

The



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Lelek Receives Prestigious Questbridge Scholarship

by Jer Gurrola

Among the 5,613 finalists, Anna Lelek was one out of 1,755 finalists to be named a Questbridge scholarship recipient and has been matched to the University of Notre Dame.

Anna, who plans to study Chemical Engineering at Notre Dame, hopes to become a biomedical engineer specializing in cancer research and nanotechnology.

She is a STEM-oriented student with meaningful goals for her future, stating, "I'm hoping to come out of college with a valuable set of skills to support cancer research and be a valuable addition to a team of researchers. This is important to me because I want to have a purpose in this world and make a difference, and what better way to do that than by fighting the deadliest disease?"

The Questbridge National College Match is an equity program that connects high-achieving high school seniors from economically disadvantaged backgrounds with a full four-year scholarship to 50 of the nation's elite institutions.

This scholarship has enabled Anna to hold gratitude for the journey her parents took to give her this life. She often ponders her many struggles, and she greatly awaited the arrival of this grant.

"I felt like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders after I opened my acceptance letter. My parents risked everything to leave their home and family to come to America

to give me a better life. They came here with no money, the inability to speak the [English] language, and no family, but here they are raising two kids with a house and jobs, making the most of it. They showed me if there is a will, there's a way," she states.

According to Questbridge, 17,900 applications were received. The average profile consisted of a 3.92 GPA, with 87% of applicants ranking in the top 10% of the class and 75% scoring 1290+ on the SAT or 27+ on the ACT. An estimated 78% are also first-generation students.

However, because of the burden of imposter syndrome and the many difficulties in attaining such a scholarship, Anna faced rigorous challenges.

"My relationship with Questbridge started my junior year when I applied to their College Prep Scholar Program. This program gave rising seniors the resources to educate themselves about the college application process and help them figure out what they want in their college. And I was lucky enough to be a College Prep Scholar! This gave me a leg up in the college application process and made it ten times easier, but of course, throughout the process, there were multiple times I got in my head about my abilities and started to doubt myself."

Despite her challenges, many of her Fenton mentors and teachers can attest that she is fit and deserving of this opportunity.

Counselor Sarah McDougal is delighted to have had their student matched and highly exclaims Anna's passionate personality.

"Anna has excelled academically during her four years here and has done a lot outside of the classroom as well. Aside from extracurricular activities, Anna did a summer program for female students interested in computer science, and with other students from across the country, she created her website. She [advocates] for female students interested in entering the STEM field."

Additionally, McDougal goes to talk about Anna's curiosity about the world. "Anna has been curious about the world and has always been excited about learning, and those characteristics helped her write some amazing essays about her experiences, her outlook on the world, and her dreams for her future."

Ms. Kelly Torres played a vital part in Anna's match. She too has strong words to represent Lelek as a student and individual by adding, "Anna truly embodies what [this] scholarship means. When she first started APUSH, she struggled with the rigor of the course. She struggled with some personal issues as well, but always made time to do what she needed to do to be successful in my class. What I loved about her is that when she would fail, she would not give up. As the course continued, Anna slowly but surely worked her way up through her dedication and perseverance to one of the top AP US



students in the course. I am so proud of her!"

"Notre Dame is a school filled with tradition and spirit, and I know Anna is looking forward to being a part of it all," says McDougal. It's safe to say that Anna Lelek embodies a scholarship made for many high school students across the nation with the same burdens, but what sets Anna aside from other high achievers is her vision to change the world and her spirit.

Anna is looking forward to participating in laboratory research at Notre Dame.

"Namely, the Harper Cancer Research Institute, where they use nanoparticles for drug delivery to cancer cells, which is [precisely] what I want to do in my career."

"I can't wait to create a life in a new place!" Anna exclaims with her valuable scholarship that will extend her dreams and chances she couldn't have dreamed of.



Torres Selected for State Choir Festival

by Sarah Guerrero Gorostieta

Congratulations to Senior Aiden Torres for being selected to participate in the Illinois Music Education Association All-State Honors Choir! On January 25, 2022, Torres departed to Peoria, Illinois where he spent the weekend performing with fellow students from across the state at the All-State festival.

To be selected for the All-State choir, students must submit an audition video to their local District festival first. Torres was selected to represent Fenton at the ILMEA District 1 Senior Chorus Festival that took place on November 19th, 2022.

Choir director Seredy Williams applauds Torres and celebrates his accomplishments, but she

reminds Torres' peers that commitment and passion are the key ingredients to success.

"Aiden did a really great job of taking my feedback in order to better his performances. That isn't always an easy thing to do," Williams explained at Torres' state sendoff breakfast.

She also highlights that being selected for the All-State choir is already a great achievement, but being selected for the Honors Choir truly is a testament to Torres' passions and drive.

Torres is a thorough member of Fenton's Music and Theater Department, and the Fenton community looks forward to hearing about his adventure's at state. From teaching underclassmen how to play a new instrument at Mariachi Club to rocking the bass at Jazz rehearsal, Torres' insight will reach future generations of Fenton musician's one song at a time.

Band, Choir Head to Disney, Have Magical Time

by Sarah Guerrero Gorostieta

During winter break, Fenton band and choir students embarked on a trip to Disney World in Orlando. Although a 20+ hour bus ride to Florida might sound quite tedious to most, both students and chaperones share that the long haul is a little more magical when you're with friends.

After 24 hours en route to Orlando, the Bison's first stop was Disney's Hollywood Studios. Both students and chaperones found themselves overcome by fatigue and soreness after a restless day, but that didn't stop anyone from having a great time.

Fenton educator and trip chaperone Mr. Jon Aguilar commented on the positivity that exuded this group, expressing, "It was great to go on the Disney trip after two years of lockdown/pandemic. Each experience provided a different perspective into Fenton students. Walt Disney World was celebrating their 50th anniversary, the parks were very crowded, and we ran into unforeseen challenges along the way with restaurants closing dining rooms due to staff shortages, limiting our options for food on the road. Our students kept their positive attitude and worked together on the journey and in the parks to make this trip a success and enjoyable for everyone."

Senior Ariana Hurtado voiced that the long lines weren't as painful when encompassed by her friend's energy, saying, "My favorite memory from Disney was playing Heads-Up in the ride lines with my friends!

The group visited EPCOT, a Fenton favorite, on day three of the trip. "EPCOT was my favorite park," Junior Alexa Calderon stated.

"Visiting the EPCOT World Showcase and immersing myself in a variety of cultures was absolutely lovely. It was the day I spent the most money, treated myself to the most delicious food, and fangirled over everything presented- it was an unforgettable day," Calderon explained.

Sophomore Julia Windham contributed to the EPCOT remarks, stating "I loved exploring the shopping scene at EPCOT with my friends. Also, the ride Test Track was really cool!"

The theme park's Test Track attraction recreates a Chevorlet Design Center, prompting riders to design their own virtual concept car before taking a "SIM Car" out to a track-like rollercoaster that reaches up to 65 miles per hour. It truly is the ultimate test drive.

Finally, Hurtado notes that EPCOT's food scene is worth a mention, and she "recommends trying out the different cultural meals and treats available at Epcot, the gelato in Italy was so good!"

Day three was also Disney 'Imagination Campus' workshop day. Choir and band students had the opportunity to participate in either a vocal or instrumental clinics, and "FHS music students got to work with the Disney voice coaches and production experts, Aguilar articulated.

The choir workshop took place early morning, and Junior Jerry Gurrola comments "Although we loathed getting up early, the [choir] clinic was more enjoyable than any of us could have imagined. We recorded ourselves creating sound effects, while unaware of what our concluding project would sound like. Our sound effect samples and voices would later be used in a simulation of tunes *Love Is an Open Door* and *For the First Time in Forever* from the animated film *Frozen*. It was an informative clinic that hopefully inspired many of us to return to Disney someday and work for them. Plus, a unique Disney 'Imagination Campus' pin was also given to us upon completing the workshop."

Senior Angel Hermida reflected on his experience with the band clinic,



Courtesy of Sereidy Williams

stating, "The clinician encouraged us to take skills, like sightreading, to a new and more professional level. I also enjoyed learning about how professional musicians prepare complex music in such a short amount of time- it's really impressive."

Sophomore Ben Sanchez reiterates this, elaborating "I learned a lot about professionalism at the [band] clinic. The clinic empowered me to grow my sight-reading skills and improvisation techniques."

The students also visited Magic Kingdom and Animal Kingdom. Gurrola reminisced about the final day of the trip when the group visited Animal Kingdom, expressing "I had a great time at all four theme parks, but Animal Kingdom had the most breathtaking scenery. Walking through the park and stopping at stores with designated cultures made me feel deeply connected to the natural world. My camera roll is packed with more photos from Animal Kingdom than those taken any other day."

Junior Mateo Corona furthers this sentiment, adding "My favorite part of the trip was the Animal kingdom because of the unique scenery and because I got to go on all of the rides! Here is my recomendation for future visitors: make sure to plan ahead and get the fast passes to ensure your spot in the queue in order to avoid large crowds."

Additionally, the group attended three nighttime shows, Enchantment, 'Fantasmic!' and a personal favorite, Harmonious- EPCOT's firework show that showcased the power of diversity in the music.

Ms. Edith Reynaga, Fenton staff member and trip chaperone, shared, "My favorite moments of the trip was the Fantasmic! show and Enchantment fireworks show at Disney Magic Kingdom! I was in awe watching!"

Those in attendance will forever be nostalgic about the magical moments created and shared on this trip, but Aguilar concludes his reflection with a 'see you next time, Disney,' commenting, "If you're a music student, be sure to join us in two years on the next choir/band trip...it's the experience of a lifetime and an opportunity you won't want to miss. See you there!"



Courtesy of Sereidy Williams

Photo Op: What Is Different For You This Semester?



"1st semester was a bit less chaotic when it came to school and extracurriculars, but 2nd semester has been very busy for me after getting back to school. I think it's because of the course load of my homework, but it's also because I'm pushing myself to be more disciplined when it comes to studying." -Roza Grochal



It's different now because I feel more alive. Like I feel more happy to see what's coming in the future of the school year and to meet new people. -Yael Alfaro

Mental Health Suffers, Students Need Tools for Coping

by Abby Hernandez

The average American student spends 14,342 hours in school throughout their lifetime. That excludes time in extracurricular activities or longer school days. Today’s students are more involved in school than ever before; however, today’s students also have higher mental illness rates. According to the CDC, more than 1 in 3 high schoolers report having a mental illness. Though some argue that mental health is just now a more familiar topic, we can see how much it impacts our students.

According to recent studies, high school students have the same anxiety as patients in insane asylums in the 1950s. Many students share their stories on TikTok about the pressure we are exposed to in school and how it has affected their self-esteem, increasing their hopeless and suicidal thoughts. However, though this is a dominating issue within schools, students are still never taught to deal with the issues that affect them. The mental health of students across the nation is not a priority.

Mental health care in the United States can cost anywhere from \$65-\$250 per hour, which many insurances won’t cover. Still, even if you can afford the steep cost, you must overcome the stigma of being mentally ill in today’s society. Unfortunately, overcoming the stigma is the 3rd hardest part next to the price and finding time to go to therapy. Students today have the world at their fingertips, which many say is very beneficial because we have access to information, but what isn’t considered is how often negative information is being spread to us.

According to ChildMind, learning about school shootings can increase anxiety and frustration while feeling unsafe.

Ms .Melissa To, one of our counselors at Fenton, explains the fear that goes along with the actual shooting and the threats we receive. This causes a lot of panics because we quickly have access to visual information.

Fenton social worker, Ms. Peggy Mellenthin, adds, “Students are affected greatly because you are now finding out hard information at school rather than at a place you trust with a supportive adult.”

She also adds how social media displays more graphic cases of what

is happening where earlier generations sometimes didn’t even know what was happening. If they did, it was less explicit because it was on TV, which censors things.

Everyone talks about how we are so scared because of social media because social media is the root of all evil; however, many students feel the opposite; they use it as an escape from the real world.

Elmer Escobedo responded to the question: how do you think social media affects you with, “Overall, it improves my mental health a little because I’m distracted, and that allows me to lose some stress.”

Though there are times in which social media can harm us Giselle Garcia reminds us that “it’s not always true and it just comes down to challenging yourself not to devalue your mentality.”

As students grow older, we’ve learned not to believe everything is true on social media, so nowadays, social media allows students to take a break and destress. We have taught ourselves ways to deal with our mental health because if you want to fix your mental health in school, you have to lose class time.

Though Fenton offers counseling, it can take a lot of work to get an appointment when needed. As a student, you must also decide if your grades matter more than your mentality. Today’s schools are not meeting the needs of students, especially those in lower-income areas, as not everyone can afford mental health care. Rather than teaching kids from a young age that their feelings don’t matter because they are in school, we should implement classes such as Leadership For Life earlier to give students these fundamental skills for loving themselves.

Students are faced with a lot of stress and anxiety from having all this information instantly, but is it the instant information that affects us, or is our world today not keeping us safe in places we should trust? The next time you scroll through social media, remind yourself it is a place where people escape reality from our messed up world. Though we cannot fix the world, teaching kids how to better their mental is a life skill that not only improves their futures but also would undoubtedly lead to an improvement in societal ills stemming from poor mental health people currently suffer from.

Special Olympics Basketball Team ‘Packs the Place’

by Abby Hernandez

On Friday January 20th Fenton hosted a special event; since the Special Olympics Basketball team is headed to state, everyone gathered in the field house to watch two games play out against Morton High School in very packed Fenton fieldhouse. They were tense, but ultimately our Fenton Bison led the way to victory.

Currently the team is undefeated due to all the hard work they have been putting in.

Throughout the games, you can see the teamwork that the players have encouraging everyone to participate by passing the ball.

I talked to one of the coaches, Coach Oliva Beecroft, to see how the preparation it takes to be an undefeated team.

“Practices are 2 times a week for 2 hours. We work really hard and not only physically prepare but mentally to amp ourselves up for the game. We do lots of team bonding, which makes our undefeated streak

possible.”

This team puts in hours of work and it is paying off, as they are off to state with a clean season of being undefeated.

Making it to state is a huge accomplishment; one that everyone on the team should be proud of. However, sometimes making it to state can cause you to lose focus in the fun, but it doesn’t seem like that happened to player Jakub Grochal.

“It was a very good experience playing and making it to

state, working as a team and being a captain. A very fun experience playing this season.”

Throughout the season, Jakub Grochal played and had a good time in the season, when I asked him what he wanted to add he said, “Even it is Special Olympics, if you have a disability or not there are still kids who can play in that sport and still have fun.”

And that is what being on a team is all about: having fun and playing something you love.



Courtesy of Rick Kambic



Courtesy of Rick Kambic

Bison Scripts: Written, Directed, Acted by Students

by Jadyn Golz

On the 9th of December, students, staff, family, and friends huddled into the auditorium to watch a collection of theater performances which were completely student-produced. The pieces were written, directed, staged, and performed completely by students. The shows ranged from lighthearted comedies, to psychological thrillers.

Bison Scripts is a chance for students to explore new activities, polish their talents, and express themselves through the theater.

I spoke to Senior Jessica Vanleeuwen, a writer and director for Bison Scripts, about what inspired her to write her show about life in a halfway house.

"This is a story about building up her successful life. It's like seeing the inside of a halfway house that people don't normally see. Yeah, there's drama but there's also good points in someone's life story that build up to it," Valnleeuwen states.

Director and writer senior Mia Silva states, "I wanted to do a murder mystery but then I thought that was cliché. It was originally gonna be a killer story, but that was kind of gory and too crazy. So, I turned it into a repeating day at a psych ward because it still has a spooky vibe."

Bison Scripts "is a very low-key way to join a theater. It's a chill, low-pressure way to join and get to know people in the theater program," states senior Delilah Johnson, a director for Bison Scripts.

"I really enjoy this time of the year because it's a time to step into the director's shoes and understand what it's like to manage teenagers. It's exciting to put my creative mind on the stage and take something that someone else has written and bring it to life. It's really fun," Johnson said.

Many students, such as Junior Jessica Urbanio, took the low-stakes opportunity to try their hand at theater.

"I wanted to get myself out there," stated Urbanio on the night of the performance.

"I'm having a lot of fun. It's really fun. It's just really nerve racking."

Silva states, "It's kind of cool to see all the aspects of theater since I'm only used to being on the stage. Now I can see what goes on in the booth, what goes on in the director's minds, and what goes on in casting, costume, and stage crew. I see all of the work that gets put in. If anyone's timid about joining theater, then Bison Scripts is a great leeway into getting involved. It's a very low

time commitment and the stakes are really low. Everything is done by students."

Dr. Mike Mitchell, one of the Bison Scripts Sponsors, states, "I think that there's just something about the student ownership of the shows that gives [the students] a certain kind of motivation that they don't get in the other shows."

Michell recalls, "Not too long ago I saw an interview with Lin-Manuel Miranda and he talked about how they had a program at their school where kids got to write and direct their own shows, and I said, 'Oh my gosh, that's exactly what I've been doing for years!' That's when [Miranda] realized he could do what he does today. Which I think is just really really important and a powerful story to share with students: 'Hey, if he can do it, you can do it. Why not?'"

Dr. George Mussman, another Bison Script Sponsor, states, "We like the idea of giving students the opportunity to have some leadership experiences. Although it can be frustrating at times, we think that it's a really valuable experience. And, we think that students have a lot of fun with it. The shows always end up being really fun. Although, we have had some serious topics that students wanted to deal with in their writing and that gets translated to the stage. But overall, I think it's been a very positive experience. Students learn a lot from it."

Mussman continues, "One of the things that is really cool about theater is that it's about working together to create something. It's not in competition. Nobody has to lose. Everybody gets to win. We do that by working together. I think that's why [theater] is such an accepting environment and why a lot of people feel really comfortable in drama programs. Whether it's musicals or plays, I think that it's because they are welcomed and it is an environment where everybody gets to come together and work together."

"I'm always impressed with students who take the chance and take the risk because it's scary to put yourself out there. Whether it's getting up on stage or being responsible for things that are happening backstage. That is something that is not easy for students to do. I'm always impressed with students who do it. But, it is something that everybody who wants to can do. It's an education program. We're not professionals. We really do want everybody to be able to come and make whatever contribution they can and learn from it," Mussman concludes.

"The cool thing is that

there is a place for anybody who wants to do [Bison Scripts]. What I mean by that is that if you're not comfortable with being on stage, we need people on crew. If you aren't interested in being on crew and you aren't interested in being on stage, you could be a writer. There are so

many different ways that you can be involved," Mitchell says.

"And if you don't want to be involved that way, just come out and watch them. There's involvement in that regard, we need an audience. It's not a play without an audience."

Join Fenton HS Film Club

by Samantha Lang

Do you like watching movies, hanging out with your friends or eating snacks? If you do, Film club is the perfect club for you! Meeting every Wednesday after school from 3:20 until the end of the movie, Film club is definitely a lot of fun to be a part of. Film club is a student founded club that was made to give students a place to watch and discuss movies based on a certain theme or genre.

Each month, Film club has different themes that they base their movies on. For example, September was Hispanic Heritage Month themed movies, October was horror and Halloween themed movies, November was mysteries, and December was holiday movies. In January, Film club will also be showcasing Golden Globe movies/winners, and Academy Award winners/movies in March as well.

Along with all that, Film club often link up with other clubs that the school has to have special movie nights. Back in December Film Club teamed up with the Link Crew students and watch a film in the auditorium. Next up, in February, they are going team up with the Black Student Union to showcase a bunch of movies for Black History Month. If this sounds interesting to you, definitely go check them out and see what they do!

Not only do they watch movies and eat snacks, but they also have other activities to do while watching their movies. For example, they made Halloween masks in October, and ornaments in December. To continue this, they will be making Valentines in February.

Last year Film club went on multiple field trips to local movie theaters. This year, Film club's sponsor, English teacher Ms. Rebecca Norris, is planning another trip in the spring. This means that you get to hang out with friends outside of school on a school sponsored trip! How fun does that sound?

To continue the fun activities, Film club also submits short films to the IHSA Drama Series.

"We would love for students to create their own short film to submit" says Norris.

So if you're not completely interested in watching movies after school, you can participate in movie making instead.



Photo courtesy of Rebecca Norris

Criminal Justice Classes Present Projects on Corrections System

by Jadyn Golz

On December 20th, Ms. Kelly Torres’s Criminal Justice class put on a student-created, student-led presentation which provided insights and modifications to our community’s current corrections system. Suggestions included remodeling the system to get easier access to health and hygiene services, focusing on rehabilitation and learning, and helping inmates come back into the community.

Unlike previous years, students had a special guest Larry Lawton speak via video call. Lawton is an ex-convict but is now a motivational speaker, author, and influencer on social media. Since his release from prison in 2007, he’s been advocating for prison reforms as well as reforms to the society that puts youth on a path to incarceration. Students were invited to the 131st episode of Lawton’s podcast *The Real Deal w/ Larry Lawton* where they discussed their project.

Torres states, “We invited people from our local newspaper all the way to Former President Obama and a bunch of people in between. Anyone

who was involved in Criminal Justice reform in any aspect made our list. The students reached out to a bunch of different celebrities and [Lawton] responded. From there it took on a life of its own. [Lawton] was really gracious for letting us be on his podcast and speaking at the presentation. Working with him was really awesome. I’ve spent, now, hours on the phone with him. He gave me probably 3 hours of his time, probably more, outside of the podcast. He’s just been really great, and he was really invested from the beginning.”

In his podcast, Lawton described Torres as “a dynamite teacher.” Also noting that Torres was always there to back her students whenever they needed.

Torres comments, “The purpose of the assignment was to understand the issues facing the corrections system in America and teach students the skills needed to affect changes for those issues.”

One of two project leaders, Ryan Peterson (Senior), states, “I think this project is the start of some

meaningful changes in the community. Our ideas from that presentation are going to be condensed and sent to Congress to hopefully change some things.”

Leader of the Rehabilitation division, Junior Febe Reyes, comments, “When I signed up for Criminal Justice, I did not expect to be part of such an important presentation. Nevertheless, I’m certainly glad we were able to organize such an event. We had an amazing turnout of teachers and community leaders as our audience; many of them asked great questions to us the students as well as to Larry Lawton on video call.”

Torres continues, “My role was basically just to push them to do everything. I’m facilitating more than I’m actually teaching. I assigned the overall project “Design a correction system” and I designed the avenues that they would focus on. I put them in their groups according to their interests. From there I had a checklist for each group on what they needed to get done. But how and where it goes from there is up to each individual group.”

Reyes notes, “This project helped me experience what professionals do in their everyday lives, like great presentation and research skills, as well as group cooperation and having higher roles. Although I don’t plan on studying a career in the criminal justice field, my desired career (astronomy) will require many of these skills.”

“There were many people that are important to the community in attendance, as well as Larry Lawton. With these people, we are able to bring attention to these issues and make a change. Hopefully as small as a local law, or as big as an act!” Reyes continues.

Torres comments, “I hope students gain compassion for their fellow man, realizing that the current system sets newly released citizens up for failure. I want them to come away from the class understanding how to make changes in whatever areas they are passionate about, knowing that they are the future leaders of America.”

FHS Wrestlers Go To Nashville

by Edgar Martinez

Fenton’s wrestling team has been hard at work all throughout their season, and as we’re coming up on the last stretch before conference and the state series, our wrestlers are only working even harder.

Thus far the Varsity team is holding an overall record of 11-6, with Captains Jovany Zuniga (24-6 @ 160lbs), Anthony Bigham (12 wins), and Dorien Vasquez (12-8 @ 195/182 lbs) leading the boys team and Captain Sophia Sosa (20-2) leading the girls.

Coach Brian Hastings states “We have an amazing group here that loves to challenge themselves and try to get better, every day with them is

incredible. I’m super excited to see the new wrestlers improve as they build up from nothing, not to mention our veteran grapplers and seeing how they fare considering their experience.”

Wrestler Sebastian Wrobel stated, “While honestly the season is hard not only the matches but conditioning and training, there’s honestly nothing more I enjoy than coming to practice and seeing what more I can push myself to do.”

A recent highlight of the team’s season was the Varsity’s trip to the Father Ryan Invitational, held in Nashville, TN. The team had a blast exploring the city of Nashville and Louisville, KY and competing in



Photo courtesy of Brian Hastings

a tournament that truly challenged their skills with teams from different states.

Overall, Nine of twelve wrestlers won at least one match,

with Captain Jovany Zuniga coming only 1 point away from placing after three hard fought wins.

Love it or Leave it? *The Grimrose Girls* by Laura Pohl Book Review

by Jadyn Golz

Published in 2021 and written by Laura Pohl, *The Grimrose Girls* is a young adult mystery novel. The story follows four girls dealing with a new school year and the unexpected death of their closest friend.

According to the police, Ariane had committed suicide by jumping into a lake just off the main grounds of Grimrose Academy. Rory, Ella, and Yuki think otherwise. They were Ariane’s closest friends, and they knew that Ariane wasn’t the type of person that would commit suicide.

Yuki and Rory shared a dorm room with Ariane. Less than a month after her death, Nani came to take her spot in the dorm. Rory and Yuki didn’t take nice to the newcomer, but Nani didn’t really care.

As Nani began to settle in, she found an old journal of Ariane’s. Inside was a collection of fairy tales, but not the nice ones. These were the originals that didn’t have happy endings. They also found a list of names that included Ariane, Eleanor (Ella), Yuki, and Aurore (Rory). At the bottom, it read “I’m one of them.”

The girls soon came to realize that each of their fates was entwined with a fairy tale of some sort. Ariane, with her dyed red hair, was Ariel from *The Little Mermaid*. Yuki, with her overprotective stepmother and flawless facade, was Snow White. Rory, with her chronic pain and hatred of birthdays, was Aurora from *Sleeping Beauty*. Nani, who’s father mysteriously abandoned her at Grimrose Academy, was Belle from *Beauty and the Beast*.

They were understandably freaked out by this discovery and tried to ignore their findings. However, mysterious deaths kept occurring. First was the school-gossip who was found with her head smashed in with a bowl of porridge. Then was a set of twins who were found dead from an allergic reaction after being

lured by a trail of chocolates.

The girls figured out that the deaths would keep happening unless they broke the curse. And so, they set off to figure out how to release Grimrose Academy from its curse of a thousand years.

The original premise and the main story of this book are pretty good. However, I didn’t like the execution. The characters had a wide range of diversity in ethnic, sexual, and gender identity. However, their personalities seemed dry and overused. Rory was the rebellious princess, Ella was the cautious underdog, and Yuki was the struggling perfectionist. There was very little character development. There were some at the end of the book, but by that point I wasn’t invested in the characters at all.

Also, the main story kept getting sidetracked by side-quests. I understand the importance of subplots and how they can make the story more interesting. But this story had four main characters, each with their own subplot. Each time the subplot entered, the main story had to be paused. I didn’t like it. It threw off the pacing and made the actual plot seem like a side story. I also didn’t find the side quests very compelling. They were predictable and didn’t serve to make the main characters more interesting.

This book is the first in a series. Currently, its sequel (*The Wicked Remain*) is out. And (judging by the pacing of the first book), there will be more to come afterward.

Overall, this book was okay. If you like fairy tales mixed with queer representation, it’s a nice read. However, I didn’t find this story very complex or deep. If you’re looking for something to read while waiting for the next book in a series, this is a nice filler book to look into. Happy reading!

JV Dance Force 2nd Place Win, ‘Best Crowd Pleaser’

by Jer Gurrola

Our Fenton Dance Force has been heavily preparing for their performances and competitions with several hours of weekly practices.

Junior varsity coach Cassidy Kelly, Fenton alumni and 4-year varsity dancer, shared her thoughts on her first year as an instructor, “As a new coach, I hope to push my team in ways I was pushed as a dancer on Dance Force. I’m introducing difficult choreography, complex stunts, and bold routines.”

Kelly hopes to implement heavy techniques into her routines to prepare these dancers when varsity time comes around, and so far, it is working.

The junior varsity dancers have been taken the floor away recently. At a recent competition this month, JV came in 2nd out of 6 schools.

Junior varsity dancer Alexa Rocha shares an insight into her Fenton dance journey by saying, “Competition season has been very stressful and time-consuming, but [it’s] definitely worth it. It [has] helped create a dance family, [where] we all bond more than ever and learned that we could always lean on each other. [Our struggles] consist of learning [rigorous] stunts, and learning a whole routine, and cleaning it in under 2 weeks. We’ve put in hard work and dedication by putting in extra practice hours and practicing at home so we can come prepared the next day.”

The JV team consisting of freshman has allowed them to enhance their skills for their future on dance force, and most definitely for their future on varsity.

Rocha has attained her skills and is heavily using them for the upcoming seasons and she shares that with us, “Being on JV gives you a head start and helps you prepare for the future, it teaches you to be more confident [through] facials, and prove your true self. We learn harder stunts and new tricks [while] focusing on turns, front kips, back kips, [among the others]. We start building our stamina and train our bodies to push harder and stronger in routines, so when we make varsity, we are better prepared to [perform] 2-minute routines.”

Despite the competition being over for these dancers, they’re continuing to use their skills for their final home-game performances during the basketball games.

Sophomore captain Kamila Zawitkowska encourages you to come and watch their final performances by sharing an insight into the program. “Dance is making a comeback. During competition season, we pull out new and old skills completely. I’m excited for the audience to take in those challenging aspects of dance that usually go unrecognized and how much we can improve from our first to last performance with the competition routine.”


Zawitkowska strongly urges a large crowd not only to enjoy the performance but to intake the pressures of dance and how difficult it may be to perfect by adding, “The difficulty and work dance force put into routines is hard to grasp and much harder to put in. I hope that with these performances, we can show the audience how rigorous dance is and that the possibility for growth continues to be what we strive for.”

Needless to say, our future dance seasons are exciting to look forward to.

This season has been full of sweat and tears, but these dancers make sure to hold their gratitude for all of the hard work their teammates are putting in.

“I’m proud that we put so much time and dedication, sweat and tears, to get what we deserved. Getting 2nd place and an award for ‘Best Crowd Pleaser’ is also something that [we] are extremely proud of. I’m extremely proud of [all] my teammates for not giving up and showing their true love for dance,” says Rocha.

“The dancers continue to prove how driven and devoted they are. Their love for the sport is shown every time they perform. I’m excited to showcase their dedication!” adds Coach Kelly with pride that her choreography has taken her dancers to earn recognition.



Cast List

Seymour - Ryan Peterson
Audrey - Kailianna Smith
Chiffon - Lita Aguilar
Crystal - Emily Worwa
Ronnette - Delilah Johnson
Mushnik - Ryan Mitchell
Audrey II - Aiden Torres
Orin - Nate Rodriguez
Luce - Natalie Worwa
Bernstein - Mara Tinnes
Snip - Faith Wrzeciona
DJ - Josh Botello
Wino - Hamza Chohan
Customer - Crystal Woods
Martin - Adrian Cisneros

Little Shop Company		
Olivia Beecroft Josh Botello Hamza Chohan Saffiya Chohan Adrian Cisneros Mateo Corona Jay Cruz Yasmin Hattar	Gerald Logue Isabelle Martinez Diego Meza Lex Mikulski Sebastian Nieves Brandon Pauls Amelia Poorman Naja Porter	Amelia Quinn Sarah Schaefer Natalie Sisto Mara Tinnes Julia Windham Crystal Woods Natalie Worwa Faith Wrzeciona

Seam Company		
Olivia Beecroft Mateo Corona	Diego Meza Sebastian Nieves	Crystal Woods Faith Wrzeciona

Dakins Recaps Qatar World Cup Highlights, Surprises

by Reagan Dakins

It happens every fourth year; the world comes together to enjoy a game that has been around for decades. The World Cup is a tournament for which everyone globally tunes in. Even if you aren’t a soccer or football fan, you know what is going on from the constant buzz around it. This year was full of surprises. This year has been rocky, from small teams making it far (Croatia getting 3rd after beating Morocco 3-1) to surprising losses (Brazil lost to Croatia in the quarter-finals).

Smaller countries made waves in the soccer universe this World Cup.

Croatia and Morocco beat the odds stacked against them. Both were predicted to be out early due to the low ranking of 14 (Croatia) and 34 (Morocco). Croatia shocked

the world when they knocked out favored Brazil; this big upset changed the course of the World Cup. This small country’s team can thank veteran goalie Dominik Livakovic. He set the record for most saves in a FIFA World Cup game since 2014; Livakovic had a total of eleven saves against Brazil, where he denied the penalty kick that could have given the game to Brazil, ending run Croatia.

Livakovic’s saves helped kick the 5-time Brazilian World champs out of the Cup. The Croatian goalkeeper also set the record for most penalty kick saves in the World Cup with four penalty shootout saves. Croatia’s victorious run finally ended with a loss to Argentina in the semi-finals.

Morocco placed fourth in the World Cup with a devastating loss to France in the semi-finals.

Now the powerhouses of soccer. In the finals, Argentina faced off against France. In this ultimate showdown, the win came down to penalties. Despite an early loss to Saudi Arabia, Argentina quickly defeated its opponents.

France’s Kylian Mbappe scored two of the three goals to tie the game, leading to a penalty shootout. Mbappe is only the second player in World Cup history to score a hat-trick and win a Golden Boot award. The Golden Boot award is given to the player who scores the most goals in the World Cup; Mbappe scored twelve goals.

The Golden Glove went to Argentinian goalie Emi Martinez, who also has a bit of controversy about the trophy due to the number of saves during the penalties he had.

The Golden Ball went to Lionel Messi; this award goes to the MVP of the game. Messi won this due to his outstanding performance in the penalty shootout, which led to the ultimate win by Argentina. The biggest win of the night went to Argentina as they won 3-3, 4-2 penalties.

The World Cup this year was full of surprises and was entertaining. It is an estimation that four billion people watched the players hit the pitch on the world stage.

In the 2026 World Cup, it will happen a little differently. Instead of being held in one arena in one country, the games will be held across three countries, the U.S., Mexico, and Canada.