24. On Sunday, May 24, there will be a garden tour of eight local gardens using native plants and low-water techniques. Tickets are available on the Colorado Native Plant Society (CoNPS) website.

GUEST SPEAKER

Jack Curry, executive director of The Riverside Education Center, described its role as a non-profit providing after-school and enrichment programs for disadvantaged students. Founded in 2006, the center has an overriding goal of "giving students the right resources and the right motivation at the right point in their development to improve the trajectory of their learning and their lives." Riverside offers after-school services in 15 Mesa County Valley School District 51 school buildings so students with the highest needs don't have to be bused away from their regular school setting at the end of the day. Currently 1,200 students are served by the program -- more than 700 of whom attend daily, at no cost to their families. The kids get a meal-sized snack, help with their school work, plus enrichment activities including crafts, cooking, biking, games and drone play. The program offers one tutor for every five students, to foster close relationships and a sense of belonging. Nearly 90 percent of students in Riverside's programs have shown significant growth in school district assessments, especially in reading and math. For kids who start out at a disadvantage compared to other D51 students, Riverside aims to provide "an extra shot of equity by supplementing their public school instruction," Curry said.

-- Lois Leach, Secretary