

# Cupid for Hire

By Sarah Traore '26

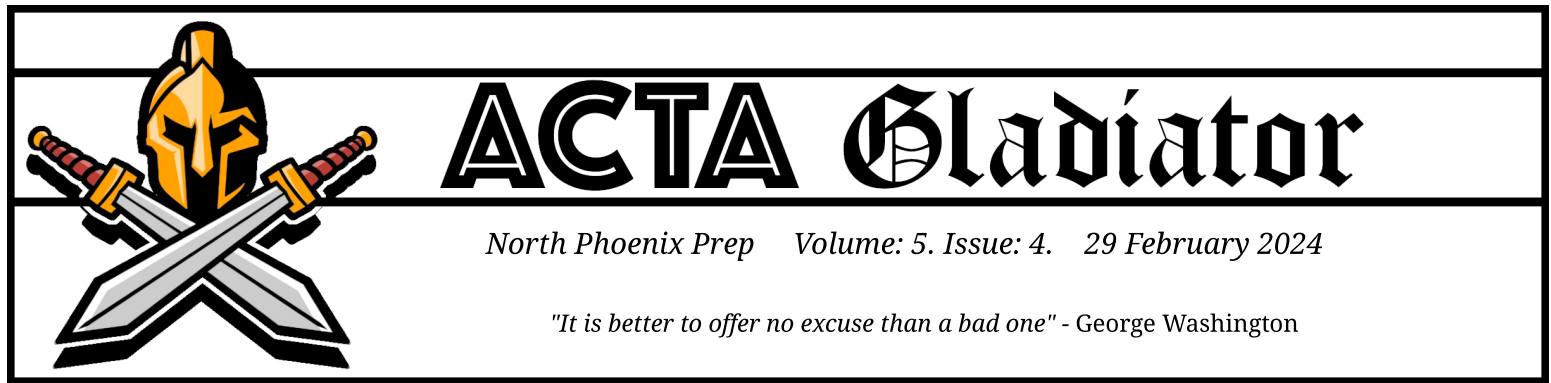


## A Triple-Threat Gladiator: Gage Kloft

By Anushka Khare '24

Gage Kloft was the center of our senior night for the winter season, being the only senior across all teams. He has played forward for the Varsity Basketball Team for three consecutive years now and when asked to sum up the experience in one word, he describes it as “challenging”. When asked what he will miss the most, he replied “my teammates and coaches”. On the night of, he was accompanied by his parents who he thanked. He ended his last game of highschool with a bang! Our team beat Mayer 34-32, closing off the 2023 season on a great note.

*Editorial contributions: Daniel Pagnone, Mr. Fleming*



## Teacher Spotlight: Mr. Kelly

By Sarah Traore '26

As the academic year progresses, NPX would like to spotlight Mr. Kelly, one of our new teachers in the Gladiator facult. In the beginning of the year, Mr. Kelly stepped up for the vacant spot of the Algebra III/Trigonometry and Logic and Coding classes–10th and 12th grades. In this exclusive interview, we had the opportunity to sit down with him to learn more about his background and dreams.



Art By  
Sarah Traore '26

Q) “What brought you to teaching as a career?”

A) “After my time in the Biotechnology field, I began to tutor high school students in math and science. That quickly grew into a business in and of itself. I realized I may have a knack for teaching and I enjoyed helping students. I decided to take a leap of faith (and courage) and try my hand at teaching high school as a full time career.”

Q) “What is/was your least favorite subject in school?”

A) “I’ve never really had a least favorite subject in school, I do truly enjoy learning all subjects. However, my most difficult subject/course was my Organic Chemistry courses in college.”

Q) “What’s your favorite animal?”

A) “My favorite animal as a pet would have to be dogs. My favorite animal in general would have to be Lions and Polar Bears.”

Q) “Where do you see yourself in the future?”

A) “Continuing to teach, going to law school, becoming an attorney. I’m not entirely sure what field within law, but something in terms of helping folks within the law.”

Mr. Kelly has fit right in with our school, both in his humor and his passion for teaching students. Thank you so much for sharing with us! We hope that NPX will be a great environment for him, and he finds a welcome place in his journey with us Gladiators through the end of his first school year here and more to hopefully come.

# The History of Love

By Maya Waters '24

Valentine's Day is celebrated on the 14th of February every year. People recognize it as a day of love and celebrate by gifting cards, chocolates, and flowers to their loved ones. However, many people don't think twice about how this tradition started and why it's on this day that we take the time to recognize those we love. The origins of this holiday stem from both Catholic and Roman traditions. The Catholic church recognizes three Saint Valentines, any of whom could have been the reason we celebrate Valentine's Day today. One of the Saints was a priest who served in third century Rome under the rule of Emperor Claudius II. The Emperor had decided that single men make better soldiers than those who are married and have kids. Because of this, he decided to outlaw marriages for young men. Saint Valentine felt that this law was unjust and continued to perform marriages between young couples. When his defiance was found out, Claudius had him put to death. It is said that he fell in love with the jailer's daughter while he was in confinement before his beheading. He sent a letter to her that was signed "from your Valentine," which is where we get that common phrase from today. February 14th was noted as the day Saint Valentine was put to death. Although this is the most common legend of Saint Valentine, some people say that it was really Saint Valentine of Terni who was also beheaded under Emperor Claudius II. It is said that he was killed because he tried to free Christians from harsh Roman prisons. As for the third Valentine, not much is said about him and there is no confirmed story about him.

Another theory of why we celebrate Valentine's Day is because of the pagan celebration called Lupercalia. Lupercalia was celebrated in the Ides of February, or February 15th. Lupercalia was a fertility festival to celebrate the Roman goddess of agriculture, Fauna, and also to remember the founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus. The members of Luperci, an order of Roman priests, would go to the cave that was believed to be where Romulus and Remus were cared for by a she-wolf. The priests would then sacrifice a goat for fertility and a dog for purification. They would strip the goat of its hide and would then go around town touching the hide to the women as they believed it would make the women more fertile. Later in the festival, women would put their names into an urn and the men would pull a name out of the urn and spend the rest of the year with the woman they chose. A lot of these pairings usually ended in marriage. Lupercia became outlawed at the end of the 5th century when Pope Gelasius declared February 14th St. Valentine's Day. However, the 14th would not be associated with love until later.

By the mid-18th century it became common for loved ones and partners to exchange tokens of their affection and cards or poems that express their love. Valentine's Day is now a holiday recognized in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, United Kingdom, France, and Australia.

Cite:

<https://www.history.com/topics/valentines-day/history-of-valentines-day-2>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Valentines-Day>



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Richard McMillin

# Presidents' Day

By Lakshmi Kumar 29'

On Monday the nineteenth, we got a day off because of Presidents' day. What even is Presidents' Day and why is it important? Well, I am so glad you asked.

To start this off, here is a quick history lesson about the origin of Presidents' Day. In the 1880's, Washington's birthday was celebrated as a federal holiday (a federal holiday is when the federal government has to give a day off to their employees). Congress then decided to pass a bill called the Uniform Monday Holiday bill, which would move many federal holidays to a Monday. On the other hand, Abraham Lincoln's birthday was on February 12th, but was also pushed to the exact same date as Washington's birthday. Many people thought that their birthdays and many other events should be celebrated on the day it got made, but once the bill passed, many people just started calling it Presidents' Day.

There are many important values in Presidents' Day. For one, Presidents' day is important because it is a time in which we can celebrate the presidents that fought for us so that we could get proper education systems and rights. In conclusion, Presidents' Day is a day in which we should honor the presidents who gave us freedom and rights, and are the reason why you are standing here right now.

Cite: <https://www.britannica.com/question/What-is-the-origin-of-Presidents-Day>

# Successful Basketball Season at NPX

By Brady Foxwell '25

Following a 3-16 season last year at North Phoenix, things weren't looking great for the Gladiators. Coming off their first ever playoff run a year prior, the team was looking for a new formula for success. Fortunately, the Gladiators didn't lose many seniors, while the core of the team was still Sophomores filled with potential. Coach Dunmore became the head coach for varsity and got to work. The Gladiators dropped their first 2 games of the season before winning the next 2 with style. A blowout win over PDS was followed by a thrilling 8 point 4th quarter comeback capped off with a Buzzer Beater 3 from Aiden Miller '25 to win at Maryvale. Miller said, "I had missed that shot earlier but I knew I wasn't gonna miss twice." The Gladiators were looking to grow as a team - and they did. Youssef Choukair said "We worked really hard in practice and we bonded through that. We became a family and that helped us play at our best. We always thought to ask not what your teammates can do for you but what you can do for your teammates." The Gladiators ended the season with the best record in school history, and only lost Aiden Miller and Gage Kloft. With juniors Colton Bombard, Jaxon Bombard, Youssef Choukair, Eoin Brogan, Abraham Jones, Jordael Hernandez, Joshua Duenes, Eric Gardner and Brady Foxwell as well as Sophomore Jaxson Graves and Freshman Daniel Morales returning for next year, things can only improve. Congrats on the season and Go Gladiators!



<https://www.fnu.edu/observe-presidents-day/>

# My Dear Rumpelstiltskin

Short Story Retelling By Rayna Sypes '28

Once upon a time, there was a child born who was meant to become the richest man in the world. He would have the handsomest features and the magic to turn anything into gold, should he have the right mechanism for it. His name was Rumpelstiltskin.

Now, it happened that in another part of the kingdom, there lived an old miller. He was a poor man with only a single child: a daughter. The daughter was an exceptionally beautiful young woman, but was cruel to many of her suitors, for she did not believe that any of them truly loved her.

One day, the king of this kingdom decided that he should meet his people, and he disguised himself and set off towards the village in which resided the poor miller and his daughter. When he was passing by the mill, he overheard the daughter bragging to a suitor that she was worth more than the wife of the king. This was a tricky little lie, as the king was unmarried. And so, he was intrigued by such a boast, and paused to hear more.

“How is that so? In my country, the queen can make gold out of anything. No lady, however beautiful, can be worth more than a queen.” retorted the surly young man.

“And you aren’t worth my time. If I were to tell you that I can turn even straw into gold, you would not love me more than you already do. And I will never love a peasant boy who bows down to a queen because she begets her kingdom in riches.”

The king had heard this whole conversation and had determined that if what the girl said was true, and she could spin straw into gold, then he should marry her and be the richest king in all of the world. If she lied, then she should be executed. And so the king whisked her away to his castle and set her up in a room full of straw with a spinning wheel in the far corner.

But she could not spin straw into gold and despaired. She was weeping when a handsome young man wandered into the room. He immediately was taken by her beauty. He had heard of her predicament, but did not realize how alluring she was. He was very crafty, and an idea came to him.

“Oh, fine lady, I shall spin this straw into gold for you, if you will give me the locket from your neck.” he called to her. She consented, and he began to spin.

In the morning, she awoke to find all of the straw and the young man gone. In their place was a large pile of gold. The king was overjoyed, and greed overtook him. He locked the poor miller’s daughter up in another room filled with even more straw and she wept, for surely she would die when he found nothing but straw tomorrow. But again the young man from last night wandered into the room and called: “Oh, fine lady, I shall spin this straw into gold for you, if you will give me the ring from your finger.”

Again she consented, and he set to work spinning. In the morning, he was gone, again leaving behind a large pile of gold. And yet again, the king locked the miller’s daughter up in a room full of straw, with the order to spin it into gold, or else die in the morning. She wept, for she knew that even if the young man were to come and spin the straw into gold, there was nothing left for her to give him for it.

But he did come, and this time he said, “Oh, fine lady, I will spin this straw into gold for you, if you will give me your firstborn child.”

The miller’s daughter consented, and the straw was spun. In the morning, the king declared that he would take her as his wife, despite her protests. For he loved her only for her supposed riches. By noon that day, all had been prepared by the castle servants. And as the woeful bride walked down the aisle, the young man who had spun all of the straw into gold stepped in front of her to bar her way. He was wearing a coat with three pockets. From the first pocket, he took out the locket, which she had given him on the first night, and opened it to reveal two pictures, one of her, the other of him. Then he put it on her neck. From the second pocket he pulled out her ring, then got down on one knee and slipped it onto her finger. From his third pocket, he pulled out a slip of paper with a list of names on it, entitled For Our Children.

The poor miller’s daughter was overjoyed, for through the nights as he spun, she fell in love with the man who had saved her life. The king however was furious, and he yelled, “You cannot wed this man, you do not even know his name!”

The young man was carried away to the dungeon, and again the miller’s daughter despaired. Now she would have to marry the king. But then she noticed a name at the bottom of the parchment sheet with the names that her love had given her. It was an unusual name, and next to it was “II.”

“You are wrong, my King, I do know his name. It is Rumpelstiltskin.”

This was the truth, and so the king was forced to let his bride go. Rumpelstiltskin and the miller’s daughter were married and had many children together.

## Candy Grams & Carnations!

By Penny Lentz '30 and Lucy Lentz '29

From February 5th - 9th, the SSO was selling candy grams and carnations for \$2.00 each. Inside, there was a chocolate covered pretzel and a chocolate chip cookie. The carnations were different colors and each color symbolizes something different: pink was for friendship, red was for love, and white was for secret admirers. So many people got candy grams and carnations. Lily Bahbah '30 said, “ I was happy I had no idea my mom got it for me; it made my week.” The sale was so fun and so many people bought candy grams and carnations for their friends. Thank you to the SSO for setting up this fun “Great-ful” Hearts Day event!

## High School Preview Night

By Daniel Pagnone '28

On Tuesday January 23rd, NPX held its annual Preview Night. The High School Preview Night is an event that showcases to our students and families the reason they should stay at NPX for High school. There were several teachers present including Mr. Marques and Mr. Black. One of our college counselors, Ms Connor, our athletic director, Coach Page, and Ms. Lentz were also present. They were accompanied by four high school students: Jonah Pearson, Elina Pinkhasova, Claire Oliphant, and Zander Luo. These students were willing to take some time out of their day to answer questions about our high school experience. After an opening speech from Ms. Jacobson, the event began.

At NPX we offer 3 distinct language tracks led by excellent teachers: Spanish, French, and Latin/Greek. We also have a great college counseling program: students will meet with one of the counselors one-on-one several times a month. Students will also have numerous leadership opportunities as they could try for either lanistae or senate among other opportunities. All classes at NPX are honors level and led by exemplary teachers. We also have several varsity level sports and Coach Page has announced that next year will be the first year where NPX will have its very own cheer team! Looking forward to seeing you next year.

# Upcoming Gladiator Events

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26 Lunch & Learn Career	27 Lunch & Learn Career		28 29 Lunch & Learn Career	1 2 Familia Friday Lunch & Learn Career	3 4 Middle School Social
5	6	7 Science Fair	8	9 10 Cozy for a Cause	
11 12 13 14 15 16 Spring Break					
18	19	20	21	22 23 Familia Friday	
25	26	27	28	29 30 NO SCHOOL - R&R W	

## Gladiator Ticket Standings

<b>1st - Samnite: 1492</b>	<b>7th - Laquearius- 611</b>
<b>2nd - Murmillones: 1205</b>	<b>8th - Thraeces- 462</b>
<b>3rd - Cestus: 955</b>	<b>9th - Sagittarius- 427</b>
<b>4th - Retiarii: 898</b>	<b>10th - Equites- 369</b>
<b>5th - Dimachaerus: 659</b>	<b>11th - Provocatores- 303</b>
<b>6th - Bestiarii: 650</b>	<b>12th - Velites- 209</b>

# Leap Year

By Penny Lentz

Humans have been practicing Leap Year since the days of Julius Caesar and the Roman Empire. It exists because of the time it takes our Earth to orbit the Sun. Because of this, we add a leap day every four years. The only exception is a year that is divisible by 100 - unless it happens to also be divisible by 400. For example, there was not a Leap Year in 1900 because it was divisible by 100 but not 400. This system is still not very accurate: periodically the International Earth Rotation and Reference Systems Service adds leap seconds to our daily lives that we don't notice. Were we to live on another planet, we'd still need to observe Leap Year. On some planets it rotates so slowly that the difference between the time it takes to rotate and the time from noon to noon is very extreme.

The 365-day calendar including Leap Year was adopted during Julius Caesar's time. In the 14th century it had drifted 10 days off of its schedule, so Pope Gregory XIII fixed this issue by instituting a revised "Gregorian Calendar" in 1582, and we still use it today. In the end, it doesn't exactly matter if Leap day is in February, you could stick it in October if you really wanted to. February only gets it because of Roman superstition.

Cite: <https://www.britannica.com/story/why-are-there-only-28-days-in-february>

## 9th Grade Field Trip

By Daniel Pagnone '28

On Friday February 16, our ninth graders visited Grand Canyon University for their field trip. GCU offers nine distinct colleges and has about 20,000 students. They also have a campus that is "noticeably new, intentional, and beautiful!" They also feature many division 1 sports. NPX students were split up into four groups each with a specific leader who toured us around campus. "First, we went and toured the different college buildings as well as the Prayer Chapel. Next, we found ourselves at their official game stadium where they host basketball games and Chapel. Our lead walked us by their tennis courts and brought us to their athletic center



holding 12 indoor basketball courts and a rock-climbing wall. From there, we ventured towards the dorms and apartments and were able to see what their on-campus living arrangements would look like. We headed to the Academic and Career Excellence building, Lopes Performance Center (1 of 4 gyms on campus), the Student Union, and the Library."

Before checking out, The students stopped to ask current GCU students about their college experience. After which they stopped for lunch. When asked to answer the question "Why should current middle schoolers be excited for a similar field trip?" Ms. Carlson said: "As students who are in their first year of high school, it is a great opportunity to be able to go on a college tour to build an understanding of what they personally are looking for in a school. They should start considering their preferences, their needs, their passions, and whether they want to remain in state or venture out of state. Visiting colleges provides an in-person experience into college life and promotes students to take their education for their own! It is so crucial for freshmen to start thinking about how they want their future to look!"

Thank you to Ms. Carlson for Pictures and the Interview