

# Arizona Girls State Independent



June 3, 2026 • Volume 17, Issue 3 • Tucson, Arizona

## Girls State Bridging the Political Gap

By Ella Diaz and Shreya Raman  
Palo Verde City Reporter

For the third day of Girls State we were joined by speaker Lisa Matthews whose speech marked a feeling of community which rippled throughout the crowd.

Her most notable quote was “Everyone has an idea of what the world needs” which highlights how everyone even outside of politics is entitled to their own ideas.

This speaker encapsulates exactly what Girls State is and aims to be. Girls State is a platform for girls with all different beliefs and ideas to educate each other on the things they are passionate about while also

maintaining respect.

The political polarization within the country today should not be a problem within Girls State and the participants of Girls State should be able to share their ideas without judgment.

Matthews also said “Take yourself out of it, take your biases out and focus on what is good for the people and the community”

Her impassioned words really resonate with the ideas of Girls State and how this is a fictional 51st state that is not supposed to bear a resemblance to the government we are in now.

That is exactly why we are split up into Federalists and Nationalists instead of par-

ties that already exist. It is to ensure that the participants of Girls State are not naturally going in with their own biases. If that was the case things within the government of this fictional 51st state would not be accomplished.

There would be constant infighting and disagreements. So in all Girls States structure is intentionally beneficial and ensures that we as young women within this government are letting go of our own biases and like Matthews said focusing “on what is good for the people and the community” to ensure that our fictional government is successful.

## Piñon Pushes Forward: Campaigns, Candidates, and County Spirit

By Joelle Lally and Violeta Acosta  
Pinon City Reporters

Today was election and candidate meeting day, and Piñon City got straight to work with the campaign process. Girls from every city and county used their imagination and creativity to come up with slogans, posters, and campaign ideas that would help them stand out.

Around Likins Hall, posters were placed everywhere so everyone could see each candidate’s name, position, and message.

Piñon City was especially dedicated and determined throughout the day. Our city worked hard on schedules, posters, planning, and communication to make sure everyone felt prepared and supported. We helped hype each other up, encouraged our candidates, and made sure our city had strong energy going into the election process.

Before campaigning officially began, each candidate had to properly fill out their nomination paper and receive the correct amount of signatures.

Once approved, candidates were allowed to start campaigning at 4:00 p.m. after dinner. Later, everyone gathered in the patio for a pep rally for the three counties: Kaibab, Supai, and Paiute. County candidates were announced and appreciated, and state candidates were recognized as well.

From 8:30 to 9:30 p.m., all counties had time to network, campaign, and introduce themselves. The night ended with excitement, confidence, and Piñon City ready for what comes next.

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)

Pinon pushes page 1
New perspective page 2
Female leaders page 3
Sick-of-more? page 4
Delectable? page 5
Exciting Elections page 6

Arizona Girls State Independent

is published daily by American Legion Auxiliary Arizona Girls State

DIRECTOR Penny Maklary

EDITOR/LAYOUT ARTIST Shannon Mead

2026 Girls State Reporters Autymn Fair - Yucca City Miriam Hozan - Yucca City

Ella Diaz - Palo Verde City Shreya Raman - Palo Verde City

Abigail Grew - Cholla City Jocelyn Kame - Cholla City

Grace Wyant - Ironwood City Brielle Zeiler - Ironwood City

Haedyn Johnson - Mesquite City Elizabeth Martinez - Mesquite City

Diana Euceda Campos - Mimosa City Ashanti Nevels - Mimosa City

Alicia Cordova - Saguaro City Mia Noble - Saguaro City

Gwendolyn Bickerton - Sycamore City Brylee Garland - Sycamore City

Violeta Acosta - Pinon City Joelle Lally - Pinon City

© Copyright, 2026 Arizona Girls State

By Grace Wyant Ironwood City Reporter

As delegates of the 79th session of Arizona Girls State begin to create their campaign materials, we are provided with an opportune time to investigate the psychology of design.

After 4pm on Tuesday there was an explosion of colorful posters that coated the walls of the dorm. All of these posters are meant to attract attention to a specific candidate, and aid in her election campaign.

Different colors can evoke an immediate subconscious emotional association in our minds, and can be utilized by these delegates for different ends.

The color blue is commonly associated with calmness or competence, similar to water. It can lower people's heart rates and projects safety.

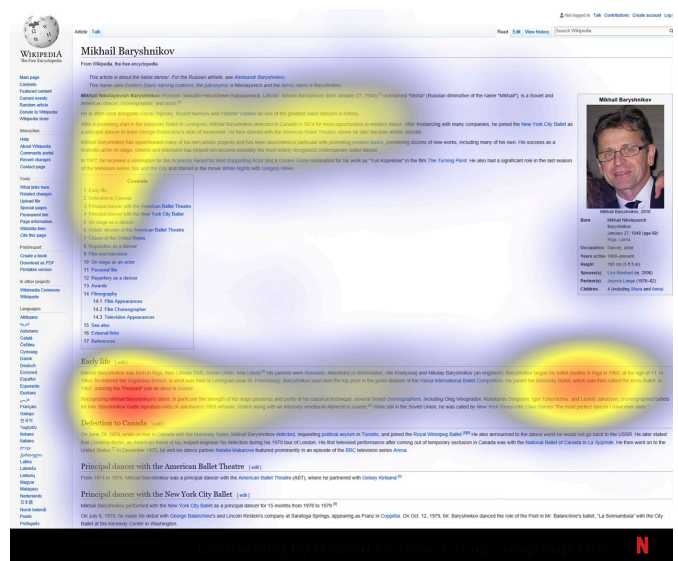
In contrast with this, the color red can signal passion, action, and defiance. This color, different from blue, grabs the viewer's attention faster than any other and is often used to trigger a sense of urgency or an important need to fight, which can be helping in motivating a vote.

Furthermore, even the text style and poster layout play a substantial role in how we perceive a candidate. The use of ALL CAPS projects confidence and commands attention, Title Case can feel professional, or lowercase can feel conversational and empathetic, especially for teenagers.

The format of campaign materials can influence their impact as well. Studies of eye tracking show that viewers scan materials in specific patterns, known as the F-Pattern and Z-Pattern (Pernice).

An example of the F-Pattern is shown in the following image, while the Z-Pattern functions similarly, following the pattern of the letter it was named for.

As you walk around the dorms and are confronted with the myriad of posters, you're likely to see many



Pernice, Kara. "Text Scanning Patterns: Eyetracking Evidence." Nielsen Norman Group, 1 Feb. 2024, www.nngroup.com/articles/text-scanning-patterns-eyetracking/

effective posters that lead you to follow this same pattern of eye movement.

In addition to this, a mnemonic can function as a psychological anchor. It can hold up space in the viewer's mind, since rhyming helps with memory retention by utilizing acoustic encoding. This allows the human brain to process and remember information through the auditory patterns.

Mnemonic devices like rhyming make the information about a candidate more memorable because they create patterns that are easier for the brain to recall, and therefore delegates can utilize them to stand out from the crowd.

As you view posters around campus, take stock of the posters that you notice. There may be a pattern in those that stand out to you the most. Based on what you learned from this article, take stock of how those delegates, intentionally or unintentionally, used the psychology of design to motivate you to remember them, and to cast a vote in their favor in the next election.

A new perspective on mealtime

By Brielle Zeiler Ironwood City Reporter

In the outside world, mealtime may seem just like an everyday, ordinary activity. However, breakfast, lunch, and dinner provide a newfound sense of community inside the halls of Arizona Girls State. Whether you are sitting with your friends, campaigning for your role, or predicting what the food served at lunch will be, mealtime has a habit of bringing people together.

In my experience, I've never sat down to truly appreciate mealtime in my household. I'm often on my phone, watching television, or dozing off as my

family engages in lively conversations across the table. Girls State has opened my eyes to this a ton, showing me how life changing simple conversations can be.

Now when I go back home, I'm going to make an effort to change the way I look at mealtime. Simple conversations about someone's day, their hobbies, or even as simple as their favorite color shows a lot more about them than you may think. Therefore, I encourage readers of the Girls State Blog to spark change in the way they view everyday activities. A simple change in your mindset can completely revert your life for the better, just as it has for me at Girls State.

# Female Leaders of Arizona Meet...Officially

By Alicia Cordova  
Saguaro City Reporter

Today marks day 3 of Girls State, June 2nd 2026; county and state campaigning begins. Before today, we have ran city meetings and elections. We have focused on spending time getting to know our cities (Aka girls in our hallway).

Around 8:30pm, campaigns for Girls Nation, state positions, and county office start and we name it, "Meet The Candidates".

You would think this would be an extreme experience full of competitive, passionate teenage girls, but in reality, it was probably the most eye-opening, wholesome experience I've had as a teenage girl yet.

Girls spent time proposing their ideas to each other. Everyone was just walking

up to a new face they see and saying hi. Even if you're introverted, you'll find a new friend with similar interests because an extrovert will definitely come to you.

Everyone was so creative with their campaigning; making picture frames, signs, games, and handouts all from scratch.

Seeing other perspectives and views from girls your age made me realize we all want the same thing and that is change. It made me realize, there are young girls around the world that are powerful enough to make a mark on so many different points.

For example; government, environment, economy, and humanity. If we all work together, imagine what we can accomplish. And that is what Girls State is all about.

Although today has been stressful and tedious due to campaigning, tonight was life changing.



## Papers submitted, girls campaigning, let's meet the Mimosa candidates!

By Ashanti Nevels  
Mimosa City Reporter

Looking into day 3 of the Girls State programs, all girls had their nomination papers signed by a temporary county clerk, and submitted.

There's so many promising girls competing for these positions. Now you'll hear short blurbs from some promising Mimosa candidates (not to say the others aren't great as well!)

**Jalynn Scott:** Running for Paviute County Treasurer. She's kind and committed. She knows that handling our county funds is a big deal, and she doesn't intend to take it lightly. If elected county treasurer,

Paviute county citizens can rest easy knowing they're in good hands.

**Dorie He:** Running for Attorney General. Attorney general is about being a leader for the state, and Dorie is committed to just that. With experience in law and debate, she knows she'll do well. As an attorney, she promises to use her speech responsibly and lead all parties, counties, and cities to a better future for law in Girls State.

**Hannah Hansen:** Running for Nationalist Lobbyist. As your lobbyist, Hannah wishes to advocate for all people. Especially those who feel underrepresented or afraid of voicing their opinions. Hannah, as a lobby-

ist will make sure everyone gets a say, and no one feels undervalued. All people will be equal, all people will be heard.

**Brei Hall:** Running for Governor. Like a ray of sunshine, Brei promises to bring love and cheer to all of Girls State. She shines bright: being kind, outgoing, and confident, she knows she'll be a powerful and positive force in Girls State. As your governor she will unify parties and bring a new era of joy to all the ladies of Girls State. She's committed and she'll follow through!

We know that all girls will do well regardless of if listed here or not. Good luck to all candidates, and happy racing.

## The beginning of something great

By Jocelyn Kame  
Cholla City Reporter

Hello ladies!! The week has still just begun and there is so much more to learn and see.

We had the privilege of meeting Miss Lisa Matthews. Who also happened to be the Pima County Facilities Management overseer. She happened to answer everyone's questions very thoroughly and lovingly.

I've talked to different girls from every

city, county, and district and I've heard nothing but great things. She was very motivating towards not only women of color, but women everywhere.

Today there was great amounts of county discussion alongside nominations for different positions.

We had a great county rally and there was so much cheer. I have met so many different people from many different parts of Arizona. Whether it was 4 hours away or 4

minutes away they are all lovely people to be acquainted with.

Today was very eye opening with all of the opinionated young women. I even talked to my city about very controversial topics at meals and I couldn't be more proud of these young women that voice their opinion in a more respectable manner than most adults.

I can see that our future is bright with these hard driven women in our hands.

# Sick-of-more? Or waiting for more!—Sycamore city history

By Brylee Garland  
Sycamore City Reporter

The focus at Sycashore is to promote the revitalization of the environment. So come SEA the Sycamore shore!

Last year, sycamore was western themed and Benson Boon funded the city. However, after a devastating flood many people moved to a new area decreasing our population.

This also led to the racetrack flooding, which was the biggest source of revenue, so once again Benson Boon found it in his heart to fund Sycamore.

Yet this time we went green! Instead of a racetrack for cars we now have a horse derby. Luckily, this positively impacts the environment—our main focus—through many factors. Such as their poop as a source of compost, controlling evasive grass species by grazing, and contribute to plant biodiversity by spreading seeds.

Tarini Arora is the mayor of Sycamore city. As well as an important and valued part of our community. There are many memories of note that prove just how supportive and inspirational she is.

Not only does she keep us organized, but she also is able to lead with humility; she keeps everything lighthearted and interesting while still being friendly! We are a very passionate group of people and we have a lot of wonderfully energetic personalities.

Sycamore is full of chaos, vibrancy, and everyone is packed in their own expertise of knowledge.

Yet our mayor keeps everyone on track while hyping us up. Shown through her



own remarks of the city: “I’m very prideful and grateful for our city and for fostering such a beautiful community.”

The flip side of the fun and engaging community Tarini has fostered is that the hardest part of being mayor in her opinion is the workload. With everything going on in Girls State there’s a lot of information to remember and distribute to a diverse group of girls.

Overall, Sycamore has a capable and loving mayor that is sycasURE to make a difference! (Haha)

It’s warm out, the sun beaming on your skin and the grit of the sand beneath you. The waves lap at your toes the rhythmic splash of the water soothing your chaotic days here in girls state.

Down on the Sycamore shore (sycashore!) you wait and realize there’s something in the water when a light catches your eye.

It’s a game! The game is called contact. This is a multiplayer game that works best with 3 or more players. The premise is

person A to think of a word and then reveal only one letter at a time.

While the rest of the players would say a genre (ie animal, fruit, country) giving just enough that person A can’t think of it but everyone else can.

Once the other player thinks of the same word they say, ‘contact!’ and say the word aloud. If the word is the same then person A will have to reveal another letter.

If person A responds before the other players say contact, then no letter is revealed. For example, person A is thinking pineapple and only letter p is revealed. Person B says animal.

Person A will try to think of an animal first and interject with ‘no it’s not a penguin’ (animal that starts with whatever letter they picked) If person A never guesses and person C thinks they know a p letter animal then they say ‘contact’ and try to say the same animal.

If they say the same one then another letter is revealed and if not then the game continues. Have fun from Sycamore!

A poll of the most notable person in Sycamore city with a whopping 10/22 votes is Selah! Selah is a wonderful person inside and out.

Not only is she funny, but it’s clear to everyone that she is genuine and here to have a good time throughout the program. Everything she does is inclusive to everyone and she is incredibly welcoming which makes her stand out as Sycamore’s most notable person!

As well as an honorable mention to Sycamore’s tallest resident our pole carrier: Teagan! She had the second most votes and does an incredible job showing how fun and delightful it is to be around her.



# Meet the new Cholla Mayor

By Abigail Grew  
Cholla City Reporter

Election season is among us and today in Cholla we have elected our Mayor, Kendra Leonard, our Precinct Committeemen, Candice Cabrera and Dyuthi Pothukuchi, and last but not least our Councilmen, Olivia Tardiff, Dani Vargas, Madelyn Yu, and Ivanna Vasquez-Urrea.

Today we will be discussing some topic with our mayor.

## What issues do you plan to address in our community?

Her response addressed the effectiveness

of riding ponies to the community as our previous government officials mandated that all residents must ride ponies instead of driving cars.

## How will you make sure all the voices in our community are heard?

She answered by saying that she will make room for everyone's thoughts and that she wants everyone to speak their mind.

What she thinks is the most important part of her role is making sure everyone's voices are heard and enacting change with that voice.

She believes she is a good fit for mayor

because of her attentive listening skills which will allow her to represent the community to the best of her abilities.

## When asked what she plans to do with her elected power?

Leonard stated that she will get rid of ponies as the main form of transportation as it is unfair to the animals for many reasons such as animal labor, harsh weather, and inability to enforce proper care. With all of this information that our new mayor has shared about her ideas and plans, we can get a better idea of who is representing our people and what issues she plans to get a jump on.

# Girls State is truly unforgettable

By Miriam Hozan  
Yucca City Reporter

Hi everyone! It's Miriam Hozan, a Girls State reporter. Today at Arizona Girls State was such a fun and high-energy experience that really brought everyone together.

The county pep rally was full of excitement, with constant cheering, creative chants, and so much pride from every

group. The atmosphere made it easy to get caught up in the moment and feel connected to everyone around me.

Throughout the day, there was also the "Meet the Candidate" event, which turned out to be one of the most interesting and inspiring parts. It was really cool getting to share ideas, talk about goals, and see how passionate and confident so many of the girls are.

Everyone brought something unique,

and it made the whole experience feel meaningful and motivating. Even with a few nerves, it ended up being really enjoyable and helped build confidence.

There was just this overall sense of support, energy, and excitement that made the day stand out. It felt like a perfect mix of fun and leadership, and it made me appreciate being here even more. Days like this make Arizona Girls State feel truly unforgettable.

# Delectable or Diabolical?

By Gwendolyn Bickerton  
Sycamore City Reporter

In the midst of meetings, campaign prep and lack of sleep, there is one thin on the mind of every citizen. What is there to eat?

Food is what is fueling each and every citizen. Food effects our energy, growth, bodily resolution and just our overall happiness.

Thus far, we have been offered a variety of meals. These range from simple breakfast pastries, lunch sandwiches and enticing dinner entrees. But is the food we are being served actually sustaining us?

I took a poll from multiple citizens, asking how they would rate the meals from June 2, 2026.

The average score for breakfast was 5.5/10, not being very diverse, yet still a decent breakfast.

For lunch, the average was 5/10 as the

cold sandwiches just were not quite hitting the spot. Those with the dietary meals expressed lament for receiving the same sandwiches each lunch day.

Dinner time is hands down the most important meal, and the Italian dinner was a huge hit. It got an average of 7.7/10 for being warm and flavorful.

This was not the case for the those with dietary needs. One citizen stated that she much preferred the Mexican food served the night before over the Italian dish.

Overall, for food served at a camp we are pretty blessed to be catered by people who care.

Though the food may not be our normal cup of tea, the fact that we are being served in a place that we are guests is important to keep in mind.

So, while you eat your sandwiches and dietary meals, or simply ravish each one; I



hope you remember the work that went into preparing each meal and that they are not just camp slop.

STAY CALM, AND EAT ON!

# Exciting Elections at Girls State

By Hayden Johnson  
Mesquite City Reporter

This morning, Mesquite city started their day bright and early working on their city history after being in quarantine since 2019!

They also got to know their neighbors by collaborating with door decorations and listening to some fun summer songs.

After the meeting with Governor Campbell, the girls broke into their counties to get the scoop on their possible candidates and what their jobs will be.

PC's held their last two meetings later that afternoon to help their committee chair

women build their campaigns for county elections, and finalize slogans for the rally to take place tonight!

After dinner at the bear down gymnasium all counties gathered for the county rallies where each candidate was able to openly introduce themselves and make connections between various candidates for both County and State positions.

Feds and Nat's begin to prepare for the upcoming elections both primary and general, excited to see who will take office and take the win!

Strong patriotism can be shown throughout cities as decorations both campaign

posters and city doors lit up the session in colorful fonts and unique mottos.

Moving later in the night the groups prepare for an exciting "Meet the Candidates" night where connections and networking will truly begin!

Closing the eventful night all members are anxiously awaiting the exciting and packed day which Wednesday will entail both County and state elections as we build meaningful connections and relationships all working towards the common girl of improving Girls State!

# Political races heating up at GS

By Mia Noble  
Saguaro City Reporter

The political race is officially heating up here at Arizona Girls State!

Yesterday, we laid the groundwork of local government with the precinct committeemen elections, quickly followed by intense races for mayor and city councilmen. Seeing our peers step up to lead their cities has been nothing short of inspiring.

Today, the focus shifted to county-level

positions. The absolute buzz of the day surrounds the Supreme Court judges race, which has easily become the most popular and highly anticipated choice on the state ballot.

Between intense campaign speeches and busy group meetings, everyone was hunting for a quick snack and perfect timing, because the Girls State store has been officially in business since yesterday!

Even lunch brought its own surprise today. While the cafeteria meal looked a

little questionable, it defied all expectations and didn't taste bad whatsoever. Fuel for the soul!

Tomorrow is the big one: state-level elections. The energy in the halls is electric as everyone gears up for the final ballot push. May the best man or rather, the best woman win!

P.S. I previously read about surviving off Alanis energy drinks through the girls state blog before arriving and laughed it off. I can now confirm it is absolutely not a joke.

