

# Arizona Girls State Independent



June 2, 2025 • Volume 16, Issue 1 • Tucson, Arizona

## Welcome to the greatest state in the land

**BY MRS. MEAD**  
AZGS Managing Editor

Welcome to the 78th Annual Arizona Girls State session. Congratulations on being chosen as a delegate. Your leadership and academic skills have given you the opportunity to represent your school, community and local American Legion Auxiliary Unit at this amazing program.

We as staff are proud to have you here and hope that your learning experience is one that you will take with you through out life.

### Girls State Sponsorship

Girls State is sponsored by The American Legion Auxiliary. The Auxiliary is dedicated to helping veterans as well as our future leaders, such as you.

Established in the early twentieth century, the Auxiliary has grown to nearly one million members. In 1919, the American Legion Auxiliary was created, dedicated to supporting the United States Armed Forces and all of the veterans.

Today, the ALA has over twenty national programs that benefit through money and other donations. Two of the ALA's most well known programs are Girls State and Girls Nation.

### New Experiences

This week is going to be full of new adventures and new experiences. Some good and some perhaps not so good. We do hope that you consider each experience a stepping stone for your future.

Your first day brought you to a dorm filled with new and exciting young women who were just as nervous as you. Yet, each of you took time to either stand out in the hall and create a greeting line or wander from room to room introducing your self and saying hello.

Each day will hold new surprises and a lot of things that will bring your city together in ways you never thought pos-

sible as well as our entire State.

### A look ahead

During this week you will learn about city, county and state government with emphasis being placed on political parties, campaigns and elections.

That is right, there will be Federalist and Nationalist parties. *Party rallies here we come!!*

There will be voting speeches and a super fun meet the candidate night. This night gives you a chance to get out there and show the entire state why you would be perfect for each office. Get out there and be creative.

Within your city you will be able to run for offices, create and pass laws and build your very own working city.

Did we mention that you will get to decorate your city. Each door in your city will represent a business within your community. Be creative and show your design side, *These will also be judged for awards!!!*

While the cities are important please do not forget about the county and state positions as well. There will be lots of county positions to run for as well as state positions.

Did we mention Governor or how about Secretary of State? Don't forget the illusive Girls Nation Senators as well.

### Fun, Fun and MORE FUN

This week there will not only be meetings and speeches, there will be FUN. There will be leisure time in the dorms and outside activities to keep down stress. We have cornhole games, rock painting, yarn adventures and much more!

We have glee club that will be practicing all week to sing us some amazing songs during our Magical Evening on Saturday.

There will be a talent show held on Friday evening. A fun way for each of you to show off your talent. Please keep an eye out for the sign up sheet outside of the Directors Office.

Did you see the mention of the magical

evening? Oh yes we have a wonderful evening of dinner and harmony planned with some very special guests.

We will round off our week with an awesome court trial on Saturday!! Your court officials that you elect later this week will be working up a fantastic who did it.

Oh and of course there will be PIZZA!! Yes, there is even a pizza party this week.

Don't forget all of our wonderful guest speakers that are sure to keep you laughing and learning.

### Please Remember

Please be respectful of the staff and other citizens as we are all here to learn and have fun.

*DO NOT FORGET THE 3 B'S:*

- *Be Thoughtful*
- *Be Kind*
- *Be Thankful*

Keep an eye on those room keys as you do not want to get locked out of your room. I am sure your roommate does not want to either.

Never leave your city without first signing out or letting your advisor know where you are going and why.

If you are feeling ill or become injured remember to see the nurse. Don't wait if you feel sick. The nurses are located on the 5th floor.

### Girls State Stop N' Shop!!

The Stop N' Shop is our official Arizona Girls State Store. They have so much to offer, from t-shirts, blankets, stickers, cards, snacks, key chain accessories, and SO MUCH MORE!!

Stop by the store and see what wonders they have to offer. Do not fret there will be a day of shopping for each city this week as well as plenty of time to stop throughout the week.

**WELCOME TO  
GIRLS STATE!!**

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# Arizona Girls State Independent



Say hello to your Girls State Independent reporters. These lovely ladies will be bringing you the latest and greatest news updates and happenings all week here at Arizona Girls State.

**From Palo Verde:**

Taylor Curtis & Deborah Molina-Uribe

**From Juniper:**

Victoria Goesser & Tatum Young

**From Pinon:**

Hannah Anderson & Daisey Garcia

**From Ocotillo:**

Aarna Dharia & Sidra Lafta

**From Cholla:**

Elizabeth Bennett & Kavya Sud

**From Manzanita:**

Sarah Early & Cady Trausch

**From Yucca:**

Elise Mitchell & Amelia Walls

**From Saguaro:**

Mollie Dittmer & Zoey Olson

**From Sycamore:**

Erin Wallace & Julia Watson

is published daily by  
 American Legion Auxiliary  
 Arizona Girls State  
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**2025 Girls State Reporters**

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- Deborah Molina-Uribe - Palo Verde
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- Mollie Dittmer - Saguaro
- Zoey Olson - Saguaro
- Erin Wallace - Sycamore
- Julia Watson - Sycamore

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## Prepare to be entertained at the Annual Girls State Talent Show!

Do you have that one special talent that sets you apart from the rest? Do you love to sing, dance or act on stage? If you answered yes to either of these questions then we want you for our Annual Talent Night!

Friday evening has been set aside just for you to show all of us here your very own talent. Strut your stuff or rock the rafters with that amazing voice.

Of course no talent show is complete without the auditions. All talented citizens are encouraged and must attend the auditions in order to participate. The sign up sheet will be down on the window of the main office on the first floor near flag.

Remember to bring all of your needed materials for your talent with you at the time of auditions as

we need to see exactly what it is you will be doing for the show.

For all questions and comments concerning the event, please see Mrs. Shields in room 637.



# 78<sup>th</sup> Annual Girls State begins with registration and greetings

BY MRS. MEAD  
AZGS Managing Editor

Yesterday each of you began your journey to Girls State by packing up the car and heading to Tucson with your parents and family. Some of you traveled all the way from the Grand Canyon while others came from Yuma and all over in between.

Once you arrived you started out in line waiting to get your first set of instructions and see just how this week was going to be.

Were those rain clouds and a bit of rain we saw today! Beats the usual 100 degree weather we start with each year! Yay to a great weather day!

First you started with a warm greeting from the UofA staff giving you your handbook and room assignments. The wonderful staff was so gracious to lend us a hand checking you in today.

Next it was off to see the nurses where you dropped off those wonderful yellow cards and the parents could chat with our team of nurses that you will see off and on all week. They are awesome and very caring!

Now you turn and off to the Store/Bank where you meet our lovely store staff and have the opportunity to bank your money so that you do not lose it this week. Remember you will have plenty of opportunity this week to stop in the 'Stop N Shop' and pick up some great items, like shirts, blankets, bookmarks, stickers, snacks and of course WATER!!!

After the bank you were off to have your amazing picture taken for your photo ID badge that you will be wearing during your week here at Girls State. *Please be sure to always have this on as it is part of your uniform.*

Next it was off to yet another room where you were greeted by the UofA staff to help



(Left to right) Arizona Girls State Governor Michelle Afanou, Secretary of State Abigail Othman and Girls Nation President Cameron Mirmelli.

you get the room key for your new home away from home for the week! Please be sure and keep those keys on your lanyard and do not lose them!!

Also be mindful when closing your doors so as not to lock yourself or your roommate out of your room. Those keys are not free and will cost to replace.

Then it was off to get those new beautiful heather orange colored shirts that will tell everyone on campus that WE ARE GIRLS STATE in a sea of beautiful coral-orange.

Don't worry about only getting two, there will be laundry days, we promise.

Finally it was off to the elevator where the advisors told your parents that it was time to leave you to adventure Girls State on your own. Don't worry they will see you again on Sunday!!

Once you stepped out of the elevator you

were greeted by our amazing junior counselors who helped get you headed to your new city.

Here you were greeted by your City advisor as well as your new city citizens. Remember that you will be with these ladies for the next week so make the best of each situation.

Now that you are in your rooms and beginning the program take a quick moment to thank those that helped get you here today. Each of the Girls State staff members have volunteered their time to help make this a wonderful experience for each one of you. If you see them wondering the cities or during session give them a quick thanks for everything. They are sure to enjoy it.

Have a great week and enjoy every moment!

**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](mailto:photos@azgirlsstate.com)

# Opening Session At Girls State

BY MRS. MEAD  
AZGS Managing Editor

Last night was an amazing first night. There were many wonderful speakers and lots of fun. To open the evening our color guard posted our very patriotic colors. We were introduced to our wonderful Governor Michelle Afanou and Secretary of State Abigail Othman. Each welcomed you and wished you the best time here at Girls State as well and to reach for your goals and make the best of the week you have here.

We started off with the swearing in of our delegates for Girls State. You have now gone from delegate to citizen of Girls State. Congratulations!

We had wonderful greetings from the American Legion Auxiliary National President Trish Ward as well as our Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs. Such a great welcome to get us started.

We had a wonderful flag ceremony presented by our County advisors and Mrs. Montijo. During this presentation the 13 folds of the flag were explained so that you will be able to understand why these ceremonies are so important and such a treasure. It gives true meaning and respect to all those who have fought bravely for this country.

Following the amazing flag presentation we enjoyed an amazing presentation from the lovely ladies on staff. This presentation explained all about the American Legion Auxiliary and how we help not only our veterans but our communities as well. Awesome job ladies for the great presentation.

Let's not forget our wonderful and talented JC's, who modeled for us just before dinner. These lovely ladies were kind enough to show you all the store has to offer. Remember "Stop N' Shop" has all that you are looking for while you are here at Girls State. From clothes, blankets,

stickers and all sorts of snacks and drinks.

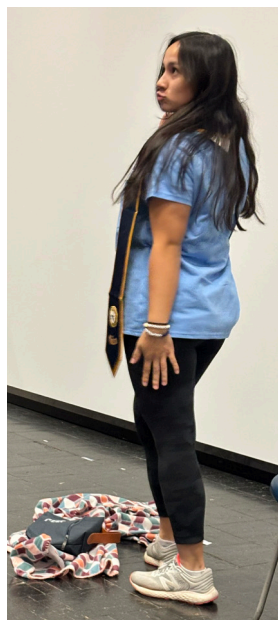
After dinner we enjoyed more learning and fun from two guest speakers.

We started with our very own Arizona Girls State staff members bringing us a wonderful presentation on the platforms and parties. Hope everyone really got the gist of Precinct Committeemen.

Next we closed the night with Chris King speaking on the role of Precinct Committeemen as well. He started us off with some dad jokes and then really got into some great information. He really kept us all captivated with all sorts of information. Such an interactive speaker.

Ladies a great job on all the wonderful and interesting questions. Way to stay on topic and keep our speakers thinking. Keep it up this week with all of the wonderful guest speakers to come.

As our Governor stated, remember to participate and stay involved.



## Calling all Glee Club enthusiasts

Do you love to sing or play an instrument? How about lead the choir during a big show? If you said yes to either then we have the club for you! Come on down and join our Glee Club.

We are looking for talented young ladies to perform at our Magical Evening dinner. After all, what is dinner without a little music?

The first meeting and auditions will be

held on Monday starting at 4:30pm in the Great room 140. Please be sure to bring your instruments with you if you have them. Also perhaps a few song ideas as well. Please note you must be present at the first meeting in order to participate.

If you have questions please see Mrs. McMullen in room 219.

Good luck ladies and we cannot wait to hear those wonderful chords on Saturday.



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## “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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## 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 GOESER**  
 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 ZOEY 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 the three 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 turnout.

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](mailto: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-Uribe.

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.



Lydia Parks and the other mayors taking their picture.



Our amazing Mayor, Lydia Parks.



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 Committeeman, 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

**P**C 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!"



# Arizona Girls State Independent



June 4, 2025 • Volume 16, Issue 3 • Tucson, Arizona

## Cholla's Fantastic Mayor

BY ELIZABETH BENNETT  
Cholla City Reporter

Ella Hackett of Cholla City in Supai County was selected as the city mayor on June 2, 2025 at Arizona Girl State. I was fortunate enough to interview her this afternoon:

Bennett: "What are what your goals as mayor during your Girl State session?"

Hackett: "My goals as mayor are to win best city and to get everyone involved in our city. I also want to create long lasting friendships between the girls and aid each of them in securing the county and state positions they are running for."

Bennett: "What are you most excited for this week at Girl State?"

Hackett: "I'm excited to learn about all the responsibilities that come with the job I

have as mayor and I'm also excited to meet like-minded people."

Bennett: "Tell us about your city's theme."

Hackett: "Our city's theme is 'My Little Pony.' Our citizen Lexie came up with it after we discussed our favorite TV shows. Lexie will be running for Supai County Sheriff later this week and she is an excellent candidate across the board. Our theme has been so fun to work with and we are so excited to have our doors all decorated accordingly, and to walk around campus with our cutie-marked crowns."

Bennett: "Even though we've only experienced two days so far, what has been your favorite memory at Girl State?"

Hackett: "I really loved making balloon animals with my city today. We made

balloon 'ponies' to share with our sister cities and it was so nice to sit down as a group and have some real time to bond as a group."

Bennett: "How is your city planning to succeed this week and what advice would you give to the other city mayors?"

Hackett: "Our city is built upon our theme's magic and our friendship with one another. We are already so close as a group and our tight relationships with each other has definitely helped our decision-making. I would advise other mayors to also build a tight knit community and give everyone the valuable space to share their ideas."

Ella Hackett has a great term as mayor of Cholla ahead of her and is absolutely guiding her city to success at Girl State.

## The RunDown of Precinct Committeemen

BY VICTORIA GOESER  
Juniper City Reporter

I am a Precinct Committeeman (PC) from Juniper City for the Nationalist Party. Before I got to Girls State, I had no idea what this was.

As a precinct committeeman, I am on the Platform Committee. This means that we build the Nationalist Party's core principles and beliefs.

Our State Nationalist Party Chair is Karina Koppikar, who happens to also be from Juniper City. Besides being very informed and knowledgeable in government, she is kind and genuine to everyone she meets. She gets stuff done gracefully and efficiently. Overall, she has been a wonderful leader with an intriguing personality.

The 3rd night at Girls State, we all had county rallies. The rally for my county, Cocopah, was invigorating.



We had chants from both parties and got introduced to everyone who is running for county positions. After this loud and upbeat rally, we had a "Meet the Candidates" night.

This entails getting to know more people and learning who your candidates are for county and state positions. Since we haven't

had our primary election yet, most nationalists met with nationalists and vice versa.

It's a great experience meeting others who are passionate about the same topics because we always have something in common and can compromise on lots of issues. I am excited for what's to come in the near future here at Arizona Girls State.

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# Arizona Girls State Independent



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 Taylor Curtis - Palo Verde  
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# The Stylistic Choices of Girls State

BY CADY TRAUSCH  
 Manzanita City Reporter

At Girls State we have a uniform, or uniform adjacent clothes. All citizens have to wear the same shirt, meaning the same color, design, and cut.

I have not always been the biggest fan of uniform clothing, the idea of everyone dressed in the same attire felt very restricting to me. I thought all personality was lost when you take away the visual aspect of not being able to express yourself through clothes.

However, since being here at Girls State I have realized uniform does not take away creativity and uniqueness, it actually makes your creativity more

prominent by having to configure your personal style to accommodate the uniform.

I have seen so many great interpretations of style expression since being here. Some girls have chosen to wear fun pants or shorts. Other girls have decided to show their style through layering of clothing or wearing fun, colorful shoes.

In the past days I have seen so many creative hairstyles to spice up the uniform. Even down to girl's nails and jewelry has added a nice touch to the outfit.

All these little details have really shown that personality is not lost when your clothing becomes limited, instead it gives you a new canvas to be able to express yourself.

# Athletics Affect Aptitude

BY ZOEY OLSON  
 Saguaro City Reporter

Citizens enter Girls State with a variety of extracurricular backgrounds, but one stands out as a common favorite amongst girls, as well as one that seems to offer the most learning experience heading into this week of politics and new experiences: athletics.

Luci McDonald, an elite badminton player, claimed that many of her skills in leadership stem from "winning multiple tournaments", allowing her to feel confident in herself and her skills both on and off the court, something that serves her especially well in her campaign for state superintendent.

Abigale Dixon, who wrestles competitively and has previously qualified for her state championships, stated that wrestling has helped her grow in a variety of ways.

Specifically, she feels that because "wrestling is an extremely mindful sport where wins and losses can really get to your head" it forces you to develop confidence, resiliency and the stamina to keep going, three things that are especially important in Girls State.

Abigale is currently running for clerk of the superior court and has had to put in hours of work on top of her job as secretary for Saguaro City, an experience certainly made easier by the perseverance built through her wrestling career.

Not only do these sports help athletes grow confidence, their consistent and strict adherence to rou-

tines helps them develop the discipline they need to get up at six am sharp each morning to resume their county and state positions.

Zoe Gadow, a gymnast, states that her experience in gymnastics forced her to prioritize, as she had to balance academics with "five hours a day in the gym."

Her gymnastics career also allowed her to become more responsible, as she learned to balance her heavy workload.

Even though it's an individual sport, gymnastics can also be a way to connect with others. Abigail Munchinsky, nicknamed Abbie, another highly accomplished gymnast, stated that being a gymnast has "helped [her] make a lot of friends."

She mentioned that since Zoe is also a gymnast, those "experiences have helped us really bond."

Abbie's experience in the world of gymnastics has also allowed her to become much more "courageous." She stated that "Whenever I feel that I don't want to go out and do something... I say it's five seconds of fear once or a lifetime of regret."

Her commitment to her goals and skills in conquering her fear allow her to balance her many difficult and stressful responsibilities as mayor for her city's citizens alongside her quest to attend Girls Nation as a senator.

Clearly, the skills earned through days, weeks and months of training for these athletes have paid off at more than competitions, as they continue to serve them here in the mythical 51<sup>st</sup> state.

Arizona  
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# My Little Pinon's

DAISEY GARCIA  
Pinon City Reporter

With the power of friendship, the Pinon City has established their halls with the spirit of Equestria.

The entrance wall symbolizes Equestria's primary town Ponyville.

Moving down the hall you embrace Princess Celestia. This princess is responsible for the rise of the sun at dawn.

Moving forward you encounter her younger sister Luna. Princess Luna is responsible for raising the moon every night.

## My Little Pinon's



The door to the left is Spike. Spike is a pre-teen dragon who acts as a best friend and assistant for the lovely Twilight Sparkle.

Moving around the curve you are blinded

by the diamonds of Rarity, a Carousel Boutique owner of Ponyville and long-term crush of Spike.

To the left you see the transformation of Princess Twilight Sparkle and facing her you encounter Twilight Sparkle's older sister figure, Cadanza.

If you look to the right, you will get flustered at the sight of Fluttershy, and as you dash more forward you feel the breeze of Rainbow Dash.

In case you get hungry, I am sure Applejack will provide you a little snack on your way next door to the part made by the excited Pinky Pie.

# Campaign Day at Girls State!

BY MOLLIE DITTMER  
Saguaro City Reporter

This concludes today's activities for Tuesday, June 3, 2025.

We had a guest speaker introducing our county government positions and information, Ms. Lisa Matthews, who directs Pima County Facilities Management which we would like to thank for coming to speak to us today.

We also had our first county courthouse meetings to introduce county roles. For lunch, we had a delicious pesto chicken

sandwich with tomatoes and other assorted vegetables.

Our slate committee worked very hard to secure all positions, both Federalist and Nationalist, in county offices and state offices.

Just a reminder that the county papers, state papers, and Girls Nation papers were due today because the campaigning started today and was from 8.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.

There will be continued campaigning tomorrow and elections. In addition, there was more Glee Club rehearsal and talent

show activities.

That concludes the official full day two of Arizona Girls State, and tomorrow we can expect some speeches from Girls Nation candidates, the introduction of our county office candidates, more county courthouse meetings, and primary elections, accompanied by some speeches to advocate for everyone's given role.

There will also be whistle-stop campaigns in the statehouse for the reporters. Good Luck to all of these lovely ladies running!

# She's Listening. She's Leading. She's Gluski.

BY ERIN WALLACE  
Sycamore City Reporter

At just 17 years old, Wendy Gluski has already achieved an impressive amount.

Her perseverance and passion set her apart from the crowd. Now, she's setting her sights on a new goal: becoming Governor at Arizona Girls State. And if determination counted as votes, the election would have ended yesterday.

Gluski is an incoming senior at BASIS Scottsdale. Since her freshman year, she has excelled both academically and in extracurricular activities, and her love of learning even earned her a perfect score on the ACT.

She's been involved in various school organizations from the beginning.

"I've been involved in speech and debate since my freshman year," said Gluski. "I did congressional debate, and I also coach congressional debate for middle schoolers. I'm also part of the Red Cross, and I was the president last year."

But her achievements don't stop there—Gluski also has a background in basketball.

"I'm coaching the girls' basketball team next year, and I played way back in the day," she added.

Clearly, she has a natural flair for leadership and has built her campaign around listening to others.

"I want to hear what every single person who came here has to say," Gluski emphasized.

Rather than focusing on her own priorities, she aims to reflect the collective voice

of Girls State.

"I really want us to focus not on the issues that I think are the most important, but on the issues that the entire Girls State thinks are the most important," she explained.

Gluski credits two major influences for shaping her mindset.

"My biggest inspiration is probably Michelle Obama, because I think she's a boss and she's an amazing public speaker and writer," she said. "My other inspiration is my family. My mom and dad are the hardest workers I know."

Undeniably, Wendy Gluski is a highly qualified candidate, and she's got my vote for Governor at Girls State.

If you're still undecided, be gutsy and vote for Gluski!

# County Policy at Girls State

BY JULIA WATSON  
Sycamore City Reporter

Today, the citizens of Girls State had the honor of starting their day with an educational and encouraging speech from Lisa Matthews, a member of Pima County Facilities Management.

She began by explaining the Board of Supervisors and its role in protecting the welfare, safety, and economic development of the community.

This board fosters safety through numerous initiatives and policies that affect things such as water, law enforcement, and more. Policy development operates like a utilitarian government.

In other words, this approach to government works to establish laws that promote the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people.

Additionally, policies are passed through a typical democratic process that involves lengthy discussions, debates, community

actions, and voting.

Lisa Matthews provided an excellent example of how a utilitarian government operates in flood management within Pima County.

The Department Director, after discussing with those around her, proposed a solution to the flooding problem. They suggested creating a loop that serves not only as a way to manage floods, but it's also used as a recreational path for walking and biking.

Though this project requires lots of time, funding, debates and discussions, citizens can truly appreciate the work of the county government through how their efforts have improved their own lives.

Unlike utilitarian rule, authoritarian government involves little to no democratic process. This form of policy development is not typically seen in the United States. However, we saw this happen in real time during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the pandemic rampaged across Arizona, there was no time for democracy. Policymakers had to rapidly instate laws and orders to quarantine and close businesses.

In addition to her discussion of policies, I would also like to touch on the encouragement she provided all of us with.

As stated by Lisa Matthews, "Everyone has a talent that you can contribute to your communities." This talent can look very different from person to person, whether it is public speaking, leadership, event organization, creativity, and much more.

Many of us may have these abilities that will never surface if we don't tap into them. In other words, the more you push yourself out of your comfort zone, the better you understand your own abilities.

Though our talents can look different from one another, who's to say that you cannot create a meaningful impact if you make the effort search for your own.



## Boy State vs. Girl State: Sisters or Cousins?

BY ELIZABETH BENNETT  
Cholla City Reporter

While the citizens of Girl State learned the ins and outs of county and state government, assessed the number of candidates in their counties running for each government position, and began campaigning for the elections to come, it seems the citizens of boy state have been up to other activities.

Boy State citizen Noah Bartlett, who ran for Compton State Senator in the primaries today, gave an update on his

day: "Today we had a career night where we went to a few 15-minute sessions of people presenting programs like naval academy, rotc, border patrol, FBI, marshal service, etc." He continued, stating that "at 'Boy State University,' (which prepares them for their positions in government) we have law and legislative school, and then you have to pass the bar if you want to be a lawyer."

He also cleared up some recent rumors circulating at Girl State concerning whether or not a city had assassinated their mayor, by simply stating he had not

heard of such events.

Concerning the food, Bartlett states "breakfast and lunch are alright but they definitely need to serve more, and dinner is typically pretty solid," to which many Girl State citizens would agree is the case on the other side of campus.

So it seems while the food catering is similar, the current events and processes of government positions differ between Girl State and Boy State, proving the two to be closer to cousin programs rather than sisters.

**Remember to stay hydrated this week!**

# Arizona Girls State Independent



June 5, 2025 • Volume 16, Issue 4 • Tucson, Arizona

## Busy Day at Girls State Ends with Inspiring Candidate Meet-and-Greet

BY TATUM YOUNG  
Juniper City Reporter

Wow! What a busy day for everyone in Girls State! Whether it was a city meeting, announcements at the flagpole, or meal time, I'm sure everyone is ready for some good rest.

Despite all the activities, the social event of yesterday was definitely "Meet the Candidates". During this hour period all girls were able to get together and introduce themselves, their platform, and what they were running for.

There is not a single candidate that I saw that was not qualified for the job, which really speaks volumes about the excellence and posture of everyone who has been



selected to attend Girls State.

From here, elections will be held today after lunch via a form on the internet designed for faster and more efficient results. I encourage everyone to seek a

member from the election board of their city to gather further details because once voting is closed, it will not be reopened.

I cannot wait to hear all the speeches and get a true grasp of what each candidate is passionate about. The excitement and creativity of clever campaigns makes me excited about what these girls could accomplish if given more than an hour or two to make signs and find alluring ways to advertise themselves.

The spirit of the authentic democratic process is alive and well here at Girls State. Time to rest up and give another 110% of effort and energy tomorrow!

## The Yucca Games

BY ELISE MITCHELL AND AMELIA WALLS  
Yucca City Reporters

Yucca city came up with a fascinating game called the Yucca Games which is a highly competitive, massively popular game of hide and seek.

In this, members of this city hide in the botanical gardens, covered in trees and greenery, in the center of their city to win the coveted position of victor.

These games are meant to engage everyone in their community and promote friendly competition. The city decided to enact this tradition yearly to both bring in more revenue through the popularity and competition of the game and also to promote friendship and a sense of unity in the community when

they all come together.

The goal of the games was to pick two to three seekers, who have to find all the other players within 10 minutes to claim victory.

To win, hiders must stay hidden for the entire 10 minutes without being found. The first 2 people found would become the seekers for the next round of the Yucca Games.

There was another edition added to the games in which 2 players are chosen to be blindfolded. They must then seek out the other players based only on their other senses and when found the other players were eliminated until only 2 players remained. Once this happened, those 2 players were chosen to be the victors of the Yucca games.

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 Amelia Walls - Yucca  
 Mollie Dittmer- Saguaro  
 Zoey Olson - Saguaro  
 Erin Wallace - Sycamore  
 Julia Watson - Sycamore  
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# And Election Season Comes To a Close...

BY ELIZABETH BENNETT  
 Cholla City Reporter

Girls State citizens ran for both county and state offices today. Each candidate, nearly vibrating with nerves and excitement, brought their all to the table, advocating for themselves, attracting votes, and making a case why their bill should send them to Girls Nation.

Secretary in State and Girls Nation candidate Aarna Dharia from Ocotillo city shocked the crowd by starting her speech with a simple word, "Vagina." While this may seem completely inappropriate without context, this symbolized the exact message Dharia was trying to get across: Sex education in schools must be improved to end the taboo surrounding sexual abuse and intercourse without consent.

At the conclusion of the general candidates'

speeches for office, city reporters from across Girl State took turns asking real and challenging questions to the Governor and Secretary of State candidates.

Some of these questions included "What separates you from your candidate?," "What measures will you take in office to address the teacher shortage?," and "How will do you plan to attract voters from both parties despite being a Federalist/Nationalist?"

Candidates' ease to demonstrate their knowledge on policy and current issue in American policies was incredibly admirable and built strong trust with voters.

Girls State citizens certainly have difficult decisions to make tomorrow morning in the General Election. But after the chaos of campaigns, it's safe to say Girls State is in good hands, no matter who wins the final vote.



# Arizona Girls State: Unity and Leadership Through Platform Committees

BY TATUM YOUNG  
Juniper City Reporter

This story was scheduled to run on June 2nd.

As our Precinct Committeemen (PC) gathered for the first time to establish their party platforms, not only did the two political parties officially get rolling, but ultimately a community was formed and ideas came to life.

In a world that preys on insecurities and doubt, our girls have stepped up with confidence to advocate for their beliefs through effective communication and by embodying an inviting atmosphere.

Putting our political differences aside, we can all agree that the young women of Girls State have the potential to create a legacy of lasting change.

For those who could not join us, in the first PC meeting, elected committeemen

were grouped with fellow committeemen from their county.

After introductions were made, nominations for Precinct Party Chairmen were chosen and gave brief but firm speeches.

After the election our party chairman, began separating us into committees.

The first committee is called the Platform Committee. Their job is to outline the beliefs of their political party, and offer suggested solutions that we can offer throughout the course of the campaign and election.

The second committee is the Slate Committee and their job is to encourage members of their political party to run, in hopes to have as many offices filled by their

desired party.

And finally, the heart of the mission is the Spirit Committee, this job entitles creating slogans and tunes that draw attraction and support to the party.

This part of government is easy to overlook, but it truly unites the political party. The effects of intentional planning and strong advertisement is a tool that could be the difference between a victory or loss.

It is a beautiful and inspiring moment to see girls from all over Arizona come together and fully embrace the political party they were assigned by contributing their own personal touch to the decisions and beliefs of the campaign.

Good luck to both Nationalists and Federalists!



## The Background of Kimberly Yee

CADY TRAUSCH  
Manzanita City Reporter

Today us girls heard from the current Arizona state treasurer, Kimberly Yee.

Kimberly Yee was the first female in Arizona to hold this position. She was a trail blazer for women in many aspects in Arizona, being as though she was also the second woman to be the majority leader for Arizona senate, following Sandra Day O'Connor.

During her time we learned about her background and process to get to the position she currently holds.

From the surface level Yee was a great speaker to inspire young women to get involved in politics and not be afraid to put yourself into spaces that are male dominated.

But, after conducting some further background research into Yee's time in politics and her stance on many issues that con-

cern women and young Americans, I came across some key differences in her policies and the ones that are being made within Girls State.

As a disclaimer this information is not to sway any readers one way or the other, it is simply to educate the public.

In 2018 in Yee's time as majority senate leader, Yee was the co-founder for SB 1394 which enforces all hospitals and doctors to report any abortions or possible abortions that have taken place in that hospital.

The bill does slightly protect the mother in that her name is not released or reported. They do however reporter her age, race, and several other pieces of information.

This bill limits the security and privacy that is established between the woman, her body, and the doctor.

In 2017 Yee voted yes on SB 1122 which authorized the sales of firearms in Arizona with no background check. Limiting the

safety that goes into ensuring these lethal weapons do not get put in the wrong hands.

The bill's reading is: Notwithstanding any other law, this state and a city, town or county shall not require as a condition of a private sale, Gift, donation or other transfer of personal property that the owner of the personal property search or FACILITATE the search of any federal or state databases and shall not require that a third party be involved.

This leaves a lot to interpretation especially in regards to firearms.

While I believe it is important to support all minorities in politics, especially women, to ensure a more diverse, equitable government. I simultaneously believe that in politics the most important aspect to look at when deciding to vote/support a candidate is their character and the policies they support.

# Arizona Girls State Independent



June 6, 2025 • Volume 16, Issue 5 • Tucson, Arizona

## Election Season Craze

BY KAVYA SUD  
Cholla City Reporter

Incredible bravery and vulnerability has been shown throughout the week at Girls State. From making campaign signs, talking to people, and placing yourself in uncomfortable arenas, we have all put ourselves out there.

And while incredible congratulations are deserved for everyone who got the position they worked hard for, the hard work of those who, unfortunately, did not get the

outcome they hoped for deserves to be recognized.

The beautiful relationships we have built transcend not only this election season, but this entire week, and will carry, support, and nourish our souls. Through meeting candidates, everyone has been introduced to a diversity of perspectives.

Anticipating and waiting for your name to be called and not hearing it can be a disappointing experience. After spending late nights making campaign signs and getting

through the primary process, it might feel disheartening to feel as though your work was for nothing.

However, the experience and public speaking skills you showed are invaluable. Moreover, the outstanding solidarity of everyone at Girls State was impressive. Every single candidate ran a clean campaign, and on many instances, the first thing the winner did was go and hug the losing candidate. The friendships built has helped steel us during the election season.

## Girls State: State of the State

BY AARNA DHARIA  
Ocotillo City Reporter

In a speech that perfectly captured the spirit of Girls State, newly elected Governor Ava Campbell delivered a powerful and heartfelt State of the State address that reminded all of us why we came here—to grow as leaders, connect with one another, and build a better, more inclusive future.

From the very beginning, Ava's gratitude was clear. She opened by thanking her roommate who helped with her campaign poster, her county, and every delegate who spoke with her or supported her journey. That deep sense of humility and appreciation set the tone for what was an emotional and motivating address.

Governor Campbell reflected on how meaningful it has been to hear from so many diverse voices over the course of the week. She emphasized how much she has learned—not just about policy, but about people—and how these interactions have shaped her understanding of leadership.

In a place as politically charged as Girls

State, where Federalists and Nationalists debate fiercely, Ava's call for unity was both refreshing and deeply needed.

"Our strength lies in what connects us, not what separates us," she said, encouraging us to see beyond party lines and work toward shared goals of justice, equality, and progress.

She reminded us that the legislation we pass is more than paperwork—it's a commitment to serve every citizen in our fictional state, regardless of background or beliefs. Ava framed leadership as a responsibility to uplift others, especially those whose voices are often unheard.

Her address wasn't just a summary of the week or a checklist of priorities—it was a sincere invitation to lead with compassion, to listen more than we speak, and to never take for granted the power we hold together.

Governor Campbell's speech was a reminder that real leadership doesn't begin and end with a title. It begins with purpose, continues with action, and lives on in the change we create long after this week is over.



American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Arizona Vice President Dolores Chavez and newly elected Arizona Girls State Governor Ava Campbell

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 Zoey Olson - Saguaro  
 Erin Wallace - Sycamore  
 Julia Watson - Sycamore  
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# A day of success for the Pinon Ponies!

BY HANNAH ANDERSON  
 Pinon City Reporter

We proudly had 13 of 19 citizens run for state or county positions.

Out of our nationalists, our wins consisted of:

- “Snow White” Tallulah Trimble as the chairman for the Kaibab County Board of Supervisors
- “Smarty” Samantha Wang won senator and is one of the finalists for Girls Nation
- “Good Witch” Glenna Barnes is one of three committee leaders in the House of Representatives
- “Cowgirl, Boot-wearing, stand-off” Makayla Jones is now our county sheriff.

For our Federalists, we have:

- “Lasagna” Lavanya Bhatia is now the Kaibab county attorney

- “Midnight Maddie” Madeline Havar is our county recorder
- “Scholarly” Madison Deese won County School Superintendent
- “Yuma-baddie” Samantha Chulamorkodt is our new State Treasurer!

I also won a seat in the House of Representatives. Others who ran included “Lofty” Ava Lewis, “Reliant” Ashlyn Riley, “Savvy” Alexis Sanchez, and “Authentic” Alexa White.

All in all, it was an incredible day for the Pinon Ponies—your hard work, dedication, and leadership truly shine!

Congratulations to all candidates on their amazing achievements and be proud of what you have achieved in such a short amount of time!

## General Elections at Girls State

BY VICTORIA GOESER  
 Juniper City Reporter

Thursday, June 5th, 2025 was an eventful day to say the least.

We had general elections that resulted in announcing Ava Campbell as Governor, and Aarna Dharia as Secretary of State. Along with Kateri FireThunder as Attorney General, Samantha Chul-

amorkodt as State Treasurer, and Jade Leon as Superintendent of Public Instruction.

I want to congratulate all of these amazing women and I wish them luck in their roles here at Arizona Girls State. I would also like to mention all of the county elected officials that won today and all of those girls who didn’t win but they got out of their comfort zone and put themselves out there.



# My Time in the House of Representatives

BY TATUM YOUNG  
Juniper City Reporter

As a freshly elected member of the House of Representatives, my experience so far has been so amazing I couldn't go any longer without sharing it with others.

Even though the federalist party is the minority in the House of Representatives, I don't feel set apart or different from any of my fellow Reps. In fact, as chair of the judicial committee, we have had the best discussions and dialogue which I personally think will lead to great bills.

I have the amazing and unique oppor-

tunity to lead conversations, which have not only opened my perspective on various topics, but I find myself astonished at the beautiful minds I get to pick and explore ideas with.

However, it's not only in the House of Representatives that I find myself thankful, to just attend the same Girls State with some of these highly impressive and inspiring girls. It is truly humbling to be among so many considerate, intentional, and revolutionary young leaders. At either legislation meetings or lunch time, I am greatly aware of the future power this generation

will hold.

More specifically, after sitting through everyone's candidate speeches yesterday, anyone in the audience could tell how passionate each person was.

This is what gives me hope for our future. I am a strong believer that our circumstances shape our perspectives, which is why in a room of 200 girls, everyone has a unique twist and thought on every topic. This just further proves how every single girl is here for a reason. I pray peace and love over everyone as Girl State welcomes all its newly elected officials!

# Why Discrimination is the Best Form of Motivation

BY CADY TRAUSCH  
Manzanita City Reporter

Today Girls State heard from two very strong women in Arizona politics. First Girls State heard from Jennifer Zips who is a federal judge who resides in Tucson, Arizona. She has been serving since 2011 after being appointed by former President Obama.

While telling her story she mentioned the many feats and challenges she faced on her way to the position she currently holds. Although she said she always wanted to be a lawyer, her first motivation to pursue her career was the unfair rule her school put in place that only allowed the boys to play

kickball.

Our next speaker was Charlene Fernandez. Fernandez served in the Arizona House of Representatives from 2015-2021, and was the Democratic leader of the Arizona House of representatives from 2019-2021.

During her time she mentioned the struggles of being a minority both by being a woman and latina. While talking about her youth she says she grew up and was raised by women, bringing up the blasphemy of women being discriminated against considering the sheer intelligence and compassion women hold.

Both of the speakers pushed and fought

to hold a position of power in a male dominated industry and world. Never once did either speaker talk about their discrimination in a negative way, they rather focused on the growth and strength that was gained through the doubts that were constantly being whispered in their ears.

Hearing these speakers before the announcement of our new governor and secretary of state was very inspiring, reminding all the members of Girls' State that the discrimination we face for being minorities should not stop us, but instead remind us of the glass ceiling we break every time we assert ourselves and make our voices heard.



# 5 Things I Wish I Brought to Arizona Girls State

BY ZOEY OLSON  
Saguaro City Reporter

## #1: Shower Shoes.

This one is pretty specific to me because I forgot mine, but when showering in communal showers it definitely is best to wear shower shoes to protect your feet from all the nastiness that comes with showering in dorms. Thankfully, the shop does sell shower shoes, but it's just best to bring your own.

## #2: Energy Drinks

Girls State, despite being super fun, is exhausting. We run right up to 10:00-10:30 doing some activities, and you might not get as much sleep as you want after that due to the 6:00 wakeup time.

Especially in the summer when we're all used to sleeping till 10:00 in the morning, having some sort of caffeine boost can really help you to stay awake during some of the less engaging meetings.

If you're like me and don't function well on low sleep, a couple Redbulls or Alanis can give you some more pep.

Keep in mind however that you won't be able to refrigerate them, so consider something you're okay with drinking at room temperature.

I would also recommend a few snacks like granola bars or chips to keep in your room, since we have very few alternative options if the prepared meal isn't quite what you were hoping for.

## #3: Pens (and other stationery)

Almost everyone attending Girls State should bring some kind of stationery, but most importantly pens.

We're constantly having to write things down as well as design our city book and campaign posters, so bring more art supplies than you think you need.

My pens have been repeatedly lost and stolen, so I'd consider bringing a pack of some you aren't too attached to. For campaign posters, keep in mind that you can't bring any elements that are premade, so make sure to limit your supplies to the posters themselves and something to write/color with.

Blue painter's tape is super nice to have as well, especially for our door decorating contests.

## #4: Undershirts

This one depends on the weather, but during the first two days of this week it poured rain on us, which almost no one was prepared for.

We aren't allowed to wear jackets or anything that covers our shirts (regardless of weather conditions) so I'd recommend some tighter long sleeve undershirts to wear under the shirts.

While we all understand why the rule is in place (the staff need to be able to keep track of us) I do think it's a bit unnecessary, especially when we're forced to use

our handbooks as umbrellas.

In a similar weather-related vein, I wish I had a pair of slippers or slide on shoes to throw on around the dorms or to get breakfast in.

## #5: A Nickname

This one is also a little specific, but in a community of 200 girls, it's likely that someone else will share your name, especially if it happens to be one of the most common in your birth year.

In my city alone, there are two Zoe(y)s, two Abigails as well as an Alex and an Alexa. In other cities there are multiple Avas and Evelyns, and I'm sure there are even more duplicates I haven't even met yet.

Coming prepared to Girls State with a nickname can definitely make it easier for you and your city by clearly distinguishing yourself as soon as you discover a name copycat.

We do regularly write our names with the last name first, so it could be convenient if you just choose to stick with your last name for identification purposes.

In general, I would highly recommend following the packing list, which includes many of these items.

Unfortunately, I lost my packing list early in my packing process, so ideally this article will function as a cautionary tale of not utilizing that list. Happy packing!



# Arizona Girls State Independent



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## Girlhood

BY CADY TRAUSCH  
Manzanita City Reporter

As this is my last article for this Girls State week I wanted to touch on the culture that is created by all the young women who got to be a part of this program.

Throwing it back to the beginning of the week on Sunday when no one knew each other, I could still see the community that girls will always hold in their hearts for one another no matter if they have known each

other for 10 years or 10 days.

I can confidently say I have never been surrounded by so many teens/young adults that are such good conversationalists. All the girls are not only friendly to each other, but are genuinely interested in your life and are always rooting for your success.

As the week went on I saw all the girls now becoming friends instead of just roommates or acquaintances. Girls are wearing each other's clothes, asking for advice from one another, and truly becoming friends.

It has been such a privilege to experience this week because of how much I have learned, but it also gave me a much needed reminder of the built-in community women can always find in each other.

Although there are many very scary and annoying things that accompany being a woman, I can confidently say I would take the period cramps and stereotypes every time if it meant I got to keep the universal camaraderie all women have.

## Talent Show Night at Girls State

BY VICTORIA GOESER  
Juniper City Reporter

Friday, June 6th, 2025 was a special night for me because of the talent show.

I played the Star Spangled Banner on trumpet to start us off. I was followed by other girls who gave it their all singing, dancing, and playing music on other instruments.

We even had Tierney Eden preform "All

I Wanted Was You" by Paramore in Sign Language.

Huge congratulations to all the amazing girls who put themselves out there and made our talent show fun and exciting!



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# A Bird's Eye View of the Senate

BY ELIZABETH BENNETT  
 Cholla City Reporter

After the conclusion of elections, citizens of Girls State were sworn into their positions. From the Governor to County Supervisors, girls stood proudly and took oaths, one after another, officially committing to their county and state responsibilities. As cities retreated from state hall, we split into our respective groups for afternoon meetings.

In the Senate, the first matter of business was determining the party chairs for Federalists and Nationalists. Afterwards we voted on a Senate President, Samantha Wang, who then appointed senators to additional leadership positions. We split into committees including judiciary, education, and appropriations, and began working on bills.

From wind farm grants to abolishing the death row

to civic education, senators worked tirelessly on their bills and gracefully accepted constructive criticism. Lobbyists continued to move between the House of Representatives and the Senate, keeping track of the bills in development and discussing bills with Senators.

I have genuinely enjoyed working in the senate for these past two days and I am so grateful for the thoughtful conversation I am able to participate in with the other intelligent senators of Arizona Girls State.

While some bills may be silly, such as “The Anti-Ethan Safety Bill” and “The Truth Bill,” others are absolutely giving young minds the platform to discuss and perhaps eventually create real change in our communities.

# Winner! Winner! The Best Dinner?

DEBORAH MOLINA-URIBE  
 Palo Verde City Reporter

After talking to countless Girls State citizens, the winner for the best dinner has been decided. The people have spoken: the best dinner this week was on Tuesday.

The menu consisted of cheese pillows, pasta, salad, focaccia bread, and cake. We had cuisine and, the classic Italian cuisine rose to the top once again.

Overall, there were many mixed opinions on the food this week, but the general consensus was that it was pretty good. No one can deny that there were definitely many obstacles when it came to what we ate this week (if you know, you know), but even still,

the citizens of Girls State are so grateful to have been so well taken care of.

There was always an abundance of food, and a lot of girls were able to get seconds every single day. Those with allergies were still able to enjoy delicious meals, an experience that is not always found in different environments.

Being able to have dessert, and even ice cream, brought so much joy to each city within our state. The discussions that we had at dinner brought each city so much closer every single day as we talked about our interests, hobbies, and families. Dinner is not just about food, but about the conversations and community that is built around the dinner table.

# Campaigns, Elections, and Fashion!

BY DEBORAH MOLINA-URIBE  
 Palo Verde City Reporter

Elections here may be done at Girls State, but the friendship building is most definitely not. Throughout this week there have been many different fashion trends that have emerged and taken all the citizens of Girls State by storm.

Some cities have creatively made different accessories to show off their city pride. The city of Cholla made construction paper crowns with their own “cutie” marks to match their city theme of My Little Pony.

Similarly, the girls of Palo Verde made golden leaves attached to bobby pins to put in their hair in order to match their theme of Greek mythology.

Some citizens, like Lydia Parks and Joanie Tarleton, have been openly donating their time and accessories to everyone here at Girls State.

Hair tinsel by Lydia has been a highly popular addition, and everywhere you look there is a girl with shiny, colorful hair.

Henna by Joanie has also been incredibly trendy, where lots of girls are vying for an “appointment” to get their very own designs beautifully painted on their arms.

Girls State has not just been an incredible opportunity to learn about government and apply our passions, but also connect with other like-minded, driven girls who care just as much about changing the world as we do.

# Teamwork & Artwork

BY ERIN WALLACE AND JULIA WATSON  
Sycamore City Reporters

Although Girls State is known for leadership and government, creativity still managed to find its way into the week, thanks to the door decorating competition. Armed with construction paper, markers, and a dream, my roommate, Julia Watson, and I set out to create the most legendary dorm door design in Girls State history.

What began as a quick arts and crafts project quickly spiraled into a full-blown masterpiece, complete with blood, sweat, tears, and, most importantly, an unbelievable amount of time.

I, Erin Wallace, am unfortunately not an artistic person by any means. So, that meant a large chunk of the process was unduly given to Julia—although I would like to credit myself for creating the beautiful name letters and ombre background.

Julia set out to create our vision: a Wide West cowgirl riding her trusted horse. Since we first arrived at Girls State on Sunday, Julia had been working day and night to create a realistic rendition of our imagination.

She finally completed the multiple page longer design on Wednesday. Since then, I have shamelessly been showing off our amazing design to anyone who was willing to look.

While I handled the buzzing publicity, Julia was the one who truly brought the magic to life. Since she's the mastermind behind our wonderful door, I'll let her take it from here.

I, Julia Watson, came into Girls State excited to showcase my talents in order to assist my city's visual appeal.

From a young age, I've always loved doing art. However, most of my art involves a small piece of paper or canvas. Therefore, the greatest challenge going into door decorating was the size of the art piece.

To navigate this issue, I began the lengthy decorating process by sketching out my ideas on a small piece of paper.

Once I got my general idea drafted, I taped different pieces of paper together to roughly align with the size and colors of the final piece. Then, I sketched out the cowgirl and her horse, spending the most time on her face.

Even sketching took a decent amount of time and work over a couple days. I had to focus on making each component propor-



tionate to one another. For example, once I completed sketching the head, I had to adjust the size of the torso to match.

Once it was sketched out, I outlined my pencil marks with black marker. Once the ink was dry, I erased all pencil marking. As for coloring, I used a variety of materials. To color the face, I used colored pencils to build warmth and depth, and bring life to the face. For the shading on the horse and shirt, however, I used markers to save time.

After completing the coloring stage, Finn and I began cutting out and taping the figure onto the gradient background.

Once we had finished attaching the drawing to the door, I realized that it was

lacking a lot of details. To conceal parts of the drawing that appeared awkward or unfinished, I cut a variety of green papers into grass. This added dimension, color, and visual interest to the overall design of our door.

To conclude, the final product wouldn't be what it is without both of our contributions to decorating and planning. Though it took a long time to create, the end result was well worth the effort.

Additionally, working on the door served as a time where I could relax and unwind from a very chaotic and challenging day. Overall, I really enjoyed working on it, and I cannot wait to see what we can do to further enhance our city.

