GRAND JUNCTION NEWCOMERS CLUB NEWSLETTER

WHERE NEWCOMERS BECOME OLD FRIENDS

PRESIDENTS LETTER

Our next meeting is Wednesday, October 14. We meet at 9:30 am for coffee and fellowship, and the meeting begins at 10 with our speaker Dr. Brian Hill, Superintendent of School District 51. We hope to see you then.

-- Gary Fitzpatrick, President



Dr. Brian Hill currently serves as the Superintendent for Mesa County Valley School District 51, the largest school district between Denver, CO and Salt Lake City, UT. District 51 enrolls approximately 20,000 students and employs over 3,500 staff members. Prior to serving as the Superintendent, Dr. Hill served as the Assistant Superintendent from 2019-2022.

Before moving to Colorado, Dr. Hill served the Austin Independent School District in Austin, TX, as a teacher, school administrator, Administrative Supervisor, and Special Assistant to the Superintendent. Dr. Hill holds a B.A. in Theology from East Texas Baptist University, an M.A. in Educational Leadership Administration from The University of Texas at Austin, and an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy from The University of Texas at Austin.

MINUTES – SEPT 2026

First Vice President Tom Politzer opened the meeting at 10 am., explaining that **President Gary Fitzpatrick** is out of town -- and on safari. He called for a motion to approve the August meeting minutes, as published in the club newsletter and posted on the website. **Dale Gates** so motioned; **Ruth Anna** seconded and the minutes were approved by a voice vote of members.

Treasurer Bill Gates reported that the club has $8,310.41 in checking, with $.71 in interest, and $5,516.08 in reserves.

Vice President Tom thanked **Tanya Davis** and her Hospitality team -- **Dale Gates**, **Alberta Husch**, **Debbie DeRoo**, **Jean Greenfield** and **Lisa Seitz** -- for the delicious baked goods. He was particularly appreciative since Tanya had cataract surgery two days ago, but pulled the team's contributions together -- and attended the meeting -- nonetheless.

On behalf of the Membership Committee, Jean Greenfield announced that several people are first-time visitors to the club -- and all of them became members today. They are **Suzanne Hetts** and **Don Estep**, who previously lived in Arizona and various parts of Colorado; **Mary Jackson**, who moved here from Lawrence, Kansas; **Julie Montgomery**, who came from Texas; **Jeneve Hopkinson**, who came from Minneapolis; and **Deb and Doug Mueller**, who came from Kansas City. With the addition of these new members, the club's membership is 379 people.

Karen Dreher, who manages the We Care program, said that she sent only one card this month -- a sympathy card to **Debbie Rieger,** whose husband was in hospice care and then passed away. "With 379 members, you'd think there would be more occasions when a member could use a get-well card or a sympathy card," Karen said. "If you know of someone who falls into that category, just text me at 303-475-5776. You can also email me (niagaraway@comcast.net), although I prefer a text."

Stacie Hawkins and **Jean Greenfield** conducted the monthly raffle. Raffle items included two cream cheese-filled pound cakes.

CLUB EVENTS

Stacie Hawkins led the group in applauding **Ken and Lisa Seitz** and their team of helpers for pulling together the Labor Day barbeque. "It's a lot of work, and we appreciate it," Stacie said. "We had 72 people in attendance," Ken said. "Everyone seemed to have a good time -- at least I had a good time," he noted. He added that the Wine Club, which he and Lisa also organize, will have its next meeting in January. More details to come.

Lois Leach of the Tour and Lunch team said that the sign-up sheet for the September 17 tour of CareFlight of the Rockies' hangar is full. Anyone who wants to add their name to a waiting list can do so by emailing Lois at decsaj12948@gmail.com. If one of the Newcomers who signed up cancels during the next week, Lois will notify you.

In the absence of **Steve Likovich**, who organized the next tour, Lois added that it will take place on October 28 at 10 am. It will involve a tour of the HopeWest PACE program facility, 2754 Compass Drive. HopeWest PACE (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly) is a one-of-a-kind program in Mesa County that delivers all needed ongoing medical and support services to seniors so they can live in their own homes and remain independent as long as possible. For more information or to sign up, email Steve at stlikovich@gmailcom.

Douglas Grodt, who leads gentle hikes for Newcomers members, said the September 10 hike will be on the Audubon Trail near the Redlands. "For people who've been asking for level hiking surfaces, this trail is level, with either gravel or blacktop." Douglas maintains a large email distribution list of members interested in future hikes. If you'd like to be added to the list, contact him at newcomershikers@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Suzan Fournier represents Newcomers Club, along with **Esther Schneller,** in partnering with Mesa County Libraries to present the Armchair Travel program. From September through May, the program offers monthly presentations by people who have recently traveled. Suzan noted that Esther presented a "riveting account" of her extensive travels through North and South Dakota. The next presentation will be October 1 at the Central Branch Library, 443 North 6th Street, and features **Loraine Jensen**, founder and executive director of the American Association of Runic Studies. She will explain the search for and meanings of runes, an ancient writing system used by Germanic and Nordic tribes from the third to thirteenth centuries. Doors open at 6:00 pm and the presentation runs from 6:30-7:30.

Stan Zygmunt is a Newcomers member who volunteers for New Dimensions Lifelong Learning Institute. He said that registration for New Dimensions' fall-winter session opened today and will continue through September 16. Classes will take place during the window between September 28 and November 13. (Different classes are scheduled for different times and durations.) There are 113 volunteer-led classes on a wide variety of topics on the roster. Stan also mentioned that Midday with New Dimensions will offer a presentation on October 8 at the Mesa County Central Branch Library Featuring **Ken Mabery**, a long-time National Park Service ranger, discussing "National Monuments You've Never Heard of and Why You Should Know About Them."

GUEST SPEAKER

Curtis Englehart, executive director of the Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP), explained that the organization is a 501(c)3 non-profit whose mission is to: 1) help existing businesses in the Grand Valley expand and 2) attract new businesses -- those that are a strategic fit for the area. He said that the partnership helps qualifying businesses take advantage of federal or state-funded incentives, deal with regulatory processes and even find a suitable site for their operations. For example, by taking advantage of the Rural Jump-Start Program, a Colorado economic development initiative that provides tax relief and cash grants to new or relocating businesses, GJEP has helped more than 30 local rural businesses add more jobs to the economy, qualifying for an eight-year state tax holiday. When it comes to attracting businesses from other locations, Englehart said, “GJEP is very selective.” Every year GJEP leads a multi-day tour for professional site selectors -- location specialists with 100-plus clients in a wide swath of industries. The tour, dubbed the Site Selection Familiarization Tour, showcases the Grand Valley's business climate, economic potential and geographic strengths. "We don't have a 'Take all

comers' attitude," he said. "We vet the businesses as much as they vet us as a location. We're not trying to grow into Denver; we have a smart-growth strategy."

Through its efforts, GJEP has helped increase the size of the Grand Valley civilian workforce to about 78,000 (an eight-year high), boost the number of local jobs paying more than the median wage (an average of $68,000/year versus a median of $57,000) and diversify the local economy. In 2025 alone, GJEP accounted for a $195,000,000 positive economic impact for the Grand Valley -- up from $10,500,000 in 2022. "For every $1 we get from investors, we generate $202 in positive economic impact."

-- Lois Leach, Secretary

MEMBER NOTES

A very warm welcome to our new members!

Susie and John Tunks, from Grand Junction. 540 Tiara Dr, GJ 81507. 303-931-6178 (Susie), 303-931-6138 (John). susietunks@comcast.net, jptfrisco@gmail.com

Mona Maas, from Elkhart, IL. 1232 Periwinkle Ct, Fruita 81521. 309-370-3097, maashouse123@gmail.com

Susan DeHart, from Kernersville, NC. 3637 F Road, Palisade 81526. 336-655-6157. snd2co@gmail.com

Rachel Armstrong. 2355 Yellowcat Ct, GJ 81507. 970-623-9442. Rachel.Colorado@yahoo.com

Gjeneve Hopkinson, from Minnesota.1880 Wellington Ave, GJ 81501. 970-210-8682. gjeneve@gmail.com

Mary and Judd Borakove, from Georgia. 625 E. Aspen Ave, Fruita 81521. 571-218-9219 (Mary), 301-252-6861 (Judd). maryedoyle33@gmail.com, jborakove@gmail.com

Celeste Steinman, from Texas. 1192 Primrose Lane, Fruita 81521. 972-795-9044, celestesteinman@yahoo.com

Mary and Bill Jackson, from Kansas. 838 Slickrock Dr, Mack 81525. 785-764-8976 (Mary), 785-766-1081 (Bill). mjack2939@gmail.com, bjackson2939@gmail.com

Ruth Abate, from Steamboat Springs, CO. 776 W Ottley Ave, Fruita 81521. 970-846-3649. ruthabate@gmail.com

COMMUNITY DOINGS

The 11th Annual **Downtown Art Festival** will showcase our artistic community on **Friday, October 2** and **Saturday, October 3**. Many galleries will participate in the First Friday gallery walk on Friday from 5-9 pm. On Saturday, enjoy the Artists Expo on Main Street between 3rd and 7th to see live demos and performances, and view the new Art on the Corner installation. 11 am-4 pm. https://downtowngj.org/events/downtownartfestival/

The **Grand Junction Air Show** will be taking place on **Saturday, October 3** and **Sunday, October 4** at the Grand Junction Regional Airport. The U.S. Navy Blue Angels will be here, and there will be historic aircraft displays, demo aircraft, informative booths, and exhibits for all ages. Gates open 8:30 am-5:00 pm each day. Tickets $20-$50. https://www.gjairshow.com/

Downtown GJ **Porchella** is a local neighborhood music event returning **Saturday, October 3** from 4-9 pm. Free. Bands and map available here: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61550938935212

The 2026 **Senior Life Expo** will take place at the Grand Junction Convention Center on **Monday, October 5** from 9:00 am-2:00 pm. Experts serving Western Colorado will be on hand to answer all your questions about retirement, healthcare, home services, and senior living. Free admission.

The **Palisade Historical Society**'s monthly history talk will be on **Thursday, October 8**, on the Geology of the Grand Mesa by Dr. Rex Cole. 6-7 pm at the Palisade Community Gym at 711 Iowa Ave in Palisade. Free admission (donations welcome).

The 31st annual **Empty Bowls Fundraise** is **Saturday, October 10**, beginning at 11 am. A $25 donation includes a handcrafted bowl and a meal of soup and dessert. Support will insure our neighbors do not go hungry. Tickets by telephone at 970-241-3658, ext. 109, or **https://catholicoutreach.org/donate/**. 245 S. 1st St., Grand Junction.

Water Lights at Night returns on **Saturday, October 10**. Celebrate an evening of peace and beauty by decorating lanterns and releasing them at sunset. After the lantern release, there will be a drone show commemorating America 250 and Colorado 150. 5-8 pm at the Butterfly Pond at Las Colonias Park. Free to attend, $8 per lantern kit, proceeds support GJ Parks and Recreation. https://www.gjcity.org/1245/Water-Lights-at-Night

The Great Pumpkin Haul will take place on **Saturday, October 17** at Moon Farms in Fruita. Join this unique race where you'll carry your pumpkin through the 2-mile adventure course. $45 registration includes pumpkin pick, course entry, and post-run festivities. There will be live music, fresh apple cider, hot chocolate, and food trucks at the finish. Register here: https://greatpumpkinhaul.com/.

2026 **Fall at the Gardens: Harvest Illuminated**, starting at 5 pm nightly **Thursday - Saturday, October 22 - 24** at the Western Colorado Botanical Gardens (655 Struthers Ave.). Come see illuminated sculptures, illuminated paths, and have fun with the whole family. Proceeds support the STRiVE program. $20 per adult, tickets available here: https://strivepsp.ticketspice.com/2026-fall-at-the-gardens.

This month's **Colorado Archaeological Society Meeting** will feature Dr. Susan Fisher, an amateur archaeologist and interpretive guide at Chimney Rock National Monument. The topic will be "Chimney Rock - the Ultimate Outlier". Free and open to the public. **Wednesday, October 28**, **6:30-8 pm** at Redlands United Methodist Church (527 Village Way).

Mark your calendars for upcoming holiday craft fairs. PEO HU branch will offer its craft fair on **Saturday, Nov. 7, from** 9 am – 2 pm at Crossroads United Methodist Church. The Art Center holds its annual sale on **November 20, 21.** Details next month.

COMMUNITY PERFORMANCES

- **Oct. 16 and 17**, Friday at 7:30 pm, Saturday at 3 pm - Western Colorado Chorale presents Of Thee I Sing, a program celebrating the USA's rich tradition of choral music to honor the country's 250th birthday. CMU's Love Recital Hall. Tickets from $28, available at https://gjso.org/.
- **Saturday, Oct. 17** at 7:30 pm - GJ Rockestra Goes… Country Rock. Rockestra presents a country-inspired show featuring Nashville artists Bart Walker. Asteria Theater, tickets from $30, available at https://tickets.coloradomesa.edu/.
- **Oct. 23-25 and 30-31**, Friday at 7 pm, Saturday at 7 pm, and Sunday at 2 pm - Romeo and Juliet, but set in a post-apocalyptic Verona, overrun by the living dead. Performed by The Theater Project at The Art Center. Tickets available at https://theatreprojectgj.com/.
- **Oct. 30 and 31**, Friday at 7 pm, Saturday at 2 pm and 7 pm - Colorado West Ballet presents Frankenstein, a darker ballet for this Halloween season - have fun and come in your costume! Tickets from $28, available at https://www.coloradowestballet.org/.

Interested in joining Lions Club or transferring clubs? Contact Esther Schneller at 970-628-6790 (text). If Esther sponsors you, you'll get a free lunch!

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January Activities

	**COFFEE (Monthly Meeting)** 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, October 14. Dr. Brian Hill**, Superintendent of Mesa County School District 51, will be our speaker.
	**ARMCHAIR TRAVEL** On **Thursday, Oct.** 1, **Loraine Jensen** will talk about runes and the runic inscriptions in Scandinavia at the Central Library. Doors open at 6:00 pm; the hour-long talk begins at **6:30 pm**.
	**BOOK CLUB** The **October 13** Book Club meeting will be held at **Ginnie Archer's** home. She'll lead us in a discussion of *Only the Beautiful* by Susan Meissner. Meeting time is **10 am**. Please contact **D J Clancy** at djclancy68@gmail with any questions.
	**BOWLING** 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.
	**DINNER CLUB** The Dinner Club held its first group dinner in September. Planning is underway for dinners at individual members' homes for the coming months.



HAPPY HOUR

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 with the location.

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.



KNITTING

Knitting is **third Monday** of the month. We will meet at **Suzan Fournier's** home at **1:30 pm** in Oct. at 3088 Mandan Lane.



MAH JONGG

The **Thursday** morning Newcomers Mahjongg group plays from **9 to 11 am** each week. Interested players can contact **Nancy H.** for details.



MOVIE CLUB

On **October 6** at **5 pm,** Movie Club members will discuss *Coyote vs. Acme*, a summer 2026 comedy that combines live action and animation. It tells the story of Looney Tunes character Wile E. Coyote, who's tired of repeatedly failing to catch the Road Runner because of defective Acme Corporation devices. He decides to sue Acme and hires an attorney (played by Will Forte) from a law firm specializing in personal injuries caused by cartoon violence. The case goes to trial, with John Cena as Acme's defense attorney and Foghorn Leghorn as witnesses. **Kenny and Faith Alevy** will host.



NEEDLECRAFTERS

Newcomer Club Needle Crafters meet the **second Monday** of the month to work on their projects. October location and RSVP details will be sent to participating group members to allow the hostess to prepare for the month. Interested club members can contact **Nancy Hollmaier** for more information.

SINGULAR DINERS

Singular Diners is for those singles who would like to experience the various restaurants in the Grand Valley area but hesitate to dine alone. Our next lunch will be on **Wednesday, Oct. 21, at noon** at Reckless Brewing Company 127 E. Aspen Avenue Fruita. Please confirm your attendance to **Lina Palomo** (626) 993-7046 or bluetopaz1129@yahoo.com.

TENNIS

Drop in any **Monday, Wednesday** or **Friday** at Canyon View Park for mixed doubles play. Court time is **10 - noon.** Everyone welcome. Questions? Call **Lorene Ramirez,** 702-985-1891.

TOUR AND LUNCH

Come learn about Grand Junction's unique senior care program offered by HopeWest PACE (Program of All inclusive Care for the Elderly). This one-of-a-kind program in Mesa County, and one of only six operating throughout the State of Colorado, delivers all needed ongoing medical and support services to seniors while allowing them to maintain the independence of living in their own homes for as long as possible. Services include primary and specialty medical care, dentistry, vision, home health, social services, meals, transportation and more. The HopeWest PACE program is located at 2754 Compass Drive. Our tour will commence on **Wednesday Oct. 28 at 10 am**, with lunch following at Taste of Chang'An, 757 Horizon Drive. Contact Steve Likovich at stlikovich@gmail.com to sign up or ask questions.

WINE CLUB

Wine Club will return in January 2027. Stayed tuned for future information. Any questions, please contact **Lisa** at lisa.seitz623@gmail.com or at 303-263-4391.



Tour and Lunch visited CareFlight of the Rockies. Pictured is one of the fixed-wing aircraft they employ.

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WE CARE!

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

NAME BADGES

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 $12.50 (new price). Email her at aahusch@gmail.com.

New Dimensions Lifelong Learning Institute News

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

The New Dimensions fall term is in full swing with 113 classes offered. Registration ended September 16, but remember that if you registered for classes this term you can add classes with openings after registration during the term.

Midday with New Dimensions lectures continue even during the regular terms.

Midday with New Dimensions is a partnership between Mesa County Libraries and New Dimensions Lifelong Learning, offering free public lectures based on past New Dimensions classes. Seating is first come, first served. Lecture information can be found on the Mesa County Libraries' event calendar at https://mesacountylibraries.org/events/ .

Midday with New Dimensions offers a one-hour lecture titled **National Monuments You've Never Heard Of (& Why You Should Know Them!)** presented by Ken Mabery, at the Mesa County Central Library, 443 N. 6th Street, at noon, Thursday, October 8. Ken retired as Superintendent of Colorado National Monument after a 43-year career with the U.S. National Park Service.

Some of this nation's national monuments do not enjoy the notoriety of our own Colorado National Monument. This program explores about 50 of the least-known National Park Service and discusses their relevance to our national legacy.



Tour and Lunch hear from the registered nurse (left) and medic (right) about the services CareFlight of the Rockies provides.

FREE AND FUN NEXT MONTH

Date	What	Where	Time	More Information
1	Armchair Travel: Runes and Runic Inscriptions	Central Library	6:30 – 7:30 pm	https://mesacountylibraries.org
2	First Friday	The Art Center	6:30 – 9 pm	https://www.gjartcenter.org/
2	Free Admission at Museum of the West	Museum of the West	10 am – 4 pm	Museumsofwesternco.org
14	A Little Noon Music: Darin Kamstra, Electronic Percussion	1st United Methodist Church, White & 5th	12:15 pm	https://www.fumcgj.org/upcomingevent
15	Mesa County Oral History Meeting: History at High Noon: Hwys 6 & 50	Central Library	Noon – 1 pm	https://mesacountylibraries.org

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 gjnewcomersclub.org

We had another wonderful **Labor Day BBQ** this year, with a smaller group but still lots of fun and good conversation. The weather was cooler than in years past. One old timer Newcomer said it was the best weather on Labor Day since she had been attending. Have Cooker Will Travel once again catered the event with a delicious BBQ meal. Save the date for next year, September 6, 2027. Same place and same time. Thank you to all of you who attended and a special thank you to all those who helped this year. **(Don and Kris Ami, Terie Furtney, Chuck Hawkins, Barbie Hofecker, Ricky and Tami Murdica and Tom and Joni Politzer)**. We couldn't do it without you! Ken and Lisa Seitz

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Grand Junction Newcomers Club
PO Box 3222
Grand Junction, CO 81502
gjnewcomers@gmail.com
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, $30 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.

Executive Board 2025-2026

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