

# The



# Signal

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## Nelson Returns to Fenton



Photo by Jessica Jalowiec

By Amber Azim

Every four years a new police officer from the community comes to work as a liaison at Fenton. This year our "new" officer, replacing Officer Justin Bjes, is Officer Matthew Nelson.

Nelson is not truly new to Fenton, however. He worked here as the police liaison from 2008 to 2012 and is excited to be back. Nelson has been a police officer for 13 years in Wood Dale.

Before becoming a police officer, Nelson went to school for

aviation, but his friend was testing to be a police officer, and he decided to test with him.

When working out in the community, Nelson is always wary. "When getting a call for a problem," Nelson explains, "your heart rate increases and you get really nervous because what they said on the call might not be the same thing that is really happening and you don't know the real danger."

When asked about his goals for Fenton, he said, "My main goal is to make sure students and faculty are safe at school and students are successful and will graduate and learn life skills." His favorite part of working here is interacting with students and staff. He also wants students to know that he is always available if students need to talk to him. He is located in the main office in room 104. He can help them with related faculty questions or if a student is interested in criminal justice they can talk to him and a counselor about a TCD program or a criminal justice program.

Mrs. Pomahac, who worked extensively with Nelson during his first tour here at Fenton, said, "We were all glad to have him back. He builds great relationships with kids and staff is a team player with the admins. He jumps in whenever and wherever needed. He is reliable and hard working."

## The Election Promises Fun, Laughs, Relatable Humor

By Rina Focht

This year's fall play, *The Election*, is a comedy that is full of sarcasm and relatable humor. The show is about a high school boy named Mark Davenport (played by senior Zach Murphy), who is running for class president. He believes he has the election in the bag, when Christy Martin (played junior by Anita Kuchlewski) comes along and changes all of his plans.

Zach Murphy has been very excited about this show since the read through of the script last spring saying, "I am most excited to see how our cast is going to work together to make this a truly spectacular show."

This year, Fenton has many new faces that are being added to the theater program. Aitanna Nadala, who is cast as Gina McMaster, moved here all of the way from South Dakota. This was her first

audition at a new school, and she says that her only advice about auditions is, "Don't get caught up too much on what you're saying. Yeah, it is important to know what you're saying, but the feeling and trying to become that character is more important."

If being on stage isn't really your thing, you can always join the stage crew. The directors are always looking for people who are willing to help out backstage. If you are interested in doing stage makeup, building sets, working with the lights, or you just want to be a part of the show, stage crew is always welcoming for this and future shows.

There are three chances for you to see the performance, October 13th, 14th, and 15th, all at 7:00 pm. Come out to support the theater program!



Photo by Jessica Jalowiec

## SEL Program Provides Important Social, Emotional Support for Students

By Julia Gainski

The SEL, or social emotional learning program, ensures that students at Fenton are being supported emotionally and socially while here at school. SEL has been around for five years and started off as an advisory that held mandatory meetings for all students, twice a month. Now, SEL has an incorporated message derived from clubs like Stunt, Bison Buddies, Brave, and the senior mentors.

Mr. Madl, Ms. Downen, Mrs. To, and the students involved are the main contributing factors of the SEL program. Students are able to easily access the SEL Google drive folder that is shared with student and staff. It consists of activities, information, and resources with each month being centered around

a certain lesson. Mrs. To states that, "SEL is just as important as academics for students." The program plays an essential role to Fenton because schools are required by state of Illinois and as a part of curriculum to show how a student's emotional and social health is needs to be emphasized as a big part of life. SEL has helped spread valuable thoughts through the "think before you post" messages hung up around the school in order to keep the awareness.

Senior mentor Maggie Jalowiec states, "Being a senior mentor has helped me feel like I'm contributing to the Fenton community and making a positive difference. Making freshmen feel welcome brightens my day."

SEL is frequently mentioned in the Fenton email announcements. Be sure to read through it and pick up important tips!



# New Staff Members: "What Are You Most Looking Forward To This Year?"



**Cameron Kopp**

"I really look forward to meeting all the kids. Last year I subbed here and now I'm here full time, it's a little bit different. I can now have a better relationship with all my students instead of the day to day. That is what I'm looking forward to the most and I also coach basketball and baseball, so I'm looking forward to those seasons and starting that up again. It'll be a good time."



**Jose Macias**

"I look forward to knowing the students and the culture of Fenton. I heard good things about Fenton and I want to learn from them. I want to see if I can bring something into the culture and try to keep positive and academic the way it is."



**Ericka Richardson**

"I look forward to getting to know the students a bit more and just having fun while teaching the classroom. I'm hoping that the kids like what I have to offer for them."



**Jennifer Houk**

"Since it's my first year, getting to meet all the awesome students and getting to know the staff better."

By Jenny Marin



**Steve Smidl**

"I look forward to building a library program that the students can be proud of. We have a lot of kids who have an interest in reading but have a really dated collection. I want to see kids read and learn about what is relevant today and how that can impact tomorrow."

## New Law Aims to Keep Students in School

By Mariel Elope

When a student has to have a suspension period, it typically means that they are not to go to school for a set period of days. However, starting on September 15, students will now have a chance of getting an alternative to suspension. This is due to a new law called Senate Bill 100 that has been passed to change the way schools have been suspending their students to reduce out of schools suspensions.

This alternative form of suspension is basically in-school suspension and is designed to keep students in school.

Mrs. Pomahac explains, "I think there was a concern that some schools were over-suspending kids and so this law basically regulates schools to consider certain conditions before suspending a student out of school."

How students receive in-school suspension depends on the situation. Now that students are to stay in school during this period of time, the school may make recommendations for social workers or out of school counseling to improve student behavior. Students would meet with a social worker, counselor, or work with a dean to reflect on their actions. As always, deans will call anyone concerned and the suspension will not be any longer than five days. Students will still have a right to make up work during this period.

There are, however, exceptions that would have students have a regular suspension rather than an in-school one. That exception is if the student poses a risk to other students' well-being and safety. For example, if a student shows violent behavior, then they would not qualify to this alternative. Another exception is if the student's continued presence disrupts school. An example for this would be a bully harassing another student who then can't focus on his or her studies. In this case, the student will not qualify as he or she is bothering other students.

Although it is true that there are schools who over suspend, Fenton does not really have this problem. When asked about her thoughts, Mrs. Pomahac replies, "I think it's right for kids...suspension is not the only way to suspend a student."

If there are any questions please contact Mrs. Pomahac or Mr. Castro.

## Freshman Play Impresses with Students' First Performance

By Jessica McCauley

Lights, camera, action! On September 15th Fenton High School presented their third annual freshman play, "The Emperor's New Clothes."

The cast had less than three weeks worth of rehearsals before they had to put their show in front of an audience. After the three weeks of long rehearsals, the small group of freshman stood in front of an audience to share their talent and inspirational message. This year, the Freshman and Fall Play were both inspired by the upcoming US presidential election in November.

In "Emperor's New Clothes," senior student director Emily



Photo by Jessica Jaloweic

Patterson and co-director Mr. Mitchell set a modern twist to the old tale.

"Our goal was to make parallels from the play to current events," Mr. Mitchell says.

"Sometimes people need to stand up for the truth, even if it makes them stand out or be ridiculed by the majority."

The cast had a blast practicing and performing their first high school performance. "They all were extremely dedicated and I couldn't have been more impressed with their performance," said Emily Patterson.

Mr. Mitchell encourages everyone to come and see the fall play, *The Election*, in October.



## Restucturing Concerns Teachers

By Julia Gainski

Recently, there has been a new transition that has drastically affected the teachers at Fenton High School. Departments have been combined into divisions and department chairpersons have been replaced by division leaders.

Previously, there were thirteen department chairs, and they were all in charge of curriculum development, budgets, and teacher evaluations. Currently, there are four division leaders to replace them.

In March 2016 a team of teachers met to represent the Fenton Education Association, including Mr. Mike Laudermith, Mr. Clint Porter, Dr. George Mussman, and Ms. Stephanie Downen. They met with a group of administrators representing the Board of Education who were Dr. Gayle Wahlin, Mr. James Ongtengco, Mr. Eric Koranda, Dr. Jill Kingsfield, and the school board's attorney, Mr. Anthony Ficarelli.

They negotiated on a new contract for the teachers, and the Board's team insisted upon the change.

"Fenton High School created a new Division Leader structure," Ongtengco explains. "The four new administrators serving as Division Leaders are developing processes and procedures to manage department budgets, evaluate teaching staff and enhance instruction."

Laudermith, who serves as the Fenton Education Association president in addition to teaching

science, states his opinion on the change and says, "I am reserving judgment on the transition to division leaders, until I and other staff have time to work with them and better understanding of how their roles will positively affect Fenton."

The reason for the transition stemmed from the administration's perspective that teachers should not be evaluating other teachers. However, the teachers that were conducting the evaluations last year felt that they were just as competent as administrators.

Since department chairs have been eliminated, most teachers view it as a tremendous loss because there are no longer experts in every single content area evaluating teachers.

Porter feels that this change also has to do with more centralized control of the district than previous structure allowed, stating, "I am concerned that not enough attention will be given to individual departments by division leaders, whereas in the past one person was totally invested in the well-being of each department and its curriculum for the benefit of students."

The Fenton faculty describes the change as a difficult transition, because a final contract was ratified the day before school began, which did not leave time to find, hire, and train candidates for these positions. In fact, the math, science, and academic research center department leader was just hired on Tuesday.



By Mariel Elope

## Upcoming College Visits to FHS

By Mariel Elope

During junior and senior years, students are encouraged to think about the future and where to go next. Many think about taking their education to the next level at colleges and universities.

There are many representatives that visit from colleges to talk to these students. These meetings are held in the counseling group room, at the ARC, or the community room and are a good way to see if you should go visit the campus and get more information about the potential colleges you'd like to attend.

There are over fifty schools that visit Fenton from community colleges to a highly selective private colleges. These visits are only a class period in length but students need to make up for the work they miss in class.

Some of the upcoming visits include University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign on Tuesday, September 20 at 11:05AM, Aurora University on Monday, September 26 at 12:00PM, Monmouth College on Monday, September 26 at 2:30PM, University of Dayton on Tuesday, September 27 at 9:30AM, and Purdue University on Tuesday, September 27 at 12:00PM.

To find out more, please check with your deans, counselors, emails, and your Naviance account where upcoming visits are updated regularly.

## "Magic" with Algebra Students

By Milijana Vasilic

In the 2015-2016 school year, Fenton witnessed the MAP scores of Freshmen Algebra I students skyrocket.

Typically Freshman students are expected to gain between two and three points on the MAP test. The freshman students certainly exceed that expectation by gaining 8.4 points. When asked, both Mr. Carzoli and Mr. Siple believe the use of technology in their classrooms is a catalyst for this increase.

By using Digital Mastery Learning on Chromebooks and Khan Academy, according to Carzoli they are giving students, "Multiple chances to reach success."

Digital Mastery learning was introduced in Algebra classrooms in the 2014-2015 school year. Both teachers admit to making some mistakes, but in the end it turned out to be a huge benefit to the students.

Siple knew the first year that, "Khan was something we had to expand on and continue."

Indeed, the continuation of Khan Academy and Digital Mastery Learning has proven to be a spectacular idea.

Although Digital Mastery Learning may be the "magic" for the increase in scores, Carzoli believes the real magic was, "That we found a way for students to reach their full potential."

Based on the previous experiences with Digital Mastery Learning in the Algebra I classrooms, it is safe to say this magic is bound to stay alive in the Algebra students this year.

## Marching Band Performs at NU

By Zoe Wilkens

Annually, Northwestern University hosts an event for their home opener football game. They invite about fifteen marching bands from high schools in the state to create the event that is known as Northwestern Band Day.

On September 3, 2016 Fenton High School's marching band was one of the schools that got invited to participate. Each year different high schools are invited and luckily for the past eleven years since 2005, Fenton has been attending NU Band Day.

During this football game all the marching bands from the high schools that get invited go out on the field during Northwestern's halftime show.

Garrett George, the director of Fenton High School's marching band, speaks about the event saying, "It's mostly an opportunity to get high school students to get college experience and observe a college

marching band."

For halftime the high schools get the amazing opportunity to play along with the Northwestern marching band. "It's marching bands basically from endzone to endzone," described Mr. George. Both, the high schools' marching bands and Northwestern's band play the same songs together. This year the songs that Fenton played along with were, "No," by Meghan Trainor; "Victorious," by Panic At the Disco; and "Shut Up and Dance," by Walk the Moon.

Ultimately, NU Band Day is a day where all the marching band students get to experience something that they may want to expose themselves to later on in life, just like Mr. George explains, "Whether or not the students will be pursuing music in college, it's about the students visualizing themselves with something they're familiar with after high school."

## Girls Swimming Sees Improved Times

By Emily Patterson

This year the girls' swim team has decreased in size by cutting quite a few people, but is still holding strong with its upperclassmen and new freshmen. The team has struggled as swimmers have come down with illnesses and experienced injuries. Even so, the coaches have already seen improved times in the swimmers and are expecting a lot from them.

Senior Cassidy Feddersen, who injured her leg last year, is now back in the pool. "I thought it would be hard," Cassidy said, "getting back into it having not been able to practice for so long." Despite setbacks, Cassidy recently took first place at a meet along with senior Jasmin Kon.

Senior Amanda Tazbazian also has seen incredible accomplishments, as she won a recent swimathon with a total of 130 laps in one session. The swimathons are hour long events held to help raise money for the team. The swimmers find sponsors to donate money per lap and then the swimmers swim as many laps as possible.

The team is looking forward to upcoming senior night, although it will be a bittersweet event. "I've been a swimmer on this team for four years," Cassidy said, "so I'm really looking to it."



# Boys' Soccer Works to Overcome Devastating Coaching Losses

By Gerardo Garcia & Paul Garcia

The soccer program has been rocked to its foundation as a result of losing several coaches this season. The loss began during the summer league when only a few games into the season, Head Varsity Coach David Alvarez delivered tough news to the team. The boys were shocked to hear that Coach Alvarez was being terminated not only from his Head Coaching position, but from the Fenton IT department as well.

"I was personally surprised, especially after they won regionals. I didn't expect it," said JV captain Andy Mena.

With no explanation, the team was left not only confused but outraged. "We wouldn't be mad if there was a reason. There really was no reason for such actions," said JV captain Pawel Jakubowicz.

The program then faced more bad news as just two games into the regular season both JV coach, Nick Falco, and assistant varsity coach, Tom Drazek, heavily-heartedly resigned. In a public letter of resignation the coaches stated that they felt the program was not only being failed by, but persecuted by the administration and the school board.

When asked for comment the school gave its official statement: "On September 2, Fenton High School received resignations from two soccer coaches. We remain committed to providing excellent

academic and athletic experiences for our students, and are confident that we can build upon the strong soccer program already in place by recruiting replacement coaches who share the high values and standards that our students and families have come to expect."

Sophomore and JV goalkeeper Carlos Popoca had this to say regarding the loss of their coaches: "Honestly I think it was a huge mistake to get rid of Coach Alvarez, and I don't blame the assistant coaches for leaving. The program is falling apart."

The new varsity coach, Jim Johns, who was hired from outside the school, is brand new to the program. As with any time a team receives a new coach, varsity practices have had a rough start but chemistry has been slowly building between the players

and their new coach.

"He's getting there. He's noticing what new things we have to work on. It's getting better and better each day," stated varsity captain Abel Carrera.

While upset about losing their head coach, the team has realized that in order to make the most of the situation, cooperation was necessary. "We have figured out that we are a good team and that we can move on and make this a good season," said varsity captain Gerardo Lopez.

The JV team has recently been assigned Coach Jake Chvatal, who was an assistant P.E. and track coach last year. Chvatal commented, "I'm anxious to get know my team as the season progresses. I'm hoping that I can not only teach and help the team grow, but that I can also learn something from my team. I'm excited

to become a Bison and can't wait for game day."

Since the program has been understaffed, Coach Victor Ruiz has been spread thin, dividing his time between coaching the JV and sophomore teams.

The two teams often practiced together when not splitting their individual time with Coach Ruiz. "He [Ruiz] is every coach in a way... the last thread left pretty much," said Jakubowicz.

The program has remained focused on their main goal: to play soccer and to win, but on top of that they have additional goal: to get the word out.

Jakubowicz said, "It's not even just about soccer. It's also about everything that's been going on with the teachers. We want to give a heads up to other programs."

Mena said that in order for things to get better, "They [administration] need to explain their actions from their point of view."

Since the beginning of the season, all teams are uniting and working through their challenges. The varsity captains still have high hopes for the future of the program.

"I think if everyone comes in and supports, like families and players try to come and support this program, I think it would still be a good program and I can see it being even better than now," said Lopez.



Photo by Jenny Marin

## Varsity Girls Set to Turn Hardwork Into Victory

By Karsen Idelman

With the recent summer olympics, Volleyball stars got the chance to play on their biggest stage. While at Fenton our girl's volleyball will still be wowing crowds of fans until late October.

The varsity team, made up of twelve girls, all sophomore, juniors or seniors is lead by Coach Mello and Coach Kleidorfer. The girls have had a solid season so far, that began with their summer camp and tournaments. The girls hard work and determination for the sport they love can be credited to their coaches. All summer and through the season the varsity players, junior varsity and freshman teams conditioned daily and performed countless drills at practice. The ladies practice 6 days a week with games, usually on Tuesdays and Thursdays, in addition to their four Saturday tournaments. When asked about the makeup and strength of team, Coach K said, "I am very excited about this team. The girls I have this year are extremely talented and dedicated to volleyball."

This year, only three sophomores were added to the roster and Coach Kleidorfer, who has been coaching for eight years, is very excited about her seniors. The two senior captains Paulina Milanowski and Natalia Skop have been with Kleidorfer all four years, as well as senior Maggie Rusiecka.

Senior Captain Paulina Milanowski and setter for the team is truly grateful for her chance to be captain and play with her eleven awesome teammates, "I have a lot of faith in this year's team. We have a team of 12 talented girls ranging from sophomores to seniors. We all connect so well on and off the court and I love playing with this group of girls. This is the best team that Fenton has seen in years. We still have a long season ahead of us and a lot of time to make improvements. I can't wait to see how successful we'll be by the end of the season. I am truly lucky to be ending my high school volleyball career with these girls and amazing coaches."

When asked what her favorite part about the team and this

year Krzyszkowski had this to say, "My favorite part about volleyball is the success of winning but also the chemistry that is built between your team when you click on and off the court."

Overall, the team this year is very strong, top to bottom, including the coaches. Kleidorfer loves volleyball, but loves coaching it at Fenton even more, "I love the intensity of the sport and the strategy of the game, especially at the Varsity level. My favorite thing about coaching is watching the girls' hard work pay off. I love watching their faces when I tell them that line is open and they get a kill with that shot or that the next play is gonna be a tip and they dig it right away. It is the best feeling to watch them succeed at something tough... My favorite thing about coaching at Fenton is the athletes. They are amazing young women that I am proud to coach." The volleyball program this year is stronger than ever and the girls have never been more ready to win.

## Homecoming Week 2016 Events At-A-Glance

**Theme:** Glow in the Dark

**Fri. 9/23:** Paint the windows from 3:15-4:00

**Mon. 9/26:** PJs, robes & slippers day; Class door decoration; Bubble soccer from 4:00-6:00 PM.

**Tue. 9/27:** Sports day; Hackie sack, spike ball in the courtyard during lunches.

**Wed. 9/28:** Black out day; Jamba Juice for sale during lunches.

**Thu. 9/29:** Twin Day; Powder Puff Football from 6:00-8:00 PM

**Fri. 9/30:** Orange & Blue Day; 12:08 dismissal; Homecoming Assembly from 12:15-12:45; Festivities in the stadium from 1:00-2:30; Parade from 2:30-3:30; Senior tailgate @ 5:00 PM; Football game (sophomores @ 5:15, Varsity @ 7:15).

**Sat. 10/1:** Homecoming Dance @ 7:30 PM