MINUTES - NOV 2026

CLUB BUSINESS

President Gary Fitzpatrick called the meeting to order by recognizing that it's Veterans Day. He asked any members who are veterans of any branch of the U.S. military to stand so the group can applaud them for their service. "We'd like to express our gratitude to you, since you worked to help preserve the rights we're demonstrating right now -- the right to assemble and freely speak our minds."

President Gary asked if any veterans had stories about their service that they'd like to share. **Joan Robinson** is not a veteran herself, but she described the exemplary work of her daughter-in-law, who heads the U.S. Navy's Infectious Disease Department at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. She held that position during the COVID pandemic, Joan said, and was responsible for the health of many people during that time, including the President. The group applauded her service.

President Gary called for approval of the October meeting minutes, as printed in the Newcomers newsletter and posted on the group's website. **Tanya Davis** so moved and **Chuck Hawkins** seconded. The minutes were approved by acclamation. He also thanked **Tanya** for the spread of delectable Thanksgiving-themed treats and congratulated members with November birthdays.

Treasurer **Bill Gates** reported that the club currently has $8,153.29 in checking, including $.68 in interest, and $5,557.40 in reserves. In short, he said, "All is well."

In the absence of **Karen Dreher**, who manages the We Care program, **Jean Greenfield** reported that Karen sent out get well cards to two members -- **Dale Gates**, who had shoulder surgery, and **Russ Rollins**, who had a hernia operation. Anyone who knows of a Newcomers member who could use a get well or sympathy card can text Karen at 303-475-5776 or email her at niagaraway@comcast.net -- although a text is preferred.

The Membership Committee's **Jean Greenfield** and **Larrayne Zygmunt** confirmed that there are no new members at the meeting.

The Newcomers executive board, led by **President Gary**, updated the group on a number of business items discussed during the October meeting:

- Proposed change in the club's doing-business name: The board previously proposed changing the club's name -- the one by which it is commonly known and referenced in its bylaws -- to

"Grand Junction Newcomers and Friends." This change is consistent with "and friends" name changes adopted by other Newcomers Clubs, including those in Montrose and Evergreen. It also makes it clear that people don't have to be a recent arrival in the area to join the club. Many members were newcomers when they arrived but have remained club members for years, sometimes decades. The only requirement for changing the club's commonly-used name is a change in wording of the bylaws, following a discussion of the topic with club members. A member vote on the issue will be held at the January coffee meeting. Assuming a "yes" vote, the club's new Doing Business As/Trade Name would be filed with the Colorado Secretary of State's office. Note: This board proposal would not change the club's *legal* name, which is used in all formal tax and bank documents. For that reason, no further legal actions or attorney fees would be required. **Dale Gates** suggested broadening the name to "Grand Valley Newcomers and Friends," but **Terry Ahern** pointed out that there's more than one Grand Valley in Colorado, so it could cause confusion -- especially for people who truly are new to the area.

- Temporary suspension of Zelle usage: The board has temporarily put a halt to the use of Zelle as a payment system for Newcomers activities. As **Treasurer Bill** explained, Zelle transactions are completed directly from one bank to another, with no intermediary. "Not all systems work when communicating with Zelle and they don't all work with every bank," he explained. "Large banks have agreed on how Zelle transactions work, but many small banks haven't yet." He said he's working with Newcomers member **Robin Chisholm**. "We're on the right path to getting things fixed, but we won't have everything working in time for holiday party payments."

- 2026 Newcomers holiday party. **President Gary** announced that there *will* be a holiday party after all -- but one that doesn't require extensive volunteer involvement. It will take place on Tuesday, December 15, at the Double Tree by Hilton, 743 Horizon Drive. The Double Tree will serve as a one-stop provider of the venue, catered meals, centerpieces and set-up and clean-up service. A social gathering will begin at 5:45 pm, with dinner at 6:30. Entree options will be chicken breast with prosciutto or six-ounce beef tenderloin. Both are served with vegetables, rolls and dessert. Cost will be $40/person for Newcomers members and $45/person for guests. Since the Double Tree's liquor license prohibits guests from bringing in their own alcoholic beverages, a cash bar will be available. A reservation form was available at the meeting and will also be included in the Newcomers newsletter and website. Completed forms and accompanying checks should be mailed to **Joni Politzer**, 2301 W. Ridges Blvd., Grand Junction 81507.

- Club raffle. At the October meeting, **President Gary** explained that the long-standing monthly raffle would be discontinued due to several legal problems with the practice. Since several members asked the board to reconsider that decision, both **President Gary** and **Dale Gates** checked with the Colorado Secretary of State's office, to verify Newcomers' eligibility under Colorado's charity gaming statutes. The answer: because Newcomers Club is a non--profit 501(c)7 *social organization* (an Internal Revenue Service designation), we are not eligible to get a legally required raffle license. In short, continuing the monthly raffle without a license would be illegal. "Apparently Newcomers had been operating the raffle illegally for many years," he said. "Once the board learned that, we voted to keep ourselves within the law." Proceeds from the raffle were originally intended to fund coffee and treats provided by the Hospitality Committee at monthly coffee meetings. According to **Treasurer Bill**, the raffle had been generating $400-500 a year -- more than enough to fund the treats. A tip jar is now provided on the treats table, for the same purpose.

- Possible change of venue for monthly meetings. Also at the October meeting, **President Gary** said the board was considering the possibility of moving the monthly coffee meetings from the

Masonic Center to the new Community Recreation Center, 2836 Recreation Way. Before proposing such a move to club members, the board has gathered additional information about the recreation center option and has toured the meeting rooms there with the center manager. **Tanya Davis** also was invited on the tour to make sure it would work for the Hospitality Committee. **President Gary** showed some pictures of the community meeting rooms and a map showing their location within the center in a fairly isolated spot, removed from the basketball courts, swimming pools and workout rooms. He said the two rooms under consideration -- basically two rooms with a retractable dividing wall, totaling 2,924 square feet -- would cost $170 for two hours of rental time each month. Recreation center staff would set up the tables and chairs and be available for tech support for the audio-visual equipment. A range of seating arrangements are available -- including theater style, banquet style (table rounds), or some combination. Currently the Masonic Center charges $85 per month for a large room with theater-style seating and three steps on each side. **Treasurer Bill** said that the club currently takes in enough money in membership dues to cover the additional room rental costs. The club's two other major expenditures are the Labor Day barbeque and the holiday party, which the club subsidizes to keep member prices low.

- Member questions and next steps in venue consideration. **President Gary** opened the meeting to questions and comments from members. They asked about everything from the rec center parking set-up (ample paved parking, with 16 dedicated handicapped spots immediately near the entrance) to AV set-up (one computer, new sound system, projector with screen, 86" TV) to proximity of kitchen facilities (right around the corner from meeting rooms -- easier, per **Tanya**) to lighting (windows on two sides, with views). to safety features (curbless entrance, all-one-level seating with no step hazards). Predictably, member opinions were mixed, with some preferring the familiar Masonic Center setting and others preferring a lighter, brighter venue. A special tour of the rec center meeting space has been set for Thursday, January 14, at 10:30 am., so members can see the space for themselves, listen for noise, sit in the chairs, etc. There is no limit to the number of people who can participate so there will be no sign-up sheet. Everyone who is interested is urged to attend. Since the number of attendees will be large and subject to last-minute change, there will not be an organized lunch afterward. At the February 10 coffee meeting, the board will make an official stay-where-we-are-or-relocate proposal and a member vote will be held.

CLUB EVENTS

Douglas Grodt, who leads gentle hikes for Newcomers members, said this week's Thursday hike will be across the top of the Colorado National Monument, on a portion of the Liberty Cap Trail. "We won't do the entire trail, but will do a section and then turn around and come back, in about two hours," he said. For more information or to sign up for the extensive email distribution list of members that Douglas maintains, contact him at newcomershikers@gmail.com.

Nile Leach of the Tour and Lunch team said that the next tour is November 19 at 10 am at Spirit Engineering, a manufacturer of fully ready-to-fly vintage-style light aircraft, located near Fruita. Spirit Engineering limited the capacity of the tour to 20 people -- and 20 already have signed up. For that

reason, Nile said he would attempt to arrange for an additional tour guide to accommodate the people on the waiting list. If he's successful, he will notify the wait-listed folks.

On behalf of **Ken and Lisa Seitz**, **President Gary** announced that the first Wine Club meeting in 2027 will take place on Thursday, January 14, from 4-6 pm at the Art Center of Western Colorado. Wines from Washington state will be sampled, for the usual cost of $25 per person. The deadline for signing up and submitting a check will be Thursday, January 7. Zelle will not be available as a payment option for this event, so please send checks to **Lisa Seitz**, 2675 Autumn Brook Ct., Grand Junction 81506 by the deadline.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Susan Norton, who volunteers for the Art Center of Western Colorado, announced that the center's 2026 Holiday Fine Arts and Crafts Fair will take place on Saturday, November 21 from 9 am-4 pm and Sunday, November 22 from 9 am-3 pm. A members-only preview will be held on Friday, November 20 from 6-8 pm. The annual fair -- now in its 56th year -- offers original fine art and handmade goods from more than 30 artists selected by a jury to exhibit their goods. There's a Not-so-Starving-Artists section of reasonably priced items, homemade baked goods, and a raffle.

Deane Drury, a first-time exhibitor at the fair, thanked **Lois Leach** for approaching Art Center Executive Director Lee Borden to suggest including original written works in this year's fair. Following that suggestion, Deane successfully passed the jury selection process and will be exhibiting his original novels on November 21-22.

Joan Robinson, who has volunteered to promote the Salvation Army's Holiday Giving Tree for years, announced that she now has information on underprivileged children who would not otherwise get Christmas gifts. The information is recorded on tags, which describe each child's age, gender and Christmas wish list. Joan encouraged members to take one or more tags and either purchase gifts for the children named or donate money, which Joan will then use to shop for the Giving Tree. "I'm always happy to spend your money on gifts for kids who need them," she said. If you choose to buy gifts yourself, bring the unwrapped gifts, each attached to the appropriate tag, to the Salvation Army, 1235 North 4th Street in Grand Junction, by December 14. You also can deliver the gifts to Joan and she will take them to the Salvation Army on your behalf.

Stan Zygmunt, who volunteers for New Dimensions Lifelong Learning Institute, said that the fall term will end on Friday, November 13. An email will go to all class participants, asking for their feedback on existing courses and ideas for the future. In addition, New Dimensions offers Midday with New Dimensions, a series of free one-hour noon-time public lectures at Mesa County Public Library locations. Stan said that the next lecture will be Thursday, December 10 at the Central Library and will feature **Ashton Andrade**, an Interpretative Specialist for the Department of Energy Office of Legacy Monument. The presentation, "Atomic Legacy Cabin, History of Uranium on the Colorado Plateau," will

highlight the 80+-year history of local nuclear and uranium development, tracing back to Grand Junction's little-known Manhattan Project site. On Tuesday, January 12, 2027 at the Clifton Branch Library, *Alex Minder* will lecture on cybersecurity and ransomware epidemics.

GUEST SPEAKER

Since the meeting was strictly a business meeting, there was no guest speaker.

Lois Leach, Secretary