



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



# The Prickly Pear Newsletter

January 2026  
Happy  
New Year!

January General Meeting



**Date: Monday, January 19, 2026**

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

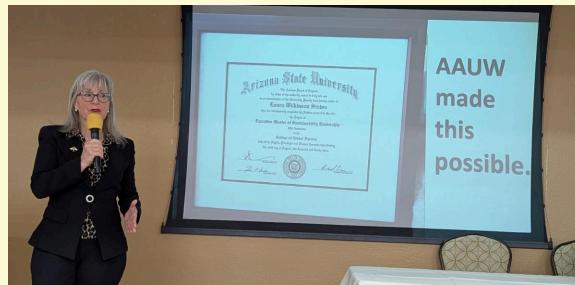
**Location: Oakwood Country Club, Bradford Ballroom**

**Address: 24218 South Oakwood Blvd.  
Sun Lakes, AZ 85248**

A representative from Civic Engagement Beyond Voting (CEBV) will be our featured guest speaker. CEBV is a statewide grassroots nonpartisan organization that empowers Arizonans to actively engage with their state and local government.

Learn about Request to Speak (RTS): weigh in on bills from the comfort of your couch! Arizona's Request to Speak is an online tool that lets everyday citizens give Arizona state lawmakers our feedback on bills. It's an easy way to get involved in state politics, stay informed on the bills that directly affect us, and provide feedback so our elected officials are more inclined to honor the wishes of us, their constituents. This training will answer all your questions and get you ready to participate in the Arizona legislative process.

## Holiday Funds Brunch



The annual Holiday Funds Luncheon was held on December 13, 2025. Laura Wilkinson Sinton was the guest speaker. She was awarded the AAUW Career Development Grant, which allowed her to return to school and earn a Master's Degree in Sustainability Leadership from Arizona State University. She is a great example of how AAUW supports women and the impact this type of support can foster. Laura shared impactful information about how we can make a difference in the health of our shared planet.

Members enjoyed hearing our speaker, socializing, and a delicious luncheon.

Not to mention, funds were raised to support the work of AAUW!

Remember: Funds raised were matched by AAUW National.

## Spring Fling News

Consider this a “save the date” announcement to mark your calendars for Saturday, March 21, from 4:30 to 6:30 pm, for the always fun and delicious AAUW SEV Annual Fundraiser Happy Hour! The event will be held in the Cottonwood San Tan Ballroom in Sun Lakes and offer multiple opportunities for everyone in the community to support our 2026 fundraiser promoting the continued STEM education of girls and women in our community.

We are currently collecting donations for raffle and silent auction items. Please think about asking the businesses you visit for donations. The link below is a donation letter from our fundraising chair. It is always fun to team up with a friend to create a creative silent auction basket.

[Link to 2026 Fundraising Donation Letter](#)

Spring Fling committees are working now to organize the event. Barb Moser will provide more information at our January meeting.

## Happy Hour Fun!

Branch happy hours are held the third Thursday of each month, 4:30-6:00 pm. Members and anyone interested in joining AAUW are invited to join us.

**Location: Grill on the Green at Ironwood**  
**Time: 4:30-6:00 pm**

**Next Happy Hour:  
January 15, 2026**

## News for the Well-Informed

### Take the Pledge for Equity – AAUW Needs About 300 More Pledges.

AAUW's strength is our collective voice. We're asking everyone in our community to take the pledge for gender equity. Go to [aauw.org](http://aauw.org), click on "Take Action", and then click on "Two-Minute Activist". Scroll down the list on the right to "Take the Pledge for Equity" and click "Submit." Fill out the form with your information and "Submit" again. It takes less than two minutes. The Pledge to Action is on the website and I have also copied it here.

"AAUW members are not bystanders — we are change-makers."

I pledge to:

- Speak up in my community when I see attacks on equity.
- Engage in events, like town halls, school board meetings, or public demonstrations.
- Contact my elected officials when legislation threatens access and equity in education.
- Support AAUW and other organizations working to protect our rights.
- Seek the facts — beyond the headlines — of how policy impacts women and girls and share with five people I know.
- I pledge to be part of a continuing movement rooted in shared purpose and community.

Vice-President of Public Policy

## Membership News

Starting January 1, the membership committee will be tracking the number of new members referred to us by current members. At the end of June, we will tally the numbers and the member who brings in the most new members will receive free National membership for the year.

That will be a savings of \$74. (You pay only the State \$9 and Branch \$22). We already know that members are our best recruiters, and this will just be a little reward for the effort! Remember to have the new member mention your name on the application!! Good luck!

Vice-President of Membership

## AAUW National News

### **AAUW Warns DOJ ‘Merit’ Rule Undermines Civil Rights Safeguards.**

In its December 10, 2025 news release, AAUW announced that it strongly objects to the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) new rule eliminating disparate-impact protections from its Title VI regulations. The news release explained that this major change limits enforcement to only blatant, intentional discrimination and that the new policy was adopted without a public comment period.

In a statement released from Gloria L. Blackwell, AAUW CEO: “The Justice Department is trying to sell this rule as a return to ‘equal protection’ and ‘merit’. Yet, merit has too often been a smokescreen to keep women out of classrooms, labs, boardrooms, and leadership.” The AAUW news release continued: “Because DOJ coordinates federal Title VI enforcement, this rule is a dangerous model for other agencies, including the Department of Education. It threatens progress toward educational and economic equity. AAUW urges Congress to conduct robust oversight of this rollback and to pursue every appropriate avenue to restore strong protections against systemic discrimination.”

To read the full press release, go to [AAUW Warns DOJ ‘Merit’ Rule Undermines Civil Rights Safeguards – AAUW: Empowering Women Since 1881.](#)

## Calendar of Events

### BOARD MEETINGS:

January 14, 2026  
February 11, 2026  
March 11, 2026  
April 8, 2026  
May 13, 2026  
June 10, 2026

### BRANCH MEETINGS:

January 19, 2026  
February 16, 2026  
March 16, 2026  
April 20, 2026

### Happy Hours:

January 15, 2026  
February 19, 2026  
March 19, 2026  
April 16, 2026  
May 21, 2026  
June 18, 2026

### EVENTS:

March 21, 2026 - Scholarship Fundraiser  
May 26, 2026 - Spring Forum  
Legislative Day 2026 - TBD

## Special Interest Groups

**Bridge Group, Mon., Jan. 5, Poolside in Oakwood.** This is fun, not competitive, bridge. Please RSVP by the Friday before the meeting to

**Mah-jongg Group, NEW!, Thursdays, 1:00 p.m., Oakwood Country Club, Poolside.** Lessons for new players will be at a separate time.

**Movie Group, Thurs., Jan. 8, early afternoon, movie is probably Song Sung Blue, Harkins Chandler Crossroads Towne Center 12, Germann & Gilbert Roads.**

**Afternoon Book Group, Mon., Jan. 12, 1:30 p.m., Helen Semple's home.** The book will be *This Tender Land* by William Kent Krueger.

**Happy Hour, Thurs., Jan. 15, 4:30–6:00 p.m., Grill on the Green, Ironwood Country Club.** Host will vary. No reservations required.

**Lunch Bunch, Tues., Jan. 20, 11:30 a.m., Crust, Chandler.**

**Great Decisions, Wed., Jan. 21, 3:00 p.m., location and topic to be determined.**

**Evening Book Club, Tues., Jan. 27, 6:00 p.m., Kathleen Enzminger's home.** The book will be *The Only Woman in the Room* by Marie Benedict.

**Dinner Group, Wed., Jan. 28, 5:30 p.m., location to be determined.**



AAUW Southeast Valley | AAUW Southeast Valley | Southeast Valley, AZ 85224 US

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