



GRAND JUNCTION NEWCOMERS CLUB

NEWSLETTER

WHERE NEWCOMERS BECOME OLD FRIENDS

January Speaker



Mike Bennett became Grand Junction’s City Manager in December 2024, bringing with him nearly two decades of leadership experience in local government. Before joining Grand Junction, Mike served in various capacities including city operations, transit, and administration in Fruita, CO and Hickory, North Carolina. In addition to his municipal leadership, Mike has also shared his experience with future leaders as an Adjunct Professor of Public Administration at Colorado Mesa University.

Mike holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Journalism from Utah State University and a Master of Public Administration from Brigham Young University. He is a credentialed manager through the International City/County Management Association and serves on the board of the Colorado City/County Management Association. His peers recognized him as Colorado’s City Manager of the Year, a reflection of his commitment to public service and community leadership.

Beyond his professional work, Mike is a husband and father of three who loves spending time outdoors with his family, fly-fishing, mountain biking, and hiking.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Remember that it is January and time to renew your membership, \$15 for singles, \$30 for couples. Please let us know if any of your contact information has changed. Thank you to all of you who have already renewed! Contact the membership committee, Larrayne Zygmunt, larrz5@mac.com or Jean Greenfield, jeangreenfield65@gmail.com if you have questions.

MINUTES – DEC 2025

There was no meeting in December. The next meeting is Wednesday, January 8, at 9:30 am.

MEMBER NOTES

Welcome to our newest members!

Deborah Braffett, from Cleveland, OH. 1516 Crest View Way, GJ 81506. 970-250-3831. debfet@gmail.com

Sharon Lindsey, from Las Cruces, NM. 200 Rood Ave, Apt 2114, GJ 81501. 575-649-1554. slindsey@comcast.net



The Dinner Club celebrated its annual holiday party at the home of Gail and Greg McCarty.



COMMUNITY DOINGS

The **Museums of Western Colorado** will host a State of the Museum Address on **Jan. 13**, and the local community is invited! Join the Executive Director and hear about the museum's milestones achieved in 2025 and celebrate the start of the museum's 60th anniversary. Address starts at 8:30 am, followed by an interactive community roundtable discussion. Museum of the West (462 Ute Ave.), reserve a free ticket here: <https://museumsowesternco.org/>

Grand Mesa Summit Challenge **Sled Dog Races** - Spectators welcome. Races start at 8:30 am on **Jan. 24 and 25** at the Mesa Top trailhead. <https://www.rmsdc.org/>

Some doings at Mesa County Libraries ([Mesacountylibraries.org](https://mesacountylibraries.org/)) include:

- Jan. 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22, 28, and 29, 6:00 pm-7:00 pm. Artist in Residence Meet and Greet: Tobias Peltier. 970West Studio.
- Jan. 8, 5:30 pm-7:00 pm. Books On Tap - discuss the books you're currently reading. Colorado Craft Coffee and Beer House.
- Jan. 14, 6:00 pm-7:45 pm. Poetry Night. Listen, and if you like, share your poetry. Central Library Mesa Room.
- Jan. 20, 10:30 am-11:30 am. Crafting for Adults. Supplies provided. Fruita Branch.
- Jan. 27, 10:30 am-11:30 am. Crafting for Adults. Supplies provided. Room 1, Orchard Mesa Branch.

Weekend Book Sale Friends of the Mesa County Libraries will hold their weekend book sales **January 2, 3, 9 and 10** from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm at the First Congregational Church (Across from Grand Junction High School). Great prices on used books, DVDs, CDs, and more - cash, check, credit card, and Venmo are accepted. Free admission, proceeds benefit Mesa County Libraries programs and projects.

Local Performing Arts

The Theater Project of Grand Junction presents "Rabbit Hole", **Jan. 9-11**. A Pulitzer Prize-winning play by David Lindsay-Abaire that explores marriage, family dynamics, and the pain of bereavement through honest, witty, and poignant scenes. Performances at 7 pm Friday and Saturday, and 2 pm Saturday and Sunday at the Art Center. Tickets \$23-28. www.gjartcenter.org

The **Grand Junction Symphony** presents "Crescendo - Bewitching Broadway", a Broadway-style event featuring popular film and screen music performed by the orchestra and guest vocalists. **Jan. 17** at 7:30 pm, **Jan. 18** at 3:00 pm at the Asteria Theater. Tickets \$23-89. <https://gjso.org/>

The **Center Stage Art Center Concert Series** offers indoor concerts to enjoy during the colder months! Concerts start at 7:30 pm at the Art Center, tickets are \$25 in advance. <https://www.gjartcenter.org/events/centerstageconcertseries>

- **January 31** - Sinners & Saints
- **February 28** - Jeneve Rose
- **April 11** - Marc Allen Band
- **Jan. 17, 18, & 19** - The Theater Project of Grand Junction: Almost Maine, shows at 2 pm and 7 pm at the Art Center of Western Colorado, \$20
- **Jan. 18** (7:30pm) & **Jan. 19** (3 pm) - Grand Junction Symphony Orchestra: Superhero Scores, Avalon Theater, \$25-\$50
- **Jan. 25** - Center Stage Concert Series at the Art Center of Western Colorado: Hot Tub Jazz, 7:30 pm, \$20-\$25

Free Talks by Valley Experts

- **Jan. 8**, 6-7 pm - Palisade Historical Society - January History Talk: La Plaza History. Iriana Medina, Executive Director of La Plaza will speak about the history of Palisade's Child and Migrant Center. *NEW VENUE* Palisade Community Gym at 711 Iowa Ave in Palisade. Free (donations welcome).



- **Jan. 15,** 12-1 pm - Mesa County Oral History Meeting - Recent Old Spanish Trail Research, Central Library Community Room.
- **Jan. 17,** 1-2 pm - Mesa County Libraries' Artist-in-Residence Tobias Peltier presents "From the Frontier to First Street - a Tattoo Lineage in Grand Junction." Central Library Community Room.
- **Jan. 28,** 6:30 pm - Colorado Archaeological Society meeting with Dennis DeVore presenting "Canines in Rock Art: Wolves, Coyotes, and mostly Dogs." Redlands United Methodist Church at 527 Village Way. Free (donations welcome).



More photos from the Dinner Club holiday celebration.



The December lunch of Singular Diners was at Rockslide Brewery, where they collected a cash donation for the Food Bank of the Rockies.





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January Activities

	<p>COFFEE (Monthly Meeting)</p> <p>Everyone is welcome at our monthly coffee, held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Masonic Lodge/Grand Valley Event Center (2400 Consistory Ct). We meet at 9:30 am to enjoy a bit of coffee and socializing before our business meeting. We usually have a guest speaker from a local non-profit or other organization. Meetings conclude around 11 am. The next meeting is Wednesday 14 and the speaker is Mike Bennett, Grand Junction City Manager.</p>
	<p>ARMCHAIR TRAVEL</p> <p>No Armchair Travel in January.</p>
	<p>BOOK CLUB</p> <p>To be announced.</p>
	<p>BOWLING</p> <p>Strikes! Spares! Gutter Balls! Whatever your skill level, you are welcome to join up with other Newcomers every Friday at 9:15 am at the Orchard Mesa Lanes, 295 27 Rd. It's only \$9 for three games. Shoes are available for rental. For information, phone or text Michael Shea at 970-663-3238, 970-213-4859, or dakotah1001@msn.com.</p>
	<p>DINNER CLUB</p> <p>The Dinner Club had our Christmas party at the home of Greg and Gail McCarty. Live music and a beautifully decorated home set the tone of a lovely buffet, attended by 56 of our members! Everyone had a wonderful time!</p>



	<p>HAPPY HOUR</p> <p>Happy hours will resume in January. Mark your calendars for the 1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesdays of the month, usually from 5 to 7 pm. Look for an email for locations.</p> <p>A suggestion: With so many new members and guests at happy hours, wear your name tag to facilitate introductions and lighten the load on our memories.</p>
	<p>KNITTING</p> <p>We will be meeting Monday, Jan. 19, 1:30 to 3 pm at the home of Carolyn White.</p>
	<p>MAH JONGG</p> <p>The Thursday morning Newcomers Mahjongg group plays from 9 - 11 am each week. Due to construction at the Pavilion, our group has moved to an alternative location until further notice. Interested players can contact Nancy H for details. Don't forget to order 2026 American Mahjongg cards upon email notification!</p>
	<p>MOVIE CLUB</p> <p>Movie club members will start their new year by meeting Tuesday, Jan. 6 at 4 pm to discuss the 2025 film <i>Jay Kelly</i> starring George Clooney and Adam Sandler. This comedy-drama presents a poignant look at aging stardom and the gap between public persona and private self. On a profound journey through Europe, both Jay (Clooney) and his manager (Sandler) confront the choices they've made, relationships with loved ones, and the legacies they'll leave behind.</p>
	<p>NEEDLECRAFTERS</p> <p>NeedleCrafters meet at member homes the second Monday of the month to "needle" on various projects. Interested persons can contact Nancy H. for info at nancyksh@gmail.com or text 224-688-2308</p>
	<p>SINGULAR DINERS</p> <p>Singular Diners is a group for those who would like to enjoy the various restaurants in the Grand Junction area but hesitate to dine alone. The next lunch will be on Jan. 21 at Red Lobster, 575 - 24 1/2 Rd. at noon. Please confirm your attendance to Lina Palomo bluetopaz1129@yahoo.com or (626) 993-7046.</p>



	<p>TENNIS</p> <p>Drop in any Monday, Wednesday or Friday at Canyon View Park for mixed doubles play. Court time is 1 pm to 3 pm. Everyone welcome. Questions? Call Tony Miller, 970-255-9964.</p>
	<p>TOUR AND LUNCH</p> <p>To be announced.</p>
	<p>WINE CLUB</p> <p>Our next wine tasting is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 15, from 4 - 6 pm at the Art Center. Cost will remain \$25. We will be tasting wines from South America. Deadline for reservations is January 8. Please send a check made out to Newcomers Club to Ken Seitz, 2675 Autumn Brook Ct, Grand Junction, 81506. Any questions, please contact Lisa at lisa.seitz623@gmail.com or at 303-263-4391. Hope to see you there!</p>

MEMBER CLASSIFIED ADS

Free text-only space is available for member non-commercial and personal ads. They will run until forbid or a maximum of three months both in the newsletter and on our website. Send your request to gjnewcomers@gmail.com by the 20th of the preceding month



Scan to access
gjnewcomers.org



Please contact **Karen Dreher** if you know of someone in the club who needs a card: 303-475-5776 (text preferred), niagaraway@comcast.net

Need a Name Tag?

We suggest you keep your name badge in your car so it will always be handy. If you don't already have a magnetic name badge, you can order one from **Alberta Husch** for \$12. Email her at aahusch@gmail.com.



New Dimensions Lifelong Learning Institute News

New Dimensions Lifelong Learning, a volunteer nonprofit organization, provides classes each fall and winter/spring for adults 50+ years. Information on class schedules is available at www.newdimensionsgj.org.

Planning for the 2026 winter/spring term continues with over 79 classes already on the class calendar. Some classes for the upcoming term:

- National Monuments You've Never Heard Of (& Why You Should Know Them!)
- United Nations System and International Law
- What legal documents do I need?
- Machines that Reveal the Fundamental Nature of Reality: LIGO and LHC
- Genealogy – The Basics: Getting Started
- Energy Use in the United States

Look for the class catalog online on January 14 with classes scheduled from February 2 until March 20, 2026.

In the meantime, attend a Midday with New Dimensions lecture. Midday lectures are short versions of past classes.

Midday with New Dimensions offers a one-hour lecture titled **The Uintah Toll Road: A Local History Story** presented by Stanley Zygmunt at the Mesa County **Clifton Library**, 3270 D 1/2 Rd, at noon, on Tuesday, January 13. Stan is a retired chemical engineer whose interest in the history around a unique mineral called Gilsonite was piqued by a drive over Baxter Pass, where he was introduced to the term Gilsonite and saw sites that challenged his engineering senses. Stan dove into researching the history of Gilsonite that yielded so many interesting stories he had to share it.

Stan will spin local history tales around the Uintah Toll Road completed in 1905 from Dragon Junction, Utah to Vernal and Fort Duchesne. Find out why investors sank serious money into building not only the toll road, but the world's steepest and crookedest railroad across the Bookcliffs. Learn how the names Mack, Baxter, and McAndrews are related to Gilsonite. Find out what Henry Ford, Aldophus Busch, chewing gum, wet sheep, and

80,000 bricks have in common. And time permitting, Stan will tell how that baby-blue warehouse that can be seen from I-70 west of Fruita ties United Kingdom nuclear reactors to Gilsonite.

Stan's Midday is a longer version of the lecture given at the June 2024 Newcomers meeting.

Executive Board 2024-2025

President – Gary Fitzpatrick, 419-450-9438, gfitzpatrick77@gmail.com

1st Vice President – Tom Politzer, 303-888-5437, tpolitzer@msn.com

2nd Vice President – Stacie Hawkins, 206-501-1523, shawkins5594@gmail.com

Treasurer – Bill Gates, 541-613-4390, whgates.62@gmail.com

Secretary – Lois Leach, 303-748-5203, decsaj12948@gmail.com

Grand Junction Newcomers Club

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gjnewcomers.org

Submissions for general club news and ads are due the 20th of the preceding month.

You don't have to be new to the area to join Newcomers. Annual dues are \$15, \$25 for a couple. Download the membership form at gjnewcomers.org, and mail the completed form with a check. Or come to a monthly coffee (2nd Wednesday of the month, 9:30 am, at the Masonic Lodge/Grand Valley Event Center (2400 Consistory Ct) to get to know us a bit and sign up then. You'll meet great people, receive our member directory, get our newsletter and timely email alerts, can join any of our regular activity groups, and participate in special events.



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FREE AND FUN NEXT MONTH

Date	What	Where	Time	More Information
2	First Friday	The Art Center	6:30 – 9 pm	gjartcenter.org
14	A Little Noon Music—Sandra Sundstrom, Violin	First Methodist Church	12:15 pm	www.fumcgj.org/events
9	Books on Tap	CO Craft Coffee and Beer House	5:30 – 7 pm	https://mesacountylibraries.org
13	Midday with New Dimensions—The Uintah Toll Road	Clifton Library	Noon – 1 pm	https://mesacountylibraries.org
30	Science Uncorked: DNA sequencing in conservation	Whitewater Hill Winery	6 – 8 pm	https://whitewaterhill.com/events-2/ Reservations welcome