

# The Knight Times

ACP Knights take on Autumn!

Vol. 1 Issue 2

In our second newsletter we look back over September and October as the knights move from Summer into Autumn. From Homecoming to Honor of the Prep take a deep dive into ACP during Autumn. With articles giving tribute to our seniors, students and staff alike, come along with us during Autumn! Go Knights!

## - FAIRES AND FESTIVALS



A Night at the Bayou:

A night of fun for all grade levels, the homecoming dance took place on September 21. Themed “A Night in New Orleans,” the event featured a DJ, gorgeous lights, and innovative decorations handmade by our beloved Student Council. The festive atmosphere attracted students dressed in their finest attire, eager to enjoy a night of music, dancing, and camaraderie. The DJ kept the energy high, playing and remixing classic favorites and popular hits. More can be found on page 3.



What time is it?

# Knights During AUTUMN

## KNIGHTS ON THE BATTLEFEILD -

On September 5th ACP hosted their first “Play Like a Girl” game. The gym was packed as students were able to skip 6th hour to attend the girls volleyball game. All throughout the game the crowd's energy could be felt and helped the Knights battle hard throughout the different sets. This was just the first one of many Play Like A Girl events planned this year to help bring excitement and fans to girl's sports.



What it means to play like a girl.

# What's Inside?

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# Homecoming

Article by: Natalie Asuncion and William Jackson

A night of fun for all grade levels, the homecoming dance took place on September 21. Themed “A Night in New Orleans,” the event featured a DJ, gorgeous lights, and innovative decorations handmade by our beloved Student Council. The festive atmosphere attracted students dressed in their finest attire, eager to enjoy a night of music, dancing, and camaraderie. The DJ kept the energy high, playing and remixing classic favorites and popular hits. A mosh pit was formed multiple times throughout the night, where many jumped to the song “Fein” which was played over three times. We even managed to snag a few interviews after the dance. “The night was a blast!” said sophomore Kaitlin Arcand, “I’m a part of student council, so I was happy to see our ideas coming to life the way we wanted them to. Dancing was pretty fun, as well.” In addition to dancing, friend groups smiling and posing for photos could be visible throughout the night. There were two photobooths, both of which were packed with excited students waiting for their photos to be taken. All of the participants were eager to create keepsakes from the night, making sure they remembered the eventful evening for years to come. Homecoming is a way for students new and old to participate in storied traditions schoolwide, from the dance to the games to the spirit days Homecoming is what brings us all together as a school, and that's what truly brings ACP together.





# Hoco Assembly

Article by: Aaron Lim and Sophia Erickson

Arizona College Prep has kicked off its anticipated Homecoming week with an assembly full of class spirit! The assembly, which featured performances from the Cheerleading Squad, Spirit Line, and Band, was full of excitement and packed with dances and an appearance from the football team who hyped up the crowd ahead of their upcoming Homecoming game. Each grade competed fiercely to prove who had the most school spirit, with seniors coming out on top after a heated chant battle with the freshmen.

At the heart of the assembly was the announcement of this year's Homecoming Royalty. The audience applauded for the nominees for Homecoming Freshman Girls: Sophia, Karis, and Angelica. Freshman Boys: Hanson, Sachin, and Sebastian. Sophomore Girls: Amita, Fennie, and Megan. Sophomore Boys: Shlok, Sean, Ifaz. Junior Girls: Courtney, Nia, and Nayeli. Junior Boys: Maddox, Evan, and Vismay. Senior Girls: Annie, Mia, Sophia. Senior Boys: Cristian, Luis, and Alexander. The winners for each grade will be announced at the Friday Homecoming Football Game. After all the anticipation, the teacher King and Queen were announced. Mr. Toresdahl and Ms. Oelschlager were crowned in center stage with cheers congratulating the candidates.

The assembly ended on a high note with band and cheer collabing on the school chant and with students looking forward to the rest of the Homecoming Spirit Week, Friday's football game, and Homecoming itself. Great job to Stugo for organizing the event with such enthusiasm and creativity.





# Honor of the PREP - Sept.

Every year, ACP is always growing whether it be our students, clubs, or our staff, it is endlessly growing which goes to show our diverse community we all love. ACP has about 2300 students and each and every one of them are unique in their own way. With an ambiance of school pride and positivity, our community is overflowing with many students who are involved in the community or always are trying to find ways to become involved. Our esteemed school has a multitude of diverse individuals with different backgrounds who have an opportunity to be recognized for their stellar character. Something new that the Newspaper staff is doing this year is that the Knight Times will be recognizing ACP's students, teachers, support staff, and admin for exemplifying the ACP prep way and being a great example of what values students should display at school. Many students throughout all classes are all people who have the PREP way in the bag. ~

## Ms. Estrada-Lopez- Purpose



Our wonderful staff member for Honor of the Prep this month is Ms. Estrada-Lopez. She has been displaying her passion, relationships, excellence, and purpose to the ACP community for almost 7 years in the front office showing warmth and hospitality to all the students, parents and visitors; however, we chose her for her admirable purpose. She makes sure everyone feels welcomed as they walk into the front office, and she's in charge of taking and redirecting phone calls to the school. Her job is to be the "gatekeeper" in the front of the office but she does so much more than that; she models "rules and standards that have been set in place for all of us" everyday and makes everyone around her feel special. Ms. Estrada-Lopez truly brings a smile to people's faces while bringing support to families and staff when needed. Besides being an outstanding staff member, she sets "goals by journaling once a week and keeping a gratitude list" and loves talking to students to offer guidance on "customer service and office skills" also while interacting with them and learning from them too! Everyday she looks forward to seeing Mr. Roth because "he acknowledges everyone and fosters a collaborative environment." The people around her at work motivate her to be the best she can everyday.

Staff advice: "Remind your students daily to take all necessary belongings with them to school" - Ms. Estrada-Lopez

## Passion - Will Covington

Q: When did you develop these passions? You brought up Speech and Debate a lot. Is that recent or has this been a lifelong thing?

A: Started in eighth grade, didn't really care all that much until I came here. And I think just Mr. Rumsey was big on this, but also just the people on the team are really great, and it makes you just really want to try your best and be motivated to win. And it's a really fun competitive activity. So I'd say that started around freshman year, maybe halfway through.



Q: You brought up friends. Do friends help contribute to these passions?

A: Oh, yeah, absolutely. I mean, again, as I explained speech and debate, the people on the team are awesome and some of my closest friends, and outside of that, the people that hang out with and in class, outside of class, all people that I care a lot about and they're super nice and love hanging out with them.



# Battle of the Bands

By: Wren Slivka and Hailey Hodges

This year for the lead-up to the homecoming game and dance, ACP revealed their newest addition to our growing catalog of large-scale school events. Seven bands composed of ACP students and staff faced off in 15 minute intervals where they could play almost any song they have the skills for in the fittingly named “Battle of the Bands.” The event took place on the Thursday before the big game. Most songs skewed toward rock and punk, but any genre from the golden age of cassettes to the sleek era of spotify was allowed. On top of the bands performing for the masses, Kona Ice, the popular shaved ice that’s a staple within every suburban childhood, was also there to serve plenty of cold treats to stave off the heat.



But what did the spectators think? Many people who attended were excited and curious as to what the different bands would play. This was our school’s first ever battle of the bands, and no one knew how many people would turn out. Luckily, there was a large crowd, about 100 or so people, students and family alike. The majority of the attendees were excited to hear “Snailed it!” and “Sorry Sound Guys,” and after an impressive performance, “Sorry Sound Guys” were the winners. I’m sure they weren’t so sorry to the sound guys when they were ACP’s first ever Battle of the Band Champions. The school as a whole has many more fun activities in store for this school year, and I hope the student body is just as excited as the members of the Knight Times are. Go Knights!





# Golf Senior Night

By: Clairet Riesgraf and Sophie Chen

On the evening of Monday, September 16th, the ACP Knights varsity girls' golf team celebrated its senior players, who have each left a lasting mark on the team. This year's seniors have contributed to both the team's success and the tight-knit community they've built on and off the course. Let's hear from the seniors themselves about their journey in the sport, their goals, and the special memories they've made.



## Gabriella Suarez

Gabriella Suarez has been part of the ACP golf team for the past three years. Initially drawn to the sport after enjoying casual rounds at Topgolf and mini-golf, Gabriella decided to give golf a shot at the high school level. "I wanted to do a sport through our high school, and I liked going to Topgolf and mini-golfing, so I thought it would be really fun," she recalls. For Gabriella, the best part of being on the team has been the people. "It's such a good group, and they make golf so fun," she says. Her goal this year is simple but meaningful—she wants to continue improving her skills and keep getting better with each match. When asked about her senior night, Gabriella couldn't help but smile. "Senior night was amazing! All the amazing parents and teammates did an incredible job making us seniors feel special."

## Siena Stevens

Senior Siena Stevens has been a part of our varsity golf team for 3 years, and has so much love and passion for both the sport and the team she's joined. She has created a wonderful bond with the girl's, so being able to watch them grow with their skills in the past few years of playing together has helped fulfill her experience as a team member.

To Siena, for her senior season she is all about work hard, play hard! She can't wait to put in her best effort during her last season and having lots of fun with her teammates, as well as hopefully hitting their team goal by going to State. The Senior Night celebration at San Marcos Golf Course, as Siena stated, was the best!! Her favorite part was the post-match celebration with all the girls, and everyone helped put together such a memorable event to send them luck and love in their games this year.

## Emery Williams

Emery Williams has had a long history with golf, having played on and off since she was a child. She started taking lessons early on and had planned to join her middle school team before COVID interrupted her plans. However, once she reached high school, Emery made the decision to try again and was part of ACP's inaugural girls' team during her sophomore year. "The friendships I've made have been the best part of being on the team," Emery says, reflecting on the bonds she's formed. Initially, her goal this year was to make it to State, but as the season progressed, she shifted her focus. "Now, my goal is just to have fun my last year and make the best of it." Emery's senior night was packed with memorable moments, but one stands out above the rest. "I made a birdie on hole 8, which is a par 3, and that was definitely my favorite part," she says. Another highlight was receiving senior sashes from her mom.

As the ACP Knights' seniors approach the end of their high school golf careers, their reflections capture what makes the sport—and their team—so special. Each player brings a unique story and a shared sense of camaraderie that has shaped their high school experience. From their goals on the green to the memories they've made, Gabriella, Siena, Emery, and Lilly will leave behind a legacy of passion, perseverance, and teamwork. Though one senior, Lilly Humbert, has already been highlighted for her accomplishments in Honor of the Prep, the entire senior class will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact on the program for years to come. Their dedication to both the game and their teammates sets a high standard for the next generation of golfers at ACP.

# Play Like A Girl

By: Shelby O'Donnal

During the afternoon of September 5, something truly historic happened in the ACP gym, as our Knights Girls Volleyball team hosted the Basha Bears in their first home game of the season. What makes this game so special you might ask? Well this game was the first ever Play Like A Girl game in ACP history as well as in CUSD history. The entire purpose of the game was for the stands to be crowded with students who were there to help bring support and awareness to girl's sports, as they are consistently overlooked and have low attendance rates compared to boys sports. The game started at 1 pm which allows for students to get out of their 6th period class to go and support our lady Knights. Unfortunately, the girls volleyball team did lose the match in 3 sets however the outcome of the game wasn't the purpose of the game. It was for the school to come together and rally around girls sports, which did happen beyond expectation. All throughout the game the crowd's energy could be felt and helped the Knights battle hard throughout the different sets. This was just the first one of many Play Like A Girl events planned this year to help bring excitement and fans to girl's sports. Hopefully from giving these girls athletes the recognition they deserve, it will bring more people out to watch and support them.

Coach Shannon has been the head girls volleyball coach at ACP for four years, and has helped in building the culture of the team. He is also a Spanish teacher here at ACP which allows him to connect with students outside the court. When talking with him after the game he gave some fascinating insight into how he viewed the game. When asked how it felt to be a part of the first ever Play Like A Girl game he explained, "It was cool to see everybody get on board and come out to watch and celebrate and cheer and support female athletes. For me, I'm a big component in making sure everyone gets opportunities, especially the female athletes and the fact that everyone came out and recognized that today was really awesome". He then went on to explain how he and his coaching staff helped prepare their athletes for such a big game. He described one of the most important things they continually focus on when preparing for games, which is putting a bubble around the court and focusing on doing what to do as a team. "We focus on trying to play the game we know how to play, staying within ourselves, and just playing ACP volleyball." When specifically asked about how he keeps his athletes focused during games he explained that they focus a lot on building connections between the coaches and players, and the players themselves by focusing on, "making physical contact with teammates to stay connected and focused on the game." Finally, he wanted to express his utmost gratitude to everybody that took time out of their day to come and support his athletes.

When talking with some of the varsity athletes that were participating in the game, senior middle blocker and right side hitter, Rea-anna Fuller and freshman outside hitter, Aly Arce, they both commented on how thrilling it was to be a part of such a huge event. They also expressed their gratitude for having the support of the entire school, with Aly commenting on how the energy from the crowd helped keep up their energy in the game. Specifically when asked how they prepare before games, Rea-anna Fuller commented, "We do a pregame meditation to help us visualize and get mentally prepared for the game. This also helps calm down our nerves before we go into our work out." One practice that both Aly and Rae-anna brought up when asked on how they stay focused during the game is tunnel vision. They both try to focus only on aspects of the game and don't allow the outside distractions to hinder their performance.



Overall, the first Play like A Girl Event was a smashing success and was an excellent start to the fall sport season. We can't wait to see how these events translate and grow throughout the remaining two seasons, and in the coming years. These events will help bring more recognition to girls sports to influence students to go to more games and support their female athletes now and in the future.



By: Sophia Erickson and Xiomya Tobo

This year's 2024 school carnival was filled with tons of family fun! Everyone showed their school spirit by showing up and participating in the fun games and activities the clubs had to offer. There was a DJ, club booths, and food trucks. Students could even participate in a dunk tank, trying to drop some of our teachers into the pool of water below them. The clubs did a great job hosting their tables and showing off their hard work that went into it. The club booths were a great success involving the students and families there to participate. Ranging from face painting to a bouncy house, all the student's clubs and organizations were very hospitable and showed the great work clubs have put into getting where they are today. Thirst Project's booth presented themselves with a poster and educated families on what they are trying to accomplish with the global water crisis. At the booth there was a fun and eventful game for the kids including a duck game and fun prizes to win.



Knights Theatre Company promoted their fall musical, The Wedding Singer, by hosting a booth called "Pin the Mullet on Sammy". Players were spun around and given a "mullet" to pin on a photo of Corey Allen, the actor for Sammy. Winners were given a small plush animal and water bottle. There was a fun DJ hyping up the crowd and walking around the tables. There were also the popular food trucks including Kona Ice and Wetzels Pretzels. Towards the end of the carnival everyone witnessed the wonderful senior night. Great job to all of the clubs and organizations for putting together such a great event!

## ACP Thirst Project

By: Sophia Erickson and Aurelia Deleon

Thirst Project is a nonprofit organization that builds freshwater wells in developing countries that don't have access to clean, safe water. Currently, over 700 million people lack access to this resource, but they have the goals of ending the global water crisis. Tara Hojjati, the president of ACP's Thirst Project spoke on her concern of the global water crisis and wanted to be involved in working towards Thirst Project's goal of getting clean and safe drinking water to any and all communities that are in need. This organization is worldwide and working hard to spread the word on the global water crisis. Their slogan is "Water is a human right, join the fight". Over 500,000 individuals have been provided with this resource through student support across the globe. She believes individuals should join the Thirst Project because of its goal of helping individuals around the world. At the moment, Thirst Project is working on building a water well in the small country of Eswatini in Africa. Great job to all of the students involved in this wonderful organization!



# ACP Football Senior Night!

By: Zakaria Ayoub and Sophie Chen

On October 18th, our Friday Night Lights game was filled with emotion, as all the family and friends of the 37 seniors on our football team joined together and celebrated the players for the last home game of the regular season. Before the game started, each player was able to line up with their family, as well as the support of other fans in the stands, and received encouragement for the four years of effort and hard work they underwent. Throughout the night, spirits were high as all the seniors put forth their best efforts, ending the night with a final score of the game being 55-14, and the Knights victory.

We had the opportunity to interview Coach Vaught, father and coach to Bryce, regarding his experience and perspective on coaching his son. He mentioned being Bryce's coach is a very gratifying experience especially since he has been training him since he was four years old. He expressed, "I treat my son as a normal player, and I encourage him to put forth his best effort like everyone else on the team."

Because Vaught has the opportunity to coach his son, they are able to spend a lot of time together, time they would otherwise be apart from each other if he was not his coach. However, his proudest moment as both a coach and a father is seeing his son maturing significantly since his freshman year, and although he has had to endure challenges such as being demoted and injured, Coach Vaught is proud of the growth he has witnessed raising and coaching Bryce.

Everyone is so incredibly proud of each and every one of our seniors, the family that they have helped create within themselves and for the school is part of what adds to the ACP community. They truly honor the PREP way in both academics and athletics.





## Mr. Roth - Excellence

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**Q: How do you encourage others to exemplify the PREP Way?**

**A: For me, I just try to ensure that as an administrator of this school, that I try to be intentional about our school-wide systems. I don't believe that anyone intends on doing bad or poorly performing; however, as a leader of the school, I can unintentionally not set up folks for success. I think it's important to listen and lean on the talent we have at this school. Our teachers, staff, and students exhibit so many qualities and it's important that we all see ourselves as being on the same team, as that is how ensure that everyone buys-in to why we do what we do here at ACPHS.**

**Q: Do you have any coworkers you feel exemplify the PREP Way?**

**A: I'm not trying to sound corny or anything; however, they all do. What's so great about ACPHS is that everyone is valued. It doesn't matter your role or title; I could name folks from every department that understand that it takes a team to make this thing work.**



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## Aly Acre- Relationships



Every single student has a unique story to tell- whether it's what motivates them in school or what keeps them going when things get tough. However, one thing all these stories have in common is that they shape these students as not just as individuals but as members of Arizona College Prep. At our school, we foster a sense of belonging where everyone is valued for who they are. Not only does this school give each student a sense of purpose but also give them acknowledgement that they will always belong here during their high school years. These few years of high school are the years where students untangle their feelings and truly understand who they want to be. Becoming involved with ACP's school community is one way to do it which helps students create long lasting relationships, giving students something to look toward every time they walk into school. The PREP way emulates this approach and highlights the importance of relationships and how it brings out the betterment for all students. Relationships provide a foundation for student engagement, belonging, and ultimately, learning. A particular student in the class of 2028, who has involved herself in the school community and nurtured, supportive relationships, is Aly Arce.

## Creative Writing Spotlight: Sofie Bainbridge (10)

In the creative writing club we offer opportunities for writers to share what they've written. Sofie Bainbridge sent in *Orange Rind*, a short free-verse poem about a perpetual pointlessness and eating through what you're given without purpose.

### **Orange Rind**

**by Sofie Bainbridge**

I think few things aren't made  
to be eaten whole. everything is an orange,  
a soft rind to be split through with ridged  
fingernails and sweet flesh to squeeze  
between your tongue and the roof of your mouth.  
you twine my hair through your fingers  
and say you see a sunset. I ask  
where's the sky and you say  
my shoulders. I wonder if this hollow  
end was always meant to be mine or  
if I was born for narrower horizons.  
orange flares behind my eyes  
until the world is drenched in sepia.  
my eyelashes are red but stained  
gray from mascara and bad makeup wipes.  
they stack, used and discarded, on my  
bathroom counter until you could wipe  
my whole face onto yours with their  
collective. I never throw things away and I  
say it's because I'm sentimental but I'm really  
just lazy. I had that word thrown at me until it  
was what I became. no one likes stories about  
girls that sit around because they don't want  
to get up. I wonder if anything is real and then  
you tell me to stop talking.



# Creative Writing Spotlight: Jade Wang (9)

One of the goals of the Creative Writing Club is to highlight the achievements of the members through their writing. As the president of the creative writing club, we wanted to showcase the work of Jade Wang, a first designation winner of the National Council of Teachers of English Promising Young Writers Competition. The winning essay—titled Black and White—is written below, with Jade Wang’s permission to share it with the Knight Times website.

## Black and White by Jade Wang

“I first met you around the time I was six, fascinated by your ineffable beauty and immense capability. Most remarkable of all was your voice, which could ring across the halls, ranging from high to low. The very first moment I caught your sound, I never wanted to let it go. I never wanted to let you go, as I was irrevocably in love. If I think about it, I can still hear the echo of your voice, following me wherever I go. You, whose voice could rival those of angels; who never lost the ability to impress. Your confidence was clear in every detailed note of precision that rang out. Back then, I could still remember how each careful sound made by you was enough to paint the most vivid pictures in my young mind. A small splash of color here and there, maybe a few strokes, quickly followed by others. Your presence seemed too much for a girl of six, who hid behind her mother’s back, only letting her midnight black eyes show. She could only hold her mother’s hand as she was introduced to you. She was too timid to do much more than hesitantly stick out a finger and give you a little poke, giggling when you sang to her, your sound filled with alacrity. In that moment, we collided together and I felt what it was like to be immortal.



Hurry, hurry, hurry! I dart down the halls as fast as I can, hearing my tiny heels click against the floor. I’m running at the speed of light, my long hair flying behind me, whacking people to the side like flies. I glance back at my parents following behind me, the layers of my dress billowing around my ankles. My mind is panicking about what will happen next. Shoot, what if I mess up? Or forget in the middle of the piece? Or skip an entire section? Or what if—

“Our next competitor will be...” The speaker’s voice cuts through my frenzy. My mother gives my hands a reassuring squeeze. Her smile is tight and her eyes shimmer with an emotion that I cannot comprehend. Mother does not frequently laugh or smile anymore. Her eyes no longer twinkle like two stars against the night sky, except for when they land on the mystical pattern of black and white. I think of each life as a small, bright light. Her light seems to be dimming; it does not shine like before. But mine is only just starting to glow; it can already stretch so far. I have to win. My hands shake like leaves as I walk up the stairs to the stage. I admit that I’m mildly afraid, and I don’t know what will happen. But as I look up and see your familiar pattern of black and white keys, a slow breath escapes my chest. You did show up after all. I had learnt and memorized how to make you sing, and I know I’m ready for this moment. Your sound had never failed me, your vocal chords always all lined up, at the ready to fire. Sometimes we would make my parents smile together, and other times we would make them frown. I feel as if you have connected me together with my family more than small hugs, kisses, and even words. You could convey thoughts and ideas more than any spoken words. With one small sound, you had us all together, mesmerized. My mind is filled with a silent resolve as my fingers graze against you. I cannot be sure when we will do this together again. Maybe a month, a year, or even a few years, or perhaps even a lifetime. But whatever happens today, I trust in you to make things work. We can do this.

# Staff Spotlight



## Wren Slivka (12) Newspaper Editor

### Fun Facts about Wren:

- Cares way too much about birds
- Born in Arizona, raised in Columbia, Missouri
- Spends way too much money on books
- Dungeon Masters for a Dungeons and Dragons group on the weekends
- Wren intends to start keeping moths as pets while up in Flagstaff

## William Jackson (11) Newspaper Editor

### Fun Facts about William:

- My Grandfather was a general in the Air Force
- My Best Friend's name is also William
- I won 4th place at Arizona DECA's State Competition
- I have a cat named Colby Jack (like the cheese)
- I've never moved I've always lived in Arizona
- I love History

