

# The



# Signal

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## Jazz Ensemble Earns Superior Distinction at Jazz Fest

By Malien Tingpalpong

The Fenton Jazz Band took a trip to Purdue University over Martin Luther King weekend to perform in the Midwest's largest jazz festival. The band performed three pieces for a group of judges, then they were able to experience a half hour clinic, even earning a Division 1 Superior Rating. Alongside the performances, the band enjoyed other groups' performances like an all-female jazz band called "Artemis." The jazz band participated in workshops allowing all the musicians to hone their skills and further develop their love for music. Most notably, the musicians experienced a fairly new opportunity: Jam Sessions.

"I had a really great time listening to all the bands play. It was a good learning experience, and I even participated in my first jam session which was so cool." Sophomore Karissa Lara explained.

The ensemble was able to participate in the competition by applying to the event and submitting their musical resume. Band Director Mr. Garrett George heard about the event through other band directors. He elaborates on the experience the band had saying, "The students participated in classes like how to be a better rhythm section member and how to overcome stage fright. It was an outstanding learning experience."

Senior Julian Klimczyk has a unique outlook on the event, as it is brand new to Fenton's ensemble. Klimczyk commented on the very new experience stating, "My experience was very different from what I was used to. It was very important with all the impromptu with a lot of changes to the itinerary/schedule. During our performance our drum gear failed so that was interesting. Overall, the clinic was most important."

Senior Julia Ladas thought



Photo courtesy of Garrett George

the festival was a great way to end her jazz career, saying, "I thought it was a great way to close out of my 4th and final year of being in the jazz ensemble. It truly represents everything good about jazz."

Ladas shares a heartwarming

sentiment saying, "From the wonderful and talented solo artists and group acts and even seeing other high school bands play to see how we could improve and experience of having one last overnight, it was a great experience."

## Kaleidoscope Hosts Open Mic

By Malien Tingpalpong

Fenton's literary magazine, Kaleidoscope, hosted their first open mic for students and even teachers who want to share their stories. Poetry, short stories, vignettes, and essays were performed at the afternoon event. A variety of performances were shared including pieces about love, family, heritage, heartbreak, and even childhood pets.

Performer at the event, Sophomore Xochitl Quinones illuminates her first poetry open mic experience saying, "It was a great experience. I was incredibly nervous, but not so much about the content rather than someone special in the audience."

The open mic was a safe space for anyone to express themselves. Quinones comments "It was my first time performing my own original poetry in front of people, but it was incredible how much support I got from everyone."

Senior Margaret Quilapio also performed and MC'd. Quilapio states, "I performed my original piece called 'Hold Your Own Hand' which is about all the activities I do with my hands like lifting weights, playing bass, boxing, and it's also about how

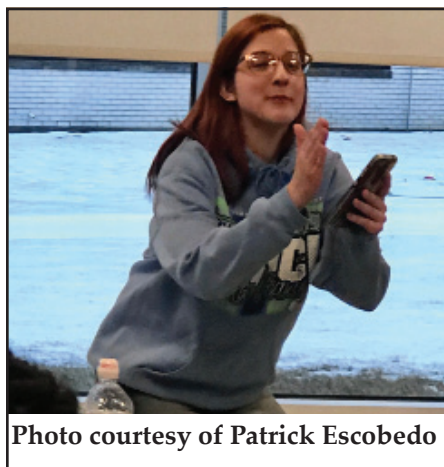


Photo courtesy of Patrick Escobedo

sometimes a perform can only rely on themselves."

Also seeing the space as a welcoming environment, she elaborates, "It was really interesting to see a different side of my peers and even the teachers who also performed. It was a very supportive crowd, and I'd definitely do it again."

Next on the agenda, Kaleidoscope will be planning and writing for Lit Fest, a literary event for the Upstate Eight Conference, in which students will participate in creative writing workshops by submitting their work. Also, they are to attend Louder Than A Bomb.

## E-Learning Aids Students and Teachers with Curriculum

By Anna Micor

Don't you hate making up days at the end of the school year? Well, you're in luck because Fenton is implementing E-Learning days this year. You never know what kind of weather to expect in Illinois, so in the case of an emergency day, such as a snow day, we no longer have to make it up at the end of the year!

In the case of an unexpected school cancellation, students are required to log into their Chromebooks and sign in. This is how teachers will take attendance.

While they stay at home, teachers assign work for students to complete, so they don't fall behind in the scheduled curriculum.

Mrs. Sara Pahl, an Instructional Technology Coach and English teacher says, "E-Learning Days will help teachers move the students forward in the curriculum without needing to be physically in the building. We are excited to implement E-Learning Days, should they need to be used. We hope students are now prepared to check-in and submit the attendance verification in an event of an E-Learning Day. Our staff has also been participating in professional development to prepare for E-Learning. Be on the lookout for an E-Learning Day tab on our school website!"

Mr. Mike Berago, the Instructional Technology Coordinator and APCSP teacher says, "E-Learning days is an opportunity to leverage technology to ensure that our curriculum moves forward on days that we are unable to come to school. This greatly benefits both students and teachers. Teachers will no longer have to make major revisions to their curriculum to make up for the missed days. The students benefit from this because, oftentimes, making up for missed days lead to extra work for students outside of school—at least, that's how it is in my AP Computer Science class."

All in all, snow days may now be a thing of the past, as E-Learning Days ensure that we don't have to make them up at the end of the school year.



# Contest Drama to Compete with Show *The Glass Menagerie*

By Malien Tingpalpong

This year's Contest Drama is gearing up for an exciting competition at Oak Lawn Community High School in February for the Sectional Competition. They are performing for the chance to compete at state. Last year's Contest Drama earned 4th place at the IHSA Group Interpretation and Contest Play State Competition with their show *Wit* by Margaret Edson.

This year's cast is excited to perform and compete once again in their show *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams directed by Dr. Mike Mitchell and Ms. Amanda Baker. The strong and talented cast consists of seniors Jordan Blanche, Nicole Thomasy, Nico Carillo, and Jesus Amador, and their student director, junior Ien Tingpalpong.

Thomasy, an experienced Contest Drama actress, expresses the emotional ties to the show emphasizing, "This one is definitely the most intimate cast. There's only four of us. It really touches home for a lot of people. You can really see everybody's emotions and it connects us in all ways of life. We're definitely a little excited."

A cast member in Contest Drama for the past 3 years, Blanche comments on the nature of the event saying, "Contest drama is a unique experience that allows a cast to grow so close."

Blanche plays Amanda, a mother struggling to navigate raising two children in a difficult financial situation. Her two children Laura and Tom, played by Thomasy and Carillo, accompany her on stage. Thomasy in the role of Laura suffers from mental issues that keep her in her own dream world of glass figurines. Carillo plays Tom the narrator and younger brother who is burdened by his family situation and dreams of becoming a writer. Amador is playing the role of Jim, a high school acquaintance of Laura and Tom.

Blanche elaborates on the connection with the cast mentioning, "They truly become your best friends, and I'm so excited to get to be on this journey with them. I am super excited to see the show finally put together with all the technical elements like costumes and lighting design."

Student Director Tingpalpong is also looking forward to seeing the technical design of the show stating, "I'm excited about this year's unique set. We are incorporating mirrors, lights, and even projectors on stage. Aside from that, we have a really great cast. We have a lot of talent in our show."

Senior Jesus Amador regrets not joining Contest Drama earlier in his high school career and is loving the experience elaborating, "I am excited for the hard work to finally pay off because it's a nice group who all cares about each other and cares about what we are doing. I'm excited to see everything flourish. I love Contest Drama."

# Students Attend Theaterfest: An Experience of a Lifetime

By Morelia Aburto

If one thing is for sure: Fenton is full of talent. The Fenton Drama department is no exception. Productions such as the musical, fall play, and Students On Stage are made up of students with amazing talent.

This year, many of the students were able to have an experience of a lifetime. This experience was Theater Fest.

Theater Fest is a three-day festival filled with performances, and workshops for students interested in the performing arts field. This year it took place at Illinois State University. Fenton Students were able to experience Theater Fest all three days. Students not only enjoyed being there, but they also walked away with new learnings in terms of performance, theater, and connecting to their fellow cast members.

"The highlight of my theatre fest was the last day, we saw the all-state musical Aida. Every cast member was so talented it gave me something to aspire to my junior and senior year," says sophomore Abigail Niehoff. Among the shows were the musical Aida and Beauty and the Beast.

The actors and casts that performed at the theatre fest inspired many of our students to give it their all. Just like Abigail, many students look up to and admire all the work from those who gave it their all in the performance. When performing, there are many tactics students need to know to make their performance one to remember. This event definitely helped learn those tactics as well as new ones. "I learned a lot about my craft of performing, and how to keep the same energy," Abigail continued.

Sophomore Evelyn Perez elaborates on the life changing experience stating, "Theaterfest was a very enjoyable and fun experience. It was so cool to navigate the ISU campus, watch shows put on by other high schools, and meet people from around Illinois who share the same passion for theater."

Perez comments on the shows saying, "So much hard work was put into every single show we watched both by the cast and the crew. Aida, the All-State show, was breathtaking and another amazing, once-in-a-lifetime experience for everyone watching and everyone participating."

Our talented students definitely took advantage of this learning opportunity and watched amazing performances. They left theater fest with a new outlook on their performing skills and the stories put on and with an experience they'll never forget.

# The Democratic Nominee Race Tightens as Primary Approches: Profile of Nominees Still in the Race

By Malien Tingpalpong

Bernie Sanders, senator from Vermont, is a frontrunner in the Democratic Primary. His policies include taxing the rich at higher rates, supporting the Green New Deal, and Medicare for all. According to Politico, Sanders is polling ahead of Biden as the race continues.

Joe Biden, Vice President under President Barack Obama and senator from Delaware in 1972, polls closely with Sanders in the nomination race. His views and stances include abolishing capital punishment, raising the minimum wage to \$15, and expanding student debt-relief programs.

Elizabeth Warren, senator from Massachusetts and law school professor, is trailing close behind Biden in the race. She is standing for a wealth tax, universal health care, and eradicating all student loan debt.

Pete Buttigieg, mayor of South Bend, Indiana, is a new face in national politics as he is running for the Democratic nominee spot. The youngest candidate in the race, Buttigieg stands out as a veteran and the first openly gay nominee. He is supporting policy surrounding the abolition of the electoral college, immediate action for climate change,

and finding an easier pathway for U.S. citizenship for immigrants.

Andrew Yang, former corporate lawyer and founder of Venture for America, served under President Barack Obama as a Presidential Ambassador for Entrepreneurial Leadership. He has been popularized for his policy of universal basic income, which would grant \$1,000 to every adult American citizen. He also stands for human-centered capitalism and transforming the jobs to evolve with automation.

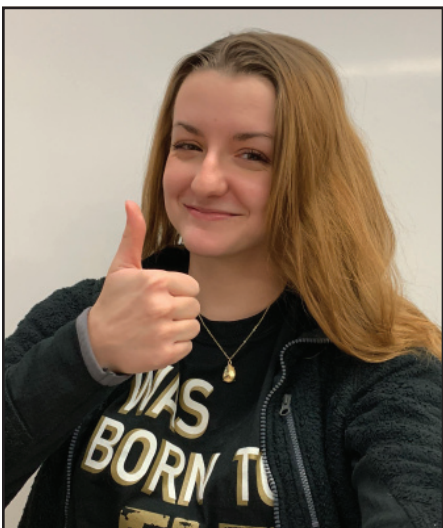
Amy Klobuchar, U.S. senator from Minnesota, once served as an attorney. Klobuchar is standing strong in the difficult race. She wants to raise the minimum wage, ban assault weapons, and expand health care coverage.

Tom Steyer, hedge-fund manager and philanthropist, is new to politics. He is a billionaire who is making his way through the race through advertisements and his own money. He supports affordable housing, ending gun violence, and a wealth tax.

Though all of these candidates differ on their positions and fall on various points of the liberal spectrum, all represent what could be a complete reversal on the policies of the Trump



Sydney Minard '20  
I will be voting for any of the nominees. Just not Trump.



Nicole Thomasy '20  
There's so much going on, it's so hard to focus on one candidate.

administration. On February 3, the Iowa caucus will provide a picture of how the electorate in the midwestern state will vote. Then the northeast has its early say on February 11 in the New Hampshire primaries. After that, the western region's caucus will take place on February 22 in Nevada. The last major primary takes place in South Carolina on February 29.

By the time these events are over, we will undoubtedly have a shorter list of names to choose from on Super Tuesday, which takes place on Tuesday, March 3. and in the subsequent primaries that will take place between now and spring break. Super Tuesday will include 14 more state primaries.

Six more state primaries occur on March 10, and then finally Illinois has its primary on March 17 along with Florida, Arizona, and Ohio.



# Diaz Recounts Trip to Japan, Gives Advice to Future Tourists

By Ethan Diaz

When you go on a trip - international or otherwise - it's probably a good idea to come back with stories to tell. Telling stories can be a bonding experience between people. Here's the problem, though, audience: for some strange reason, going to Japan feels like a dream. Yes, going to Japan was amazing, and sure, it was a dream come true. However, I feel like it went by so fast that it was hard to take in everything - that, or I have an abysmal memory. But, you know what? Let's give this a shot. This isn't going to be the most professional article you've read: we're going to keep it cool. I'm going to touch on short topics I consider the essentials of Tokyo, Japan.

So, here's what a tourist needs to know about the land of the rising sun. Let me preface this by addressing the one concern most of you interested in visiting the country might have: you will survive without knowing the language. It is \*highly recommended\* you go in knowing a bit of Japanese, but - as someone who knows only a handful of phrases - it's actually pretty easy to roam the streets with only English. You may also want to be mindful of the cultural etiquette. But, there are some other pieces of info that are good and important to know.

1) Respect The Train Lines, And They Will Respect You - What I mean by this is the importance of the train lines. In Japan, public transportation is the most common way of getting around. Sure, you'll see a good few cars, but - from what I gather - the majority of them are comprised of taxis and delivery vehicles. You're going to want to see

yourself to the subways or shuttle stations. I, myself, used the subway for about 85-90% of the trip. Always keep a train line map on hand, too - that will definitely save you time. If you know which line to get on and which stop to get off at, you will get where you need to be. Also, don't bring ice cream on the train. Or any food.

2) The Convenience Store Will Be Your Best Friend - Let's talk about 7-Eleven. You know how 7-Eleven in the states is mostly junk food and stuff of that sort? 7-Eleven in Japan is that but the quality has improved ten-fold. You'll go to nearly any and every 7-Eleven you find. Trust me, I did exactly that. Selections include salads, soups, sandwiches, rice balls, pastries and anything else of the sort. They also have a selection of exclusive items. Let me tell you about the Pizza Bun, my favorite thing in the store. If you've ever had a dumpling, it's basically that - minus the meat and veggies you'd normally find in it. Instead, you get pizza sauce and a ball of cheese wrapped in an off-white, crust colored bun. It doesn't sound like much, but it is delicious. Pair it with your choice of beverage, and BAM, happiness! Here, that would probably come out to about 5 or 6 dollars, yes? It cost me about 350 yen, which is about 3 dollars or \$3.50, if you convert it. I'd say that's a fair buy, wouldn't you?

3) How to Act Around People - Here's a big one: the locals. You might get the impression that the Japanese can be a lot of angry folk, but this couldn't be farther from the truth. Japanese people are some of the sweetest people you'll meet. From what I gather, their mentality of other



Photo by Ethan Diaz

people - friends, relatives, strangers, etc. - is to do everything in their power to make that other person happy. This goes for tourists, too. Remember how I mentioned that knowing the native lingo was good, but not necessary? Workers - and sometimes the people on the streets - will try their best to point you in the right direction, or generally assist you in some way. Just return the favor and be friendly back - because no one likes a meanie weenie. I saw a guy dropped his credit card at the train station, and rushed to give it back to him. He said "thank you" and went on his way. One other thing you should know about Japanese civilians, specifically in cities; You will be smooshed a lot. Japanese people walk EVERYWHERE, and it can be a little overwhelming. Streets are filled to the brim with humans, and it can be very easy to lose sight of people. Trains can also make for human sandwiches.

4) Splurge Wisely - If you are like me, and you're into Japan's

pop culture, you're probably going to want to buy every single thing you see. Don't. Buy a ton of stuff, but think about what you're buying before you do make the purchase. For example, I'm a fan of Sanrio - Hello Kitty people - and my favorite character is Pochacco - a little white dog. Pochacco merchandise is almost non-existent in the states, so it seemed natural to get that stuff in Japan, where it's readily available. That's the kind of mindset you have to have: What is special and exclusive here? That said, I bought way too many things. Don't be me. Arcades and vending machines can be dangerous, too - I could spend all my money just playing claw machines and I wouldn't even be mad.

These were just some of the things I feel a person interested in going to Japan should know. Personally, I would love to return, having gone before and taking that knowledge back for an even better experience.

## Death of Iranian General Ignites Tensions Between U.S, Iran

By Jenny Aguilar

On January 3, 2020, people all over the world woke up to the deaths of both Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and the Iranian general Qassem Soleimani. This unexpected death shocked both Americans, Iranians, and the rest of the world alike, launching a series of events that would lead to "World War III" being used not just in a joking manner.

The U.S.'s relations with Iran have always had some bumps in the road. On November 4, 1979, Iranian students invaded the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, holding hostage 52 Americans for 444 days. Later in July 1988, a U.S. Navy ship shot down an Iranian civilian plane, stating it mistook the plane for a military jet. On the flip side, the U.S. and Iran have been able to reach some agreements, like the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and the U.N. that was led by former President Barack Obama.

Even with this roller coaster of a relationship, nobody expected the bombshell that was the death of Iran's most celebrated general. Qassem Soleimani was the Quds Force, a group that aided in the killing of 608 U.S. troops. Former President George W. Bush officially labeled the Quds force a foreign terrorists group in 2007.

While the death of Iran's most powerful general shocked the common citizen, there had been some negative build up between the U.S. and Iran. On December 27, 2019, the militia group Kataib Hezbollah, which has connections with Iran, attacked Iraq's K1 military base, killing an American contractor and injuring several other Americans in the process. This begins the back and forth between the U.S. and Iran, including Trump ordering airstrikes aimed towards Kataib Hezbollah and supporters of the militia group invading the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq. After more threats, an airstrike was spotted near the Baghdad airport, the Pentagon later confirming the death of Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and Qassem Soleimani. Ms. Kelly Mullins, a U.S History teacher

here at Fenton, recalls her first thoughts when hearing the news: "Why him, why now? Who was involved in the decision making?"

This confused, distraught sentiment was echoed all over. The most recurring explanation to the attack has been that Soleimani was an "imminent threat" to the United States, but this has called for debate as to what an "imminent threat" actually means since the U.S. government is not providing details to what exactly Soleimani was planning.

The Iranian government responded to the death of its most valued general by firing two missiles at the U.S. base in Iraq and shooting down a Ukrainian airline, which Iran later admits to doing on January 11, 2020. Recent reports state that a number of Americans were injured during the U.S. base attack, though specifics have not been released.

While no other major event has followed in the aftermath, many American citizens are fearing about their countries safety. When asked about the United States' relations with other nations after this incident with Iran, Mullins says, "Other countries are concerned about our foreign policy. We need to conduct relations in a steady, stable manner. Others see this as an impact on our [credibility]." An anonymous speculates to the possibility of other nations also going against us: "I think that all of them are entitled to do so, however, it is scary that they're all ganging up on us at the same time." The phrase "World War III" has been tossed around in conversations, both as a joke and in a dubious manner. The anonymous sophomore believes another attack is possible: "It happened once before; it can happen again."

Despite the fear and anger going around, some implicit positives have come out of the situation. Students have taken a stand to voice their thoughts and concerns. Mullins describes the newly energized class environment: "I'm answering a lot of questions in class. It dispels the myth that young people only think about themselves."



## Wrestling Team Starts Season Strong, Looks Towards IHSA Series

By Michelle Agyemang

The Fenton Wrestling team has been off to a great start this season! They have made many accomplishments, including sweeping out a few schools in the Upstate Eight Conference. They won tournaments at Glenbard South (63-9), Homewood Flosswood (45-29), and Warrenville South (48-24). They have also increased their overall record to 15-6 by winning 3 out of 4 dual meets.

Head coach Brian Hastings seems to be incredibly proud of his wrestlers, saying, "We've had a great mix of kids! We have some great leaders, and we have a great senior class, Jeremy Pikorz, Danny Ramirez and Ricky Saucedo have been great leaders for four years, and Kevin Lavera has really stepped it up."

These few wrestlers plus many others have been showing

great success with their individual scores. Junior Quinn Willcoxon has had a high season with a 23-6 record and 16 pins. Senior Ricky Saucedo has been doing great with a 21-11 record, along with brother Danny Saucedo at 20-10. In his very first season being on varsity Sophomore Konstantinos Papadopoulos has been doing great with 15 wins. Kevin Guevara pushed his record to 16-11. Many other wrestlers are pushing their way to the tops of leaderboards as well.

Aside from the stats, there are countless amounts of things that these students learn from being on the team.

When asked what he has learned from wrestling, Ricky Saucedo said, "One thing that I learned from wrestling is to always fight for what you want. You should always push past your limits because it taught me to go through hard times."

The wrestlers have learned many important things over the season. Coach Hastings agrees, saying, "We've had a lot of people get some valuable varsity experience. It's been good that they could have the experience to compete well and still do well."

With the valuable lessons of passion and determination learned during wrestling, the boys are sure to do well for the rest of the season.

Although the wrestlers have been doing a fantastic job this season, there are still things that they need to work on. The team has hopes of continuing to work hard and improve meet to meet. The team's goal is to eventually win conference, then regionals, and hopefully, they'll make it to state. With the amount of success the team has acquired the wrestling bison have a fair shot at making it to the top.



Photo courtesy of Brian Hastings

## Boy's Swim Brings Home First, Second Places at IMSA Meet

by Olivia Baran and Olivia Markowski

"Just keep swimming!" Fenton High School's Boys Varsity swim team obtained second place, while JV obtained first at the IMSA Swim Meet. The talented swimmers have definitely been working hard this season, in order to achieve these results.

Varsity swimmer, Kasper Widlo shares, "Swim has allowed me to build new relationships and learn what it means to have self-discipline."

Those are certainly valid motives for partaking in Fenton's Swim Team. "Swim is a beneficial, healthy sport, and is always pushing me past my limits," states Varsity Swimmer, Nicholas Pietrasz.

What an amazing way to become involved in the various sports and programs that Fenton has to offer. Swim is one of many examples of how these students can relieve themselves of the daily hardships, high school may cause. The hard work that has been put in by these boys, has surely paid off, as was shown by their recent success. Let's cheer on our fellow Bison, as they compete in their upcoming meets and bring home more victories!



Photo by Kasper Widlo

## Catcher in the Rye Offers Nuances in Classic Coming of Age Story

By Jadyn Golz

I originally picked up this book thinking it was going to be this humble tale about a young boy who spent his days wandering the rye fields at his father's farm until he had to move to the vast city of New York and learn a few life lessons along the way. Well, I was completely, utterly, indescribably wrong.

For those looking for the description on the back of the book, *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, there is none. Hence, I'll provide you with one:

Holden Caulfield has just been expelled from Pencey, the fourth High School he's flunked. After a small tussle with his roommate and dorm neighbor, Holden decides he's just going to leave early and spends his days wandering around New York.

His journeys make him run into new acquaintances, old acquaintances, and a severe case of pessimism. After some wandering back and forth, Holden makes his way back to his sister, Phoebe. At this point, Salinger decides to cut the story off. Thus, leaving the ending to reader interpretation.

In terms of plot, this book doesn't have much to offer. The events of the book take place in less than a week. And as of characters, there is definitely a diverse group. Though, they don't spend enough time with Holden to develop their character.

But even so, there is something about this book that made it a classic. For some it may be the pessimistic and slightly older humor. For others, it may be the development and character of Holden.

Holden Caulfield is an interesting soul. His self awareness and his perception of other people tend to be oversimplified. But even so, his perception of the "phonies" around him is exceptional. To Holden, adults aren't aware of the hypocrisy they pursue. Hence, Holden doesn't want to grow up; but it's too late for that. Instead of not growing up himself, he wants to be the person who makes sure that the children never have to grow up and become like the fake people.

Holden spends so much time on this topic, that he can't see the phoniness of himself. Holden longs for the comfort of someone who could understand him. But he's so scared that that person will leave just as his little brother did. So, he shuts himself out to protect himself. Holden wants nothing more than the world to just stand still like the figures in museums. Always the same, never changing.

This isn't the type of book that I'd recommend a 7th grader. Salinger wrote *The Catcher in the Rye* as an adult novel but the demographic has slowly changed due to the themes of the novel. As a teen, I think this a very good young-adult comedy. Though, I'm sure that adults would enjoy this book as well.

Even if you don't get the theme but enjoy the humor (or vice versa), this book has something wonderful to share with its readers.

## Talent Show Promises Variety of Acts, Entertainment

by Lissette Hernandez

It's that time of the year again were STUNT (Students United) organizes one of their most anticipated events... the Talent Show. Students have the opportunity to showcase any talents that they might have anywhere from singing, dancing, comedy, and even juggling. These talents are then showcased to their peers, community members, and anyone else who wishes to attend. Ms. Annette Valente, members of STUNT, and the sound and light booth technicians work very hard every year to execute a successful showcase for everyone to enjoy.

Valente says, "This is a special event that occurs every year, that shows how talented Fenton students are, and shows talents that might not be shown on a regular basis, an event that students should try to come."

This event will be held in the auditorium on March 6 at 6:30pm, admission is \$5 and tickets will be sold at the bookstore as well as on the day of the event at the door. Come on in and bring family and friends to enjoy these special performances delivered by our talented student body.