



AAUW Arizona Spring Forum 2025

Saturday, March 29, 2025

Scottsdale Community College

“OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION”

Speakers:

Meghan Kissell

Senior Director of Policy and Member Advocacy at AAUW National

Jodi Liggett

Founder and Managing Director of the Arizona Center for Women's Advancement

Registration to open in mid-February.

***AAUW advances gender equity for women and girls
through research, education, and advocacy.***

Empowering Women Since 1881

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President's Pen

Becky's Musings



We begin again. A new year. A revised set of priorities.



As we begin 2025, let us renew our efforts in the empowerment of and for women. We can be hopeful, we can be energized, we can know that our organization does not let obstacles reduce our commitment.

In 2024, we supported issues we cared about—women's health care, education for all, Anti- the banning of books, voter registrations.

We supported candidates that advocated for our priorities. We were more active than we had been in years. Now, we know that we need to remain as active if not more so in 2025 and beyond.

On March 29, we will be holding our Spring Forum in Scottsdale focusing on AAUW's priorities for the next couple of years. We look forward to seeing you there. We will also be electing our new State Board members. You will be receiving more information on the candidates for office in February.

I want to thank all of you who participated in AAUW this past year. By working together, we accomplish much, and we become a stronger, more vital, and a more impactful community.

Becky Gunn, President





PUBLIC POLICY

by Betsy Flaten and Beverly Byrd
AAUW Arizona Public Policy Co-Chairs



2025!

It's hard to believe we're into the new year. This year will bring challenges, but we will remain focused on ensuring girls can access education without bias, creating economic equity for women, advancing leadership for women in the political sphere, and protecting women's health and reproductive rights.

Over the next few issues of The Sun, we will address each of these priorities individually. This issue, let's focus on education. But first, why do we need to be concerned about public policy at the state level? Why is it important to be knowledgeable about state politics?

Virtually all our daily life experiences are affected by local government - from roads and local services to criminal justice, bodily autonomy, individual privacy, funding public institutions and schools, and so much more. Ninety-five--95% of the nation's legal action occurs in state courts. Arizona lawmakers introduced over 1,700 bills last year alone! The sheer volume of information can be overwhelming. You think "I don't do politics?" Think again: politics is simply the business of everyday life in our communities.

So back to education! As you know, public education is under attack from many directions - decreased state funding, school closures and ESA (Empowerment Scholarship Accounts). And Arizona students rank lower in mathematics and reading than the national average. Seems overwhelming, but being knowledgeable of other organizations and resources who are also working toward bettering public education is helpful.

Consider "Save Our Schools" (sosarizona.org). They have a weekly Ed Report available online. The Truth about ESA vouchers section explains the system and process and the impact on the state budget.

Arizona School Board Association (azsba.org) is another source. Check their website for information about their mission, objectives and their advocacy.

Know your legislators and their stance on public education, ESA vouchers and support for pending legislation. Be aware that both the Education Committee in the Arizona House and in the Arizona Senate have new leadership.

- ✚ The Senate Committee is chaired by **David C. Farnsworth (District 10)**.
- ✚ Vice Chair is **Carine Werner (District 4)**.
- ✚ In the House, **Matt Gress (District 4)** will chair the Education Committee with **James Taylor (District 29)** serving as Vice Chair.

Once the legislature convenes on January 13, 2025, more information about the Education Committees (House and Senate) will be available at <https://apps.azleg.gov>

Attend your local schools board meetings and get acquainted with your board members. Board meetings are very informative and provide an opportunity to voice our support of public education through **Request To Speak**.

We will update you as issues are brought up at both the state and local levels that relate to our Public Advocacy priority for education - equal access to quality public education, including access to diverse materials.



East Mesa

by Janice Dill, President

Calling all Quilters – Attend the East Mesa Quilt Presentation

The East Mesa Branch invites all AAUW members to attend a quilt presentation, Saturday, March 1; 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Leisure World, Mesa Arizona. The quilt presentation will begin at 11 a.m., and viewing will continue until 2 p.m. There is no charge for this event. The event will be held in the Ballroom at Recreation 1. To attend, enter Leisure World via the Power Gate – 908 S. Power Road, Mesa.

The morning will start with our monthly business meeting at 10 a.m. followed by our featured speaker Penny Bose at 11 a.m.

Penny is an award-winning quilter from Chandler, Arizona. Her presentation will be *Quilting in America* and the impact quilts have had on our society. She has been recognized nationally as well as locally, and two of her quilts were published in the 2025 AQS (American Quilter's Society) event calendar. She made her first quilt in junior high and began quilting for clients ten years ago.

She opened her business "A Quilter's Creation" after creating several community service quilts. She designs patterns for herself and clients. She also enjoys spreading the comfort of quilts to people who might not otherwise enjoy them. Through Nimble Thimbles, her local chapter of the Arizona Quilt Guild, they give away more than 100 quilts every year to local philanthropies, including the American Legion and

American Red Cross. These quilts let people know they are cared for on a very fundamental level.

Penny's quilts have hung in the Great Wisconsin Quilts Show, The International Quilt festival in Houston and the Road to California Quilt Show and all the AQS shows. The picture is of Penny with her quilt "A Peak Through a Kaleidoscope" at the Houston Quilt Festival this year.



Penny Bose

Penny loves the creative process, from designing her quilt patterns to creating digital designs for both her own and client quilts. She sees quilts as the voice of the maker, creating art that reflects moods, statements and, of course, love. She is bringing her quilt that features women and a few others that show the newest ideas in quilting. She loves researching the history of quilts and their stories.

We will be displaying photos of Hawaiian Quilts, Native American Quilts, and Slave Quilts and the stories of how they are part of our history in America. We would like to display quilts from our AAUW members and the community that have a story to share. We are hoping to display 20-25 quilts. If you have a quilt to share, please contact Mary Linnemann at mklinnemann16@gmail.com or (320) 492-9131 or any member of our AAUW board. Direct any questions to Mary Linnemann or Janice Dill at (920) 860-0638

Green Valley

Amy Perlick, Co-President

We had an informative speaker, Dr. Abby Limmer from the University of Arizona, at our December meeting. She gave us the unique perspective of marital rights and responsibilities in medieval Cairo. She relayed the true story of a women who was married at 9, a mother at 16 and, after her husband left her, was able to make a living supporting her family by becoming a teacher. Also at our December meeting, our Public Policy co-chairs had a letter available for our members to sign. The letter encourages President Biden to publish the Equal Rights Amendment. We sent those to the White House.

In early December we had the opportunity to tour the St. Andrews Children's Clinic in Nogales, AZ. We support this organization by making 80 bag lunches for this monthly clinic that offers children healthcare support from medical specialists who fly in from around the country to serve them.

Our members will be touring the Sahuarita Food Bank and Resource Center this month to learn more about this important community resource.

We are proud to be the organization that will honor Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on January 20 by placing 96 flags up and down a main thoroughfare in Green Valley. We have done this for the past 16 years and the community is thankful for this.

We will show support for women and girls by sponsoring the annual Rally to End Violence against Women and Girls on February 15.

We are gearing up for our annual fundraiser, FundFest, to support scholarships to Pima Community College.



Our group toured the St. Andrews Children's Clinic.



Dr. Abby Limmer
Professor of Middle Eastern Studies
University of Arizona
Title of talk: "He Said, She Said in Medieval Cairo."

Northwest Valley

by Rosemary Dougherty, President

May all have health and happiness in the New Year.

Our Annual Holiday Breakfast - "Holidaze in Hawaii" was wonderful. The Ukulele Club was very entertaining, and the ladies received some interesting White Elephant Gifts. Last, but not least, the food was great. The Foundation Office was invited, and they were surprised and thankful. Another Holiday is past. Now we must concentrate on 2025.

Our Annual Scholarship Fundraiser Fashion Show to benefit AAUW NWV Branch Scholarship Program is coming up on Saturday, January 18, at Briarwood Country Club with Fashions by Calle Rose. This promises to be an outstanding event. Hopefully, all of you have made arrangements to attend. The food will be superb, as well as the atmosphere. Bring your friends and get a table of eight!

January's General Meeting highlights the Arizona Women's Hall of Fame with presenters Mary Jo West, HOF inductee and member of the Board of Directors; and Jane Rosenbaum, Secretary to the HOF Board. You will not want to miss this Program. Bring a friend! I am sure she will want to join our Branch, as we have so much to offer.

The Girlfriends trip to West-MEC was wonderful. There is so much to see there. Those who went were truly amazed. Of course, then we had a great lunch at the Irish Wolfhound.

Some New Year's thoughts: Happy New Year! We know that this past year has been full of challenges, and we hope that the coming year brings brighter days. Sending all good wishes!

In an extraordinary year, I have been grateful for your extraordinary friendships . . . thank you. And cheers to new beginnings!

Prescott

by Miriam Haubrich, President

We recently were notified that Prescott AAUW received an award from AAUW National. It is my pleasure to share the body of the email with you. It is with great pleasure that I share some exciting news—

AAUW Prescott (AZ) Branch has achieved two stars in AAUW's FY24 Five Star Program!

"Your branch attained the . . .

Communications & External Relations and Programming stars.

This recognition is a testament to the dedication, hard work, and commitment of your branch members to advancing AAUW's mission of gender equity for women and girls."

The Five Star Program is designed to honor branches that align their work with AAUW's strategic priorities in areas such as Advancement, Public Policy & Advocacy, Governance & Sustainability, Programming, and Communications & External Relations. Earning two stars is an incredible accomplishment, and we are thrilled to celebrate this success with you.

This award is the result of hard work of many in our branch working toward a better world. I am proud of all the work being done to further our mission:

"To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy".

Scottsdale

by Alice Buck, President

Scottsdale Branch attended the Fall Forum in Tucson in November ten members strong, coming away with ideas on how to make our meetings and interactions more vibrant. We are so very grateful to all in the Tucson area who made us feel welcome and showed us how to present a meaningful AAUW-AZ experience. We look forward to returning the favor when AAUW-AZ gathers for Spring Forum in Scottsdale in March.



In December, we enjoyed our annual fundraiser which successfully masquerades as a very fun Holiday Luncheon each year. We raised for both AAUW Funds and Scottsdale Community College scholarship funds.

In January, our general meeting will be presented by Northwest Valley Branch, bringing the **Made History!** Project to Scottsdale. We can hardly wait to add, in NW Valley's words,

*“our priceless stories of actions
taken by our community
members...
to improve the lives of
women and girls.”*

In February we are looking forward to our annual **Author's Luncheon** when we will be hearing from local author **Jennifer Ashley**. We will be dining at the Artichoke Grill at Scottsdale Community College, our meal being prepared by the culinary arts students at SCC.

Our Special Interest Groups are very active, with . . .

- ✚ Two book Groups
- ✚ Lunch Bunch Group
- ✚ Great Decisions Discussion Group Monthly Meeting

We continue to eat, drink, read and discuss together, all the while enjoying each other's company.

Since 1881, AAUW has been one of the nation's leading voices promoting education and equity for women and girls. AAUW has a nationwide network of members, donors, and advocates across the United States, as well as . . .

[700 local branches](#)
and more than
[450 college and university partners.](#)

Since AAUW's founding over 140 years ago, we have examined and taken positions on the fundamental issues of the day — educational, social, economic, and political.

AAUW's commitment to educational equity is reflected in our research, policy work, national partnerships, and programming.

Southeast Valley

by Mary Kenney, Sr Co-President

Catching up with AAUW Southeast Valley Branch

The AAUW Southeast Valley Branch (SEV) members continued their efforts to support our community through a special summer session on June 26 when members met to pack their donated items for Harvest Compassion Center.

Donations included non-perishable food products, personal hygiene items, nearly new clothing and contributions to Harvest Compassion Center Summer Sneakers and Snack Drive. Donations piled up quickly and required two SUV vehicles to transport everything to the Center.



AAUW SEV members, Ellie King and Ellie Watland, speak with Lori Schweighardt, Harvest Compassion Center's Community Resources Coordinator, about how Branch's donations will help the not-for-profit

On October 21, SEV kicked off its general membership season with an afternoon social attended by more than 50 members. Introductions of board members, chairs, and leaders of special interest groups were followed by highlights for the coming year. Also, in attendance were AAUW Fellowship recipients, Shekesha Shelton and Natalia Arruda, who have been invited to attend a future Branch meeting to speak about their post-graduate studies.

Next up, SEV hosted Chandler's Assistant Chief of Police, Melissa Deanda, as its speaker at its November general meeting. Assistant Chief Deanda spoke about her current responsibility in her leadership role and shared her story that led her to this key position. She was also available to local high school and Chandler-Gilbert Community College students, invited as Branch guests, to answer questions on how to pursue a career in the justice system.

Demonstrating the value of education, Assistant Chief Deanda spoke about her current leadership role, including realizing the value of continuing her education. She noted how she was inspired by a school resource officer during her high school years and was eager to make a difference in her community. But Deanda also offered insight into her personal challenges of raising a family and having a demanding career in a male-dominated field.

In addition to the keynote speaker, a Thanksgiving basket was successfully raffled off to members whose ticket purchases helped the Branch purchase Teachers Reading Manual for San Marcos Elementary, a Title I school in Chandler.

Wrapping up the calendar year, the SEV Branch got into the holiday spirit with its Holiday Funds Brunch on December 14. The event featured a presentation by one of the Branch's scholarship recipients, Nicole Caldwell, who is studying mortuary science at Chandler-Gilbert Community College.



**Nicole Caldwell
Scholarship Recipient**

In addition, 10 Branch past presidents were recognized for their service and impact on the Branch. While encouraging members to support AAUW at the national level, the Brunch also featured a holiday raffle to continue efforts to support San Marcos Elementary.

Tucson

by Jane Russ, Branch Member

Tucson Branch - Last Year and This Year

The last quarter of 2024 had the Tucson Branch busy with monthly events as fun get-togethers, meeting new members, and staying informed on local women's issues.



Branch president, Ana Nygren, along with approximately 15 members met at a local wine bar for happy hour. The after-business daytime and weekday were specifically chosen to attract working members and guests. Along with introductions and casual conversation, one of our members shared information from the Education Forward Arizona, an organization seeking to change the way people think about and support education in AZ.



Our branch was proud to have partnered with AAUW AZ to host the 2024 Fall Forum on November 9 in Tucson. The 'Now We Lead' program featured conversations with Melissa La Duke, AAUW National and Magdalena Verdugo, CEO YWCA of Southern Arizona.

Melissa fielded questions about AAUW National's priorities, action to the membership vote taken last year, and encouraged everyone to visit the National website to stay informed on what is happening at the National level.



Ana Nygren
and Melissa La Duke



Ana Nygren
and Magdalena Verdugo

Magdalena shared her leadership experience and keys to succeed as an outstanding leader. In addition, the work the YWCA

of Southern Arizona does for small business and women were shared. Our branch is looking forward to the annual YWCA Women's Leadership Conference on January 30.

In January, the branch is looking forward to tabling at the University of Arizona's 'Launching Your Career Symposium' and providing information about salary negotiations to students and guests. This annual event enables the branch to meet students and talk about AAUW, our mission, scholarship opportunities, and learn what is on their minds as they are attending school or nearing graduation. University of Arizona is a long-standing C/U partner with AAUW Tucson with multiple joint programs held throughout the year.

Book Recommendation by AAUW Fellow



By Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson - Sometimes the bravest thing we can do while facing an existential crisis is imagine life on the other side. This provocative and joyous book maps an inspiring landscape of possible climate futures. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson guides us through solutions and possibilities at the nexus of science, policy, culture, and justice. Visionary farmers and financiers, architects and advocates, help us conjure a flourishing future, one worth the effort it will take—from every one of us, with whatever we have to offer—to create. If you haven't yet been able to picture a transformed and replenished world—or to see yourself, your loved ones, and your community in it—this book is for you. If you haven't yet found your role in shaping this new world or you're not sure how we can actually get there, this book is for you. With grace, humor, and humanity, Johnson invites readers to ask and answer this ultimate question together:
What if we get it right?

**NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER •
A SMITHSONIAN BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR**

ARIZONA SUN

Four issues—September, November, January, and March—of The Sun are published each year.

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Please submit all articles to both emails.

Please format in Microsoft Word and photos as Jpeg.

Next Deadline: February 28, 2024



USEFUL LINKS

AAUW Arizona State <https://www.aauwarizona.org/>

AAUW National <https://www.aauw.org/>