



**American Association of University Women**  
**Southeast Valley (AZ) Branch**  
Chandler, Gilbert and the Greater Southeast Valley  
southeastvalley-az.aauw.net • aauw.sev.az@gmail.com

# The Prickly Pear Newsletter



**February 2025**

## **February Branch Meeting**

**February 17, 2025**

**5:30 - 7:00 pm**

**Sun Lakes United Methodist Church**

**9248 Riggs Road**

We welcome leaders from Save Our Schools (SOS) to speak about the work of their organization in Arizona.

SOS is a non-partisan, community-based organization supporting strong public schools to build a better Arizona. They:

- Research public education issues affecting our state in an objective, fact-based manner
- Engage Arizonans around the topic of public education by sharing research and initiating dialogues around the state
- Collaborate with other local and national education and community groups, business partners, and other leaders to build support for public education in Arizona

**Meeting Schedule:**  
5:30 - Social Time  
5:40 - Branch Business  
6:10 - Speaker  
6:50 - Wrap Up

Our two speakers are both Leads with the East Valley SOS Community Action Team.



Leda Devlieger was born and raised in Cottonwood, Arizona, and is a mom of two teens and an educator. She has participated in Arizona's public schools as a student, parent volunteer, substitute teacher, classroom teacher, and advocate. She is not currently in the classroom but continues to educate and engage parents, teachers, and community members about education policy and issues in the East Valley. She also serves as the SOSAZ Social Media Coordinator,

helping to manage social media in an effort to increase awareness of our work. She believes every student in Arizona deserves a fully funded, safe school in their neighborhood, regardless of income or zip code.



Lisa Calderon is a proud mother to four daughters and one granddaughter. Originally from Central California, Lisa relocated to Arizona in 2010. She grew up with an appreciation for educators as they were instrumental in her love of reading and learning. She was the first to graduate high school and attend college. She has had the privilege of time to support her community and her children's school where she has volunteered for programs such as art masterpiece, serve on PTO and Boosters Club. She says "I will always be an advocate

for quality and equitable education."

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**Party Like It's Mardi Gras!**

Our annual Scholarship Fundraiser is Friday, February 21, 2025 and promises to be an exceptional Mardi Gras themed social evening.

This popular annual scholarship



fundraiser will be held in the Cottonwood Country Club Ballroom in Sun Lakes from 4 – 7 pm with doors opening at 4 pm. Proceeds from the evening will fund scholarships for women attending Chandler Gilbert Community College. Our 2024 scholarship fundraiser allowed \$10,000 in scholarships to be awarded to deserving women.

For the ticket price of just \$30 per person, you and your friends will enjoy delicious appetizers, live music, the opportunity to bid on fabulous prizes, and a fun photo op. A cash

bar will be available for your favorite libation and will feature a special Mardi Gras themed cocktail and mocktail.

Tickets must be purchased in advance and last year was a sell out!

Shown in the picture are Barb Moser, Beth Zdeblick, Penny Rings, and Mary Kenny preparing a basket for the event.

Members are encouraged to donate items for baskets. Gift cards are a great item. A wine bottle can be added to the wine cooler basket.

Use the flyer below to invite your friends.



Bourbon

# party like it's MARDI GRAS

**FRIDAY**  
**February 21, 2025**

The Ballroom at  
Cottonwood Country Club  
From 4-7pm  
Doors Open at 4pm

**\$30 per person**  
*Tickets must be purchased in advance.*

**Assigned Seating**  
Sign up with your friends!

Please Text or Call:  
Barbara • 925 787-1438  
Beth • 630-890-3508  
Email: [barbmoser57@gmail.com](mailto:barbmoser57@gmail.com)

*Includes:*  
**Appetizers**  
**Live Music**  
**Fun Photo Op**  
**Raffle**  
**Silent Auction**  
**Prizes**

**Cash Bar**  
**Specialty**  
**Cocktail**  
**& Mocktail**



*Proceeds will go to fund scholarships to women and girls attending Chandler Gilbert Community College.*



**AAUW**  
empowering women since 1881  
Southeast Valley (AZ) Branch  
Chandler, Gilbert and the Greater Southeast Valley

## AZ ESA-Available to Everyone,Regardless of Income

Governor Hobbs recently stated, "The best way to ensure we have a strong, thriving economy is by acting decisively to support our public K-12 schools."

AAUW supports equity in education. One way to support equity in education would be to advocate to modify the ESA voucher program in AZ.

According to Save Our Schools Arizona, while exact data on who uses ESA vouchers is challenging to obtain due to the program's total lack of transparency, the scant data available to taxpayers paints a clear picture: the vast majority of vouchers go to the wealthiest zip codes in Arizona. Multiple analyses have found a clear correlation: for any given zip code, the higher the household income, the more families use vouchers.

Governor Hobbs proposed an income cap and sliding scale for the ESA voucher program. It is estimated that her program could save taxpayers \$150 million per year.

I am urging everyone to click on the link below and let your legislators know how you feel about the way ESA vouchers are managed in AZ. Other states have voucher programs that are income based. Why doesn't AZ use these states' plans as its model?

<https://sosarizona.org/email-your-lawmakers/>

Ellie King  
Vice-President of Public Policy

## January Meeting Wrap Up

### We Welcomed AZ Public Policy VPs to Our January Meeting

Betsy Flaten and Beverly Byrd, AAUW Arizona Public Policy Vice-Presidents, were the speakers at our AAUW Branch meeting on January 20, 2025. They shared many ways that we could make our voices heard in the public policy arena.

### Are you familiar with these websites?

[www.azleg.gov](http://www.azleg.gov) - This website is all you need to learn about bills and find out who your representatives are and their schedules. Check out the "Request to Speak" section where you can let your representatives know how you feel about a bill. Go to the website and just look around. There is a wealth of information just waiting to be seen by someone who wants to express their opinion and be in the know.

[www.cebv.us](http://www.cebv.us) – On this website you will find training on how to "Request to Speak." There is also information to help you express your opinion in an informed manner. Attend the virtual Happy Hour every Sunday from 4-5pm. Sign up for "The Weekly," to receive an email about bills going through the Legislature. And much, much more!

**Legislative Day - March 11.** Have you ever been to the Capitol and seen how things are done? Plan to attend this event and you will be educated. We will try to carpool.

**Spring Forum – March 29** at Scottsdale Community College. This promises to be a great event with wonderful speakers from the national AAUW office. Save the date. More details to come.

Ellie King  
Public Policy VP

# Calendar of Events 2024-2025

## BOARD MEETINGS:

February 12, 2025  
March 12, 2025  
April 9, 2025  
May 14, 2025

## BRANCH MEETINGS:

February 17, 2025  
March 17, 2025 Branch Annual Meeting  
April 21, 2025 Induction of Officers

## EVENTS:

February 21, 2025 Scholarship Fundraiser  
March 11, Legislative Day  
March 29, 2025 Spring Forum

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## SEV Branch Special Interest Groups

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### Bridge Group Mon., Feb. 3

It meets on the first Monday of the month at the Poolside in Oakwood. This is fun, not competitive, bridge.

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### Mahjong Group Wednesdays, 1:00 pm Oakwood Ballroom Tables 6-7

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### Afternoon Book Club Mon., Feb. 10 - 1:00 pm

**Book: *Mad Money***  
**by Jodi Picoult and Jennifer Finney Boylan**

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**Lunch Bunch**  
**No Meeting in Feb.**

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**Great Decisions**  
**Wed., Feb. 26- 3:00 pm**

**Topic: The Future of NATO**

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**Evening Book Club**  
**Tues., Feb. 25 - 6:00 pm**

**Book: *Ordinary Grace***  
**By: William Kent Krueger**

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