

MINUTES - JULY 8, 2026

CLUB BUSINESS

President Gary Fitzpatrick called the meeting to order at 10 am, noting that "even amid the smoke, we're here." He called for any changes to the June meeting minutes and, hearing no changes, asked for a motion and a second to approve them as is. **Susan Norton** so motioned; **Marilyn Drury** seconded. The minutes were approved by acclamation.

President Gary thanked **Tanya Davis**, head of the Hospitality Committee, for the Independence Day-themed treats and decorations. "Once again, you've produced a very festive selection," he added. He also congratulated the handful of members with July birthdays.

Treasurer Bill Gates reported that the club's checking account has \$8,535.31, with \$.72 in interest. Reserves are at \$5,516.08, with \$84.90 in interest, year to date.

The Membership Committee's **Larryne Zygmunt** said that **Joyce Gilligan**, who moved here from Wyoming, became a new member. In addition, three visitors -- **Pattie Robinson** and **Ginger Hiatt**, both of Grand Junction, and **Ruth Abate** of Fruita -- were visitors at the meeting. **President Gary** welcomed them all.

Reporting on behalf of **Karen Dreher** of the club's We Care program, **Sharon Lindsey** said that get well cards were sent to **Pat Perrin**, who had surgery after breaking her leg; **Don Ami** and **Dee Ramsel**, who both sustained broken arms; Lori Arment, who had abdominal surgery; and **Jerry Norton**, who had "one more surgery" in a series of operations.

Stacie Hawkins and **Molly Fitzpatrick** ran a special raffle of only four donated items -- two hand-made items, including a decorated gourd by **Wayne and Linda Ash**, plus two tickets to Music in the Grapevines summer concerts. Raffle tickets were \$3 each. The raffle raised \$125 to support club activities. Stacie noted that there will be no raffle in August, although members are encouraged to bring in items for future monthly raffles, which will resume in September.

CLUB EVENTS

Douglas Grodt, who leads easy hikes for Newcomers members on Thursdays, said the next hike will be July 9 at the West Bench area of the Grand Mesa. While the Grand Mesa is cooler than the Grand Valley and therefore an escape from the heat, Douglas has received reports of significant smoke on the mesa --

an unusual occurrence. For that reason, he noted that anyone with breathing issues or smoke sensitivity should be aware of conditions there.

Ken Seitz reported that the next Wine Club tasting event will be August 13 from 4-6 pm at the Art Center of Western Colorado. Greek wines will be sampled for a cost of \$25 per person. The deadline for making reservations is August 6.

Ken Seitz also reminded the group that the Annual Labor Day BBQ will be Monday, September 7, from 5-8 pm, at the Grand Pavilion at Canyon View Park. Cost will be \$13 per person for members and \$20 per person for non-members. Sign-up forms are available on the Newcomers Club website (gjnewcomers.org) under Meetings and Events. The form is also the last page of the monthly newsletter.

President Gary thanked Ken and Lisa for stepping up to organize the Labor Day event, and called on other members to step up to manage the club's annual Holiday Party. "When I sent out an email asking for a volunteer, I got zero responses," he said. "Without someone to pull the Holiday Party together, we might have to cancel it this year, and no one wants to do that." Former party organizers are available to provide help and suggestions.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Stan Zygmunt, a Newcomers member who volunteers for New Dimensions Lifelong Learning Institute, said that the curriculum development team is working steadily on the fall-winter term. More than 95 classes are already on the calendar on a wide range of topics. In the meantime, Midday with New Dimensions has two upcoming hour-long classes, free to the public. On July 9, Dr. Holly Oberle, Colorado Mesa University assistant professor-International Relations, will discuss "Lessons from Other Developing Democracies" at the (air-conditioned) Clifton Branch library. On August 6, preparedness expert Rob Hunter will do a presentation on "Wildfires: How to Prepare" at the (also air-conditioned) Central Library.

Susan Norton, a Newcomers member who volunteers for The Art Center of Western Colorado, said that the next Music in the Grapevines summer concert will take place at Two Rivers Winery on July 21. Exit 42, a local group that has been playing together for more than 30 years, will play. Gates open at 6 pm; the concert runs from 7-9 pm. Advance tickets are available for \$20 per person on artcenterguild.org or at The Art Center of Western Colorado gift shop. Tickets are available for \$25 per person at the gate, although recent concerts have sold out.

Two representatives from Hilltop Community Resources -- **Mary Miot**, volunteer manager, and **Elisa Mackey**, development specialist -- invited Newcomers to the annual Desert Bloom Bash fund-raising event on August 29, 4:30-10 pm at Absolute Prestige Ranch in Loma. The event includes a cocktail hour, catered barbeque dinner and live music. Tickets start at \$175 each and can be purchased on Hilltop's

website, http.org. Proceeds from the 2026 Desert Bloom Bash go to support Hilltop's Connections Program, which offers services to the area's unhoused young people from ages 13 - 22 -- including outreach on the street, food, shower facilities and temporary and emergency shelter. In addition to attending the event, **Mary Miot** invited the group to volunteer at the Bash event or at other Hilltop projects, to help create a community where everyone belongs. To volunteer, go to http.org and click on the volunteer icon.

GUEST SPEAKER

Dr. Peter Booth, a long-time museum professional and current assistant director at The Art Center of Western Colorado, talked about the center's plans to upgrade its facility and expand its already successful programs. The plans are called TLC for TAC -- short for Tender Loving Care for The Art Center. "Our mission is to create an authentic creative community that provides economic and social benefits," he said. "I think we're doing an exceptional job of that, despite some challenges." The Art Center offers 23 exhibits a year, showcasing the work of 500 artists, many of whom are local. It offers an extensive art education program, with classes for kids, adults and people with physical and developmental disabilities. It also serves as a welcoming venue for local performing arts groups, civic groups, Colorado Mesa University students -- and Newcomers Wine Club. "People find art and culture projects inspiring, and that helps draw businesses to our community." Under the TLC for TAC initiative, The Art Center would upgrade its physical location -- from repairing the roof to enhancing security to adding an integrated sound system to introducing more landscaping and a sculpture garden. In addition to a general spruce-up, the center hopes to continually refresh and upscale its programs and its partnerships to solidify its position as a community creative hub. "We're looking to the future and, while we want to stay where we are, we may grow into a second location at some point," he concluded.

Lois Leach, Secretary