

Arizona Girls State Independent



June 3, 2025 • Volume 16, Issue 2 • Tucson, Arizona

“Worms and Worries”

BY JULIA WATSON
Sycamore City Reporter

Yesterday, on June 2nd, Sasha Anand and Cameron Mermelli inspired the members of Girls State through their well-spoken testaments of their experiences at Girls State and Nation. As they spoke and answered questions, valuable information was provided to those who listened.

Sasha and Cameron served as a great example of what it takes to truly succeed in this environment. And, no, it's not just prior experience. In fact, both of these talented women expressed how they were nervous and not as experienced to begin with.

However, stepping out of their comfort zone when campaigning is what truly led

them to their current position.

When campaigning, they expressed the effectiveness of humor and authenticity. For example, Cameron took her last name, Mermelli, and shortened it to “Merm” in order to rhyme it with worm. Simple, memorable, and humorous campaign slogans are a useful tool to help voters connect with your message.

Additionally, your actions outside of your campaign are just as critical. It is essential to build genuine connections with your peers rather than speaking with people only for their vote. It's very clear to voters when the candidate is trying to genuinely get to know them or not.

Their speech and discussion also provided a lot of encouragement for aspiring

leaders. It is easy to compare yourself to the girls around you when beginning your campaign. When looking from an outside perspective, it can seem like everyone else goes through the campaign process with ease.

However, everyone has their own struggles and fears to push through. Whether you win or lose, campaigning in Girls State is a great way to challenge yourself in spite of this fear. There is a place for each and every one of us at Girls State no matter where we start.

So, get out there, meet people, and strive for different positions without letting doubt hold you back. You might just make it to Girls Nation and create lasting connections that will stay with you for years to come.

The Distinction of Gender in Government

BY CADY TRAUSCH
Manzanita City Reporter

With Arizona Girls State starting for the year of 2025, I thought it was important to address our next door neighbors, Arizona Boys State. While it is only our first full day at Girls State, the amount of collaboration, communication, and mutual respect I have seen from all the girls has been very welcoming but not surprising, it is in women's nature to have kind souls.

Girls in this program get to construct their very own State with their own laws, committees, and representatives. Now, going into this I knew this would not be a huge feat for us girls. Girls are born with, and then are conditioned throughout their whole life by our society to be polite, nurturing, and sensitive.

Now some may look at these traits as a weakness to society, but these traits plus

the many more traits that accompany every unique female individual create the perfect storm for an efficient, organized, compassionate state.

Now when I found out that Boys State was convening not only at the same time as Girls State but in the same location it got me thinking. What would their society look like? Would they be able to be as empathetic and collaborative as a Girls State is?

But during these thoughts, I realized how easy they would be to answer, considering the United States and many other countries have been living in a real life Boys State since the genesis of their government.

Now by pointing out that Boys State is a close replica to early US government being that both are run by young men with little to no experience, I am not negating the importance of teaching boys about the works of government. With them not only taking place at the same time, but at the same loca-

tion the juxtaposition between the two is stronger than ever.

I am asking society to look at both governments and notice the difference in collaboration styles and relationships that form between citizens.

Our society tends to overlook the talents women bring to the table, often meaning women are excluded from leadership roles. With a program like this that takes away the aspect of gender hierarchy, it gives women a chance to show society the capabilities women have.

And with the addition of the exact same program happening for boys I hope society can see how talented women are not just in comparison to Boys State, but all governments. This week can not only be used as a teaching opportunity for the young women and men but for all individuals to recognize the talents of each gender.

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Arizona Girls State Independent

is published daily by
American Legion Auxiliary
Arizona Girls State
Penny Maklary, Director
Shannon Mead, Managing Editor

2025 Girls State Reporters
Taylor Curtis - Palo Verde
Deborah Molina-Urbe - Palo Verde
Victoria Goesser - Juniper
Tatum Young - Juniper
Hannah Anderson - Pinon
Daisey Garcia - Pinon
Aarna Dharia - Ocotillo
Sidra Lafta - Ocotillo
Elizabeth Bennett - Cholla
Kavya Sud - Cholla
Sarah Early - Manzanita
Cady Trausch - Manzanita
Elise Mitchell - Yucca
Amelia Walls - Yucca
Mollie Dittmer - Saguaro
Zoey Olson - Saguaro
Erin Wallace - Sycamore
Julia Watson - Sycamore
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2025 AZ Girls State City Mayors

BY MRS. MEAD
AZGS Managing Editor

Say hello to the Arizona Girls State City Mayors. These Mayors were elected yesterday afternoon by our citizens of Arizona Girls State.

A huge shout out and congratulations to each and every one who ran and those that were elected.

What an exciting time at Girls State. Now is the time for building those magnificent cities!

The 2025 City Mayors are:

- Lilly Freed - Juniper
- Christine Njuguna - Manzanita
- Kalyani Bhatnagar - Ocotillo
- Taya Mitacek - Pinon
- Abigail Munchinsky - Saguaro
- Celeste Barrett - Sycamore
- Ella Hackett - Cholla
- Lydia Parks - Palo Verde
- Parker Goodell - Yucca

The Passing of Knowledge

BY VICTORIA GOESSER
Juniper City Reporter

We have all been so blessed to be here at Arizona Girls State 2025, but we are even more blessed to have those who came before us, in 2024, share their knowledge and time with us.

These speakers include Cameron Mirmelli, Sasha Anand, Michelle Afanou, and Abigail Othman. These inspiring women have not only taken time out of their busy lives to meet us, but also have welcomed us with open arms, great attitudes, and a comforting smile.

It's no wonder why these amazing women were chosen for their respective roles. Through their speeches, I have gained so much confidence and was inspired to get out of my comfort zone. For

example, I would've never chosen to be a reporter for my city without their little boost of support. I thank them for their support and time.

I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the wonderful staff members here at AZ Girls State. Specifically I would like to thank Mrs. Lovelace, the Juniper City Advisor, and Mrs. Vietri, the Nationalist Party Advisor, for believing in me after knowing me for barely 2 days.

These women are not only mentors and leaders, but they are role models. I have already learned so much and I know there is more to come shortly, but these astonishing Advisors always listen to my questions and concerns with an open ear and open heart. I look up to them and hope to be as impactful as them in my future.

Citizens Chow Down

BY ZOEWY OLSON
Saguaro City Reporter

Girls State is an event designed around civic engagement and leadership which draws in incredible young women from across the state. However, besides the campaigning, incoming citizens worry about one major aspect: the food.

During their very first dinner here at the University of Arizona, the citizens were pleasantly surprised by the quality of their meal. One citizen of Saguaro City, Abigale Dixon, stated that the meal, which consisted of salad, roasted squash, mashed potatoes, chicken with sauce as well as a slice of Funfetti cake, was “really good” and that she “heavily enjoyed the mashed potatoes”.

Mollie Dittmer, also a Saguaro resident, agreed that the mashed potatoes were delicious, but that she “didn’t really enjoy the chicken.”

This meal was not only delectable, but it

also provided an opportunity for the incoming delegates to try out some new foods.

One citizen, Katya Hernandez tried out a salad for one of her first times ever, and I, a notoriously picky eater, thoroughly enjoyed the roasted squash.

However, not every meal has been one for the books. Monday’s lunch was viewed with suspicion as mysterious paper bags were lined up on tables, and many citizens were dismayed by the reveal of roast beef sandwiches.

We were primarily concerned with the texture and color of the roast beef, which seemed overly fatty and pink.

Although it was discovered the roast beef was supposed to be pink, as that’s generally considered a desirable color, many of us still found the texture and color somewhat disconcerting, lamenting that it certainly would have been cheaper to stick with a more traditional turkey sandwich.

Besides the sandwiches, the additional

snacks in the bag also left something to be desired. For students like Abbie, who don’t especially like chips, the limited number of lunch snacks was disappointing.

The bags were also a disappointment for long time fruit enjoyers like Mollie, who described the pear from her bag as “the worst I’ve ever eaten.”

Thankfully, the Girls State shop had a wide selection of snacks and drinks for the girls to choose from.

Saguaro resident Trixie picked up a few bags of chips to snack on throughout the week alongside her new official Girls State graduation stole.

Especially sleepy residents, like myself, were also able to pick up a few Alani energy drinks which will function as a much-needed pick-me-up.

As this week of Girls State continues, citizens of this mythical 51st state can only hope for vastly improved lunches, and a continued streak of success for our filling and delicious dinners.

The Great Shower Debacle

BY AARNA DHARIA
AND SIDRA LAFTA
Ocotillo City Reporters

It seemed as though no one in all of Ocotillo City would shower. *At all.*

Everyone wanted to shower at the same time, after the muggy rain, but unfortunately, the four showers would NOT suffice. As we all filed into the small city hall, one topic was hot in our minds: HOT WATER. We all shared looks of skepticism and a desire to shower. Quickly, a heated debate occurred – voices raising at each other, the tight bond we had earlier was quickly loosening at the scene.

Aarna Dharia abruptly stood up, halting the – frankly, unproductive – debate. She decided to group the girls into 2 factions, morning showers and evening showers. The valiant Yoltizin Peralta Luna courageously volunteered for the 5 A.M. shower. She shouted, “I’ll take the 5 A.M. slot!”

We released a collective sigh of relief that none of us high-maintenance teenage girls would be waking up that early for a shower. The girls followed in Peralta Luna’s stead; her roommate, Aryanna Romero, took up the torch and opted for an early shower in another stall.

As the evening slots quickly filled, we realized we had an overflow. One soul was needed to sacrifice their precious beauty sleep for the sake of the greater cleanliness of Ocotillo.

Unexpectedly, Emma Iverson stood up and said, “I guess I can take the morning.” Applause roared through the city hall.

Emma Iverson: the hero of the night.

When asking the citizens of Ocotillo about their recollection of the night, we started with Shandei Helms.

Interviewer: “So what were thee motions like in the room?”

Helms took a sigh. “It’s an environment

I’ll never forget...”

She continued, “Moments like those, they really make you question friendships, and your trust.”

Our next interview was with roommates Gabriella Nilson and Hannah Mueller.

Interviewer: “What was your biggest fear in that room?”

Nilson and Mueller shared a hesitant look, they were the fastest roommates to bond. Nilson spoke up, “I was scared it might damage our friendship, to be honest.” Mueller took a shaky breath, “I just didn’t wanna lose... my roommate, ya know?”

So, despite the high tensions and debate, the citizens of Ocotillo came to a resolution through communication, compromise, and the power of friendship. This experience taught us that debates over showers can be heated, but our community bond was too strong to drown.

Remember to drink plenty of water this week!
Temps will be rising as the week goes!

My First Taste of Girls State

ERIN WALLACE

Sycamore City Reporter

As we continued to wrap up our city elections at Arizona Girls State, the main focus soon shifted from rising through the ranks of mayors, councilwomen, and precinct committeemen to our growling stomachs, because even the most powerful government can't run on an empty stomach! From breakfast to lunch to dinner, here is my honest review of the meals that are feeding our future leaders.

Breakfast:

Unlike some people, I'm an avid supporter of the saying "Breakfast is the most important meal of the day." However, I understand the hesitation some girls have about heading to breakfast at the crack of dawn. And although I love breakfast, a 7 a.m. wake-up time is a *very* strong turnoff.

Still, in the name of journalism, I got up and trudged down to the first floor to review the meal. I was greeted with a spread of fruit pastries, yogurts in all different flavors, sugary cereal that I'm sure one bite of would have had me running up and down the stairs of Arizona Stadium, orange juice, and the holy grail: coffee.

I'm not a huge sweets person in the morning (I'm more of an eggs and bacon girl), but the pastries were unlike anything I've ever had. Most breakfast sweets are drier than the Sahara Desert, but these were amazing. The consistency was soft and flaky, with the perfect ratio of jam to dough. The yogurt was refresh-

ing and flavorful, and the orange juice had just the right amount of tanginess without being too much for my early-morning taste buds.

All in all, this meal was a solid 8/10, and I highly recommend giving up those extra ten minutes of sleep for a nourishing start to your day.

Lunch:

After a long morning of listening to speeches and voting, my stomach was ready for some lunch. Inside each girl's paper lunch sack was a roast beef and cheese sandwich, a bag of Lay's Original chips, a brownie, and an apple.

I was very ecstatic about this meal—sandwiches are one of my favorite lunch-time go-tos! I found that the sandwich, like most sandwiches, was quite dry. However, with a packet of mayo, that problem was easily solved.

As a very picky girl, I was very satisfied with the plain potato chips to accompany my sandwich. And you'd think the apples were freshly picked off a tree here in Tucson, with how soft, juicy, and fresh they were.

And the pièce de résistance? The sweet, chocolatey brownie. I have a very strong—but strict—sweet tooth, and this brownie passed the test. My only suggestion would be to add some chocolate chips in, because let's be real: you can never go wrong with more chocolate!

I rate this meal a 7/10, a reliable lunch for leaders.

Dinner:

By the time dinner rolled around, I couldn't believe my first full day of Girls State was coming to an end. For dinner, we were greeted with the most magnificent spread of Mexican food. I'm not joking when I say I thought my taste buds were going to explode. As I went through the buffet line, I reached for garlic rice, black beans, chicken and rice enchiladas, and Mexican Caesar salad with a delicious vinaigrette dressing.

And, of course, it couldn't be a Girls State meal without dessert! On today's menu was a slice of chocolate cake with whipped chocolate frosting—I'll admit that I went back for seconds, because how can a girl resist a slice of heaven?

As an Arizonan, I've had my fair share



of Mexican food, and this meal has raised my standards by a mile. By the time dinner was done, I left the Bear Down Gymnasium hobbling out because my stomach was so full. This was by far our best meal of the day and a perfect way to end our first full day of Girls State. I rate this meal a 10/10.

But my favorite part of the meals wasn't the food. What I cherished most was the girls sitting around the table with me, sharing laughs, swapping stories, and that's what truly made the experience so special. Honestly, I would've eaten any quality of food if it meant I got to sit with my girls.

As Monday comes to a close, I can already tell I'm in for an unforgettable week. Here's to full stomachs, new memories, and many more 10/10 moments ahead!



**Arizona
Girls State
Picture Show**

**Be a part of the
Arizona Girls State Slide Show
by sending us your
selfies, group pics and
all out fun times!**

Email to photos@azgirlsstate.com

The Palo Verde Results are in!

BY DEBORAH MOLINA-URIBE

Palo Verde City Reporter

The results for this year's Palo Verde City elections are in!

After a grueling election process led by our very own, wonderful Mrs. Heck, we finally reached a conclusion after about half an hour.

There were many great candidates for the position of mayor, and the competition was fierce. Each candidate displayed notable qualities and honest characteristics that more than qualified them for the role of Palo Verde's Mayor.

The eloquence displayed in their speeches truly moved the hearts of every citizen of the best city at Girls State, Palo Verde.

Similarly, the race for the councilwomen was arguably equally as intense, with countless candidates vying for the position.

As each young lady delivered their carefully crafted speeches, the citizens of Palo Verde knew that they had a tough decision ahead of them.

After these touching speeches, the citizens cast their ballots, and the results were in. Our city mayor is none other than the

amazing Lydia Parks, and our councilwomen are Kalissa Boschetti, Madison Ritchie, Ellie Craig, and Deborah Molina-Urbe.

The citizens of Palo Verde are elated with these results, and have high hopes for the future of their city with such outstanding leadership to guide them through the week.



Our amazing Mayor, Lydia Parks.



Lydia Parks and the other mayors taking their picture.



Lydia Parks and the Councilwomen.

Manzanita City Local Elections

BY SARAH EARLY

Manzanita City Reporter

Mayor and City Councilwomen Chosen!

The citizens of Manzanita City in Cocopah County have come together in a democratic spirit to select their new Mayor. The Nationalist party chose Ms. Christine Njuguna, and the rivaling Federalist Joanie Tarleton, and the results revealed in the afternoon that Ms. Christine was selected to be the Mayor of Manzanita.

Earlier that morning, the citizens chose

between eight candidates for the councilwoman committee: Ms. Sofia Alvarado-Trinta, Ms. Violet Mojarro, Ms. Kate Smith, Ms. Baikal Padilla-Garcia, Ms. Piper MacArthur, Ms. Sophia Lopez, Ms. Marley Newsome, and Ms. Jocelyn Slocombe.

Results came out simultaneously with the mayor, who will represent Manzanita on the city council. Our representatives for the city council are Ms. Sofia Alvarado-Trinta, Ms. Baikal Padilla-Garcia, Ms. Piper MacArthur, and Ms. Marley Newsome.

The citizens of Manzanita City are

ecstatic about the new representatives. One citizen, Ms. Sophia Lopez, was interviewed and said, "I like all of them, and they are all very creative. I believe that they will all [uphold] their duties in an excellent form."

Tomorrow, nominations for the County and State election will be held, and citizens in Manzanita are anticipating the excitement of new faces being represented in new positions across the state and hearing how their issues will be addressed in the future, whether it's through the Nationalist or Federalist party.



A Once-In-A-Lifetime Girls Nation

HANNAH ANDERSON
Pinon City Reporter

During the State House assembly after lunch, the citizens were brought together to discuss the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that is Girls Nation.

Guest speakers included Girls Nation President Cameron Mirmelli and Girls Nation Senator Sasha Anand.

Both interacted meaningfully with the citizens in a Q and A fashion. When asked a variety of questions, they responded with

thought-provoking answers resulting in three major takeaways: “Be proud of yourself for trying”, “Be genuine, be kind”, and “You are your own voice”.

Citizens left the gymnasium with excitement, feeling reignited with the call to take risks and to unashamedly embrace who you are.

Further, both Cameron and Sasha rightly emphasized that disagreeing with another citizen is not a bad thing, it is quite the opposite. Opposing beliefs should ultimately lead to a compromise, leaving both

sides feeling respected expressing their opinions.

A summary of the campaign strategies discussed included connection rather than persuasion, humorous slogans, opinionated topics, and valuing relationships.

They left the assembly reminding each citizen, and possibly some staff, that these are mythical elections with fake parties, so do not get lost in the competition, but rather see the program for what it truly is: an opportunity to gain experience and make connections.

Balloon Animal Frenzy

BY KAVYA SUD
Cholla City Reporter

Anticipation mounted as the citizens of Cholla heard that they would finally be meeting their sister cities.

After becoming well acquainted with their fellow peers and Cholla citizens, it was evident they itched to meet the rest of Girls State’s citizens.

Hoping to make a good impression, they brainstormed ways to be memorable and make a mark on the other girls.

Naturally, based on their premise of My Little Pony and the special skills of the people found in their city, they resorted to making balloon animals.

What started off as a fun simple activity quickly became a testament to Cholla’s quick organizational skills and the close knit community they had already built.

The newly elected mayor, Ella Hackett, hastened to place people into groups: one for blowing balloons up and one for tying them.

The group of about 15 or so teenage girls transformed into circus workers, twisting balloons and becoming immune to their popping. Occasionally, a citizen’s balloon would pop or they would have trouble tying the strings, but without fail their fellow members came to their rescue.

Outside of the disturbing popping noises the raucous laughter was a prominent feature and in the end the girls not only grew as balloon artists but also as friends.

1st Full day of AZ Girls State

BY MOLLIE DITTMER
Saguaro City Reporter

Saguaro city, similar to many other cities, has officially concluded elections for the Precinct Committee-man, Mayor, and Chairmen.

We now continue to work on our city book including the establishment of our official seal and theme.

In addition, our hall decorations have improved significantly following our theme of mystery, investigation, and most importantly suspicion.

Our city contains a bank, gym, library, school, bakery, police station, and many more establishments.

Furthermore, Girls State has had their 1st official Lunch! Although there seems to be some heavy controversies on the contents of this brown paper bag.

Some unsuspecting Girls State citizens have been faced with something truly frightening. Official reports claim that



A picture of Saguaro city members hard at work.

there have been numerous incidents and complaints regarding the color of the roast beef in the roast beef sandwich claiming that “it’s too pink.”

That is all to conclude our official full

first day of Arizona Girls State and don’t forget that city pictures will be taken tomorrow on Tuesday, June 2nd so be looking sharp ladies!

FEAR THE FIN-NATS PC REPORT

BY TAYLOR CURTIS

Palo Verde City Reporter

PC Report! The Nationalist Party held its first Party meeting at 10:00 AM on June 2, 2025.

The citizens gathered together, and some met each other for the first time. The girls enjoyed connecting over similar interests.

Soon enough, staff party supervisor Mrs. Vietri explained how the party would function and what the PCs meeting would look like.

The team then elected their State Party Chairwoman, and Karina Koppikar took the cake! Chairwoman Koppikar led a busy meeting this morning, helping the Nats establish their mission, vision, and values.

The county party chairs were also chosen...Aama Dharia from Cocophah, Taylor Curtis from Supai, and Wendy Gluski from Kiabab. These ladies will represent their party in their respective counties!

After the elections, the PCs broke up into three committees: slate, platform, and

spirit.

The Slate Committee began recruiting. (Their goal—to elect as many Nats as possible to office). These girls are busy bees!

The Platform Committee began finalizing the Party's beliefs, focusing on Judicial, Educational, and Appropriation issues.

Finally, the Nationalist Spirit ladies launched into action, creating the Party chants and cheers. With a Shark as the mascot, the Nationalists are sure to make a splash! "Join the Crew, Vote for Blue!"

