



May Meeting
Monday, May 12
11:30 am-1 pm

This will be our branch's Annual Meeting & Election of Officers

We will meet at
Fiesta Guadalajara
710 North Ave, Grand Junction, CO 81501

Speaker - Theresa Kahl

Theresa Kahl, owner/ director of **Absolute Dance** as well as executive/ artistic director for **Colorado West Performing Arts Company**, has been a major force for both dance education for youth as well as bringing professional ballet to the performing arts scene for Western Colorado. She has been teaching on the Western Slope for over 30 years, both in private dance schools as well as various high schools, Colorado Mesa University, and through outreach programs such as REC and Eureka!.

Theresa will talk about how her mission to bring more awareness to dance as a performing arts has been a committed vision of hers and the impacts she has made thus far. She will also talk about her latest mission of bringing professional ballet to Western Colorado with the nonprofit arts organization, Colorado West Performing Arts, continues to come with both triumphs and defeats and the impacts she has seen throughout the past three years of having a professional company here in comparison to the previous years for dance in the Grand Valley. She welcomes open conversation about upcoming goals and obstacles that present the company and dance scene for Western Colorado. *Note: several of us enjoyed her recent presentation of the ballet Coppelia.*

RESERVATIONS: Please contact Bonnie by May 10 at 970-589-1320 or at bkosanke44@gmail.com. This is needed for restaurant seating.

Branch President Jane Fitzgerald 970-241-9684
VP Programs Bonnie Kosanke 970-589-1320
Secretary Susan Swift 970-361-6517

VP Membership Lori Wood 970-234-5674
Treasurer Karen Pieper Hildebrand 432-312-4747
Newsletter Shawndel Schadle 720-388-6977

NOTES FROM THE BRANCH PRESIDENT

The **AAUW Grand Junction Branch's Annual Meeting is May 12**. This will include the election and installation of Board Officers. The Nominating Committee has proposed Jane Fitzgerald as President, Bonnie Kosanke as VP Programs and Karen Pieper Hildebrand as Treasurer. Other nominations may be made from the floor at the meeting. I hope every member will attend to show support for these Board Officers.

AAUW National Election is now live through May 13th at 5 pm ET. Those without valid email addresses are receiving ballots by mail. For all others – to vote, an email from **AAUW<vote@simplyvoting.com>** has been sent with a link which has your ID and Password. For more information click [here](#), where you will find explanations of the issues and backgrounds of women up for election.

REMINDER to **RENEW** AAUW Grand Junction Branch Membership

Most AAUW Grand Junction Branch members need to renew their membership for the 7/1/2025 – 6/30/2026 year by **June 30, 2025**. AAUW National should send you a reminder email around May 20. Please complete any changes to home address, phone numbers, and email. Dues for national, state, and branch membership are \$108 for the year. (National, \$74; State, \$10; Grand Junction Branch, \$26)

Options for renewing your membership are:

- You may renew online at www.aauw.org/membership
- Pay by check (made payable to AAUW Grand Junction Branch)
Send to our branch Treasurer:
Karen Hildebrand, 3167 Saddle Gulch Drive, Grand Junction, CO 81504

THANKS to all of you who attended our interesting Program Meetings this year...and special thanks to Bonnie for arranging them; and to those that participated in the lively discussions at Coffee & Chat; and to those who helped launch the two new interest groups...Supper Club and Walk & Talk Group. I very much appreciate all of you.
Thanks to Shawndel for taking over much of this newsletter.



NOTIFICATION

As usual, there will be no General Program Meetings in June, July or August.
They will resume in September.
However, our Special Interest Groups will meet over the Summer
and you will receive an abbreviated newsletter with the details.

WHAT YOU MISSED LAST MONTH

Actually, very few of you missed it because we had a very good turn-out for the Program Meeting on April 14 with Shenna Hayden, the Executive Director of the Museums of Western Colorado. The Museums of Western Colorado includes the *Museum of the West*, *Dinosaur Journey* and *Cross Orchards Historic Site*. Here are some highlights from the notes I took.

Before taking the job in Grand Junction not many months ago, she had accepted a position at a museum in Olympia, Washington in 2019 where she had been hired to grow that museum's endowments and size. But COVID came, and she switched to children and family programs, which she found she enjoyed.

Shenna said that museums are becoming more interactive, not just for children, but also for families. One example are field trips for K-12 students in Title 1 schools. Cost for a student is \$5, of which \$3 goes toward the bus: there is a fund for students unable to pay. The museums host educational programs and workshops: 4th grade students work on Colorado History with hands-on experiences with artifacts.

In 2024, the three museums had 52,780 visitors. The Museums of Western Colorado is one of only 116 accredited museums by the American Association of Museums (AAM). One of the criteria of Money Magazine's "Best Places to Live" is having an accredited museum. AAM says that overall, museums contribute \$50 Billion to the US Economy each year, and 726,000 jobs. Federal Government funding may be at risk in the future.

Currently Shenna is working on new exhibits at Museum of the West, trying to preserve women's history. She wants people to know what women did around the home in various decades. She plans to change exhibits more often...using items from their large storage facility. She also wants to work on community engagement----inspiring change through cultural heritage. And she wants to try to set up projects for teens.

The Goals for the Museums of Western Colorado for 2027-2031 are:

- Set up partnerships within the Community
- Increase the diversity of revenue
- Have more educational experiences and programs
- Remove barriers to visitations....possible discounts for admission

....submitted by Jane Fitzgerald



AAUW CONDEMNS EXECUTIVE ORDER TO DISMANTLE THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

March 20, 2025 ~From AAUW website

*Action Jeopardizes Students' Futures; Congress Should Not Allow Further Cuts and
Take Immediate Action to Protect Students*

Washington, D.C. — The American Association of University Women (AAUW) unequivocally condemns President Trump's executive order "Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, and Communities" dismantling the U.S. Department of Education.

"This reckless and shortsighted action threatens to gut vital protections that ensure equal access to higher education and will have devastating consequences for students — especially women, students of color, and those from low-income backgrounds — who rely on federal oversight for their right to an equitable education," said Gloria L. Blackwell, CEO of AAUW. "Eliminating the Department of Education would decimate federal civil rights enforcement, slash protections against gender-based discrimination, and roll back decades of progress toward making higher education accessible and affordable. This decision is not about streamlining government; it is about stripping students of their rights and futures."

Consequences of this action may include:

- Low-income students may lose vital federal financial aid that makes it possible to earn their degrees;
- Survivors of sexual harassment and assault on campus may see more Title IX cases dismissed and drastically weakened pathways to justice;
- Students with disabilities could be left without critical safeguards to protect and enforce their rights in schools.
- LGBTQ+ students who experience harassment and discrimination could face unsafe environments without their schools being held accountable;
- Student loan borrowers may be more vulnerable to abuse by predatory for-profit colleges and noncompliant servicers while facing unaffordable repayments

AAUW urges Congress to speak out against this move and protect the Department from any further cuts that could hinder enforcement of federal civil rights laws protecting students and preserving access to higher education. The cost of inaction is too high, and the futures of millions of students — especially those from marginalized communities — hang in the balance. In response to these coordinated and continuing attacks on education in America, AAUW is launching [The Defend Higher Education Fund](#) to enable AAUW to elevate the critical higher education issues impacting women, mobilize advocates across the country, provide strategic resources to students, staff and faculty on campus, and fuel investments in the infrastructure and technology necessary to move our mission forward.

Support to this fund ensures AAUW can effectively fight on behalf of women on campuses across the country and ensure that AAUW remains a trusted and powerful voice for equity. To give to the fund, please visit our website at <https://my.aauw.org/donation-product-detail>.

Special Interest Groups

Coffee & Chat Group



This fun and nonpartisan group will meet on

Saturday, May 24, 2025 starting at **9:30 am**

Location: **Spoons Bistro & Bakery** - Outside Patio
3090 N 12th St, Grand Junction, CO 81506.

This month's **Discussion Topic**: The Role of Art and Literature in our Current Society



THE SUPPER CLUB

Dine in a different local restaurant on the **3rd Wednesday** of the month.
Time with good friends, laughter and wine will enhance the experience.
Spouses & friends welcome.

May 21, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Goat and Clover Restaurant

336 Main St, Grand Junction, CO 81501

To ensure seating, contact **K**aren by **May 20** at 432-312-4747 or phildebrand@hotmail.com



Picture This Walk & Talk Group

Enjoy a leisurely walk at the Connected Lakes

Saturday, May 10, 2025 at 9:00 AM

We will meet at Jane's house and walk to the Rim Trail to the Connected Lakes.

2327 Eagle Point Ct, Grand Junction

If you have any questions, contact Shawndel at 720-388-6977

Bench Pictures from April's Walk & Talk

