

The



Signal

The Official Newspaper of Fenton High School

Friday, February 26, 2016

Fenton Promotes AP Class Enrollment Through 'Rush'

By Julia Gainski

This year, Fenton has taken a tremendous step in promoting Advanced Placement or (AP) courses. Mrs. Georgakis, Mrs. Rajendran, and the EOS outreach team planned and hosted the AP Rush event on February 3rd, in the Community Room to advertise all the different courses in order to increase the AP enrollment, specifically with the underrepresented students.

To explain, the underrepresented students are those who have different minority backgrounds or students that qualify for reduced lunch and are capable of taking AP classes but do not have the knowledge of the benefits in taking them. The turnout for the event was fantastic as around one-hundred and eighty prospective students attended and explored the different courses offered.

AP ambassador Heena Amin who represented AP Calculus

BC stated her appreciation for the event, "I loved AP Rush! I think it's a great way to encourage students to push themselves further than they ever thought they could go. AP classes have made me feel college ready, and it was amazing to be able to help other kids feel like that way too."

AP Rush is part of larger initiative, in which equal opportunity schools increase access in equity in AP classes. The main goal of the event was to have current AP students share their experiences with perspectives in order to increase AP enrollment especially with underrepresented students.

Mrs. Georgakis expresses her intent and explains, "We are hoping that peer to peer outreach will make students feel more confident in taking AP classes, it's all about current AP students reaching out to others."

Another AP ambassador, Emily Patterson, a representative of the AP United States History, shares

her insight at the event and recalls, "I got to talk to a few students who were interested in taking AP US, and I was able to persuade them that it's a

fun class to take and you should not be worried to take it. I was also able to inform students that they were able to take the AP test for reduced cost."



Photo courtesy of Rachel Georgakis

Band, Choir Celebrate 90 Years of Collaboration

By Emily Patterson

On February 24th, the Annual Band and Choir concert will be performed in the Fenton auditorium. However, this year is special. This year's concert will be the 90th collaborative concert between Fenton's bands and choirs. In celebration, the music department is getting a blast to the past.

Ms. Casey, the choir director until 2007, when current choir director, Mrs. Williams, took over, recently returned to Fenton to talk about her time as choir director and work collaboratively with the three choir classes. Ms. Casey is responsible for establishing many of the annual choir traditions that continue

to today, such as the Spaghetti with a Song performance (coming up on March 13th), the performance of the Hallelujah Chorus at the winter concert, and the ever-loved performance of "Fame" in celebration of graduating seniors at the last choir concert of the year.

When Ms. Casey began working at Fenton in 1979, there wasn't even a swing choir; she established it in 1984 with only 16 people. The choir eventually grew, the largest group she ever had being 24 people; now, swing choir is made up of over 60 people. It was very fun to have Ms. Casey in class observing and talking to the class. She had a wonderful bubbly attitude and provided some helpful critiquing of the pieces that the choirs are preparing.

Mr. Lewis was the band director at Fenton beginning in 1962 and music department chairman in 1967, retiring only in 2003. Mr. Lewis was also invited to come back and work with the bands, however, he sadly passed away last June at the age of 78. Remembered and celebrated as a wonderful man and musician by the entire Fenton, Bensenville, and Wood Dale community, Lewis's memory will live on as the music students of Fenton continue to perform in the auditorium that bears his name.

Fenton's swing choir also invited alums to come perform with them at the concert, with 16 students from the classes of 1991 through 2015 joining the choir to perform.

The choirs and bands of Fenton are excited to perform in the Lewis-Huffman Auditorium and continue to celebrate the age-old tradition of music at Fenton.



Photo courtesy of Sereidy Williams

LGBTQ Community at Fenton

By Jack Martinez

This past summer, a huge step forward in gay gained with the legalization of gay marriage. Couples all over the country rejoiced and lined up to get married. However, the battle isn't over just yet. While this was a battle won for homosexual rights, the war over queer rights in general is far from over. There are still many cases of discrimination, especially in workplaces and school.

Here at Fenton however, things are a lot better. There's an amazing amount of support from staff and students in general and little to no aggression.

Junior Enoc Hernandez said, "I feel like it's overall positive" when asked how he felt Fenton and its LGBT community.

And it's true. Fenton has always strived to be a community where its members could prosper and the LGBT side is no different. Especially with groups like BRAVE and STUNT and counselors, LGBT students can feel a bit more relaxed knowing that they have the support of such a large group.

As sophomore Lexie Kiamco explained, "I mean the staff and students don't really care. It's a 'you do you' environment. They're supportive if you come out, but no one really does on a large scale, usually just to their friends and whatnot."

On February 11, BRAVE hosted an event during all lunch periods where those who participated went through a simulated coming out story. As they walked in, people were given stars that they then decorated and wrote the names of those who were important to them, dreams and hopes, dream jobs they wished to have, etc... on the points. Depending on the color of their star, the participants may have had to rip off those point or fold them to symbolize the possible hardships of coming out.

Mrs. Georgarakis, who attended the event said, "I thought it was an excellent activity that helped as much as it could to help you understand and empathize a student's coming out experience. Everyone has different experiences and this made me think about how brave our students are." She continued on, explaining that she had a red star and it made her realize what some have to lose by coming out. The experience also helped her empathize with a lot of what the students have to deal with.

We're kind of lucky at Fenton to have staff who are willing to learn and listen about how us students identify ourselves.

In fact did you know that if you're a transgender student, you can use the bathroom you're most comfortable with? Same applies for locker rooms. Your email doesn't match your preferred name? No problem. Talk to your counselor about it and it can be changed. School should be a place for learning, not someplace where you're judged for your gender or sexuality.

BRAVE Hosts LGBTQ Event

By Emily Patterson

On February 11, the students of BRAVE hosted a coming out training exercise for Fenton staff during all lunch periods. The students and staff gathered in the community room in the new cafeteria. The point of the exercise was to show Fenton staff what LGBTQ+ students can experience when they come out.

The exercise began with each staff member receiving a colored star of one of four colors and then decorating the portions of their stars to their likings. Then, staff were instructed to write on each point of the star a close friend, community they are a part of, close family member, dream job, and hope or dream. The staff were then taken through a story line, the color star they had deciding what happened as they-as an LGBTQ+ individual-came out. Some people were accepted by everyone they encountered, some were rejected by a few, but accepted by others, and some ended up with nothing but a crumpled, torn up piece of paper. This last group represented LGBTQ+ people who commit suicide-40% of all suicide victims.

After this activity, staff and students were able to ask some questions and discuss the activity and their feelings on it. Mr. Ongtengco, Fenton's principal, took some time to reinforce Fenton's message of love and support for all students, no matter their race, gender, or sexuality.

If you look around some of your teachers' rooms, you may now see a couple of new posters, simple pieces of paper with a collage of words or rainbow triangles-I know I've seen them. These signs are to let students know that the teachers that occupy these rooms want to create a safe space for students-LGBTQ+ or not-and that they're open to talk if any students ever needed to.

I know, personally, that I was ecstatic to see these posters on my first period teacher's door the next morning as I walked into class. It's amazing to see the compassion of Fenton's wonderful teachers, and it's even more amazing to know that so many safe spaces exist within the walls of the school.

New Learning Environment

By Julia Gainski

Thankfully, construction has come to a greatly anticipated conclusion as new areas such as student commons, cafeteria, ChromeZone, classrooms, multi needs room, academic research center, and guidance center have all been revamped and increased in space for better collaboration between students and teachers and learning purposes.

Mr. Ongtengco shares his opinion on the renovation and says, "I think it looks amazing compared to what we had and I tell the honest truth, the layout is fantastic, spacious, and the teens love it."

The planning for this extensive project began in 2013 as facilities committees comprised of Fenton staff and administrators, District 100 Board of Education members, parents, students and community members researched and developed a highly elaborate renovation plan. In the end, it truly came together as a community effort and an excellent space to spend time in after school.

Mr. Ongtengco also mentions

that the main goal of the project was that "Fenton needed a facelift, in order to create a better learning environment for our students that is modern and plain cool."

The soundproof Community Room is yet another new addition to Fenton and fits eighty students. Located in the cafeteria, it is used for staff meetings, the Latinos Outreach Program, and is available for any class to use.

Senior, Ellie Gonzales, provides her insight of Fenton's new look by stating, "I think the renovation is perfect for the new look for the school, it's a really cohesive learning environment for all students."

Coming soon, there will be a flat screen tv around seventy-two inches added in the commons area and will be placed to display Fenton's Twitter page, athletic page, and more social media accounts. Also down the road, Fenton is looking forward to opening the courtyard to students and possibly adding in a garden with furniture as well.

STUNT Talent Show Preview

By Allie Brzys

While most students attend Fenton's annual talent show, few actually realize the hard work that goes into all the performances that we view.

This year is actually STUNT's 10th year hosting the talent show. Acts range from dancing, singing and playing instruments. One of these include a duet by seniors Deanna Wiggin and Amairany Arzeta, who are both Dance Force members.

When asked about the preparation for the show, Deanna said, "It takes a lot of work to come up with the music and choreography. But the time is worth it once we're up on stage. It's a lot of fun and I'm excited to perform."

Amairany said, "Yes, I'm super excited because I get to dance a duet on stage with my best friends one last time."

Regarding the time put in, she then added, "We've been really busy with dance practice but when we get together we always manage to put a lot of effort into our moves and we make sure our music is A1."

Another performance includes Andrew Lake who is playing in a band. He said, "We call ourselves Lunova. Hours of work go into a performance that lasts just a few minutes."

To see these students, and many others, make sure to buy a ticket for the talent show on March 11th!



By Mariel Elopore

Chess Ranks 59th of 149 at State Tourney, Tomasik Awarded

By Ava-Clare Steed

Here at Fenton, our Chess Club and Team seem to be well on their way to being professionals! That's not to say that every student who joined began as a prodigy. Chess club and chess team are open to anyone with an interest in playing chess. However, there is a slight difference between being on the chess team and being a part of the club. Being a part of chess team is a commitment, with major reward in seeing the improvement through competitive games (every Thursday), and tournaments (about once a month- sometime during the weekend); whereas, participating in chess club is a more loose, relaxed environment where anyone is welcome to drop by during practice (Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:30 to 5:30 to play a game of chess, or learn the fundamentals of the game from the upper level students.

What makes chess club/ team stand out from the rest of extracurriculars at Fenton? They have secret handshakes, secret symbols, and even UFC!

There are two coaches and two student leaders (known as the General and the Admiral). Mr. Kekstadt and Ms. Downen make a wonderful team as supervisors of the group, each bringing to the table their own unique strengths; such as Kekstadt's tenacity and rigor in recruiting students of all skill levels for the team, and Downen's overall prowess in the game and a knack for teaching the essentials to anyone willing to learn.

This year's Admiral, a symbol of the most improved player both in skill and in character, went to Carlos Marquez. And General, the ultimate leadership position, was given to Sebastian Oleksy, allowing him to make a major decision for the roster at the State Tournament February 12th and 13th. The results of this decision won Fenton a victory over Leyden during one of the seven games between the two-day tournament in Peoria.

When the game against Leyden began, we were down 22 to nothing,



Photo courtesy of Stephanie Downen

but by the end, we had made a polar flip and won 46-22. The roster chosen by General Oleksy that helped to defeat our long time rival included: Sebastian Oleksy, Krystian Tomasik, Joseph Ghanimah, Carlos Marquez, and Dulce Garcia. Altogether, the Fenton Chess Team had 4 wins (defeating East Aurora, Glenbard North, Rockford, and Leyden) and 3 losses throughout the tournament, ranking the team 59th out of 146 schools.

However, there was an individual award given to sophomore Krystian Tomasik. He had 6 wins out of the 7 games, ranking him 5th on board 2 out of 146 players.

Qualifying Musicians Play for Metro Suburban Honor Band

By Gerardo Garcia

Fenton was able to qualify eleven musicians this year for the Metro Suburban Honor Band. The eleven musicians were Samantha Ward, Spencer Franke, Alexis Vargas, Alex Krynski, Christina Morales, Danielle Ferbrache, Ricardo Jesus Torres Gomez, Katie Bruce, Jacob Trzeciak, Julia Zawitkowska and Emma Coker.

Originally there were twenty five musicians nominated, Mr. George said that when being evaluated by a committee they were being looked at if "they take private lessons, have they received previous honors musically, have they achieved first chair placements, do they perform in outside organizations."

When Ward saw that she qualified she was simply "honored," and Krynski was "excited," not expecting to have accomplished the honor as a



Photo courtesy of Garrett George

freshman. However it wasn't really a surprise that any of the qualifying musicians were chosen as many are in multiple ensembles and or were in ILMEA. Coker even takes lessons for the violin, cello and the trombone!

Every musician has a different reason for putting in so much hard work, Krynski said "I don't really like settling for anything. I figure that if it's possible for me to do better, than I should." Alex also said, "Music is important to me because of the effect it can have on the people around me. It's the best feeling when you see someone smiling at the hard work you've put into your music." Similarly Coker said that she likes "to strive for excellence," and that "everyone is always surrounded by it (music) and it's, like, fun to be a part of it". Ward said she works hard because, "I want to do music for the rest of my life. It's fun, and it's something I like to do".

Ferbrache also plans to pursue music after high school, saying "I plan to become a professional French Horn player and get a degree in horn performance when I go to college."

Besides receiving a significant honor to put on their resume, the Honor Band members also performed their own concert with other Honor Band qualifiers at Ridgewood High School on the 16th. Before the concert Honor Band got to work with the North Western band conductor, Dan Ferris, and jazz musician, Tony Spada.

On that experience Krynski said, "The music was really fun to play and it was awesome meeting all these other kids that have just as much dedication and passion that I do." Ferbrache said, "The whole day is one great experience with so many lessons learned."

At the end of the day these exceptional student musicians were content with a concert well done and glad to have been rightfully recognized for their hard work.

First Semester Increase in Fights Likely a Result of Cramped Quarters

By Emily Patterson

Fenton saw an increase in fights this past semester. Ms. Pomahac believes that this increase was partly due to construction. "There were only so many places to go," Pomahac said. "Before people could avoid one another. Before, you knew you were going to see someone in the North hallway? Take the South hallway."

Now that there are more options and open spaces, Ms. Pomahac is hoping and expecting that the number of fights will decrease.

The consequences of engaging in fighting at Fenton are suspension with a minimum of two days and a maximum of five, as well as the high possibility of receiving a ticket for disorderly conduct. In the instance of a two-party fight, the parties will have to agree to peer mediation and come to an agreement with each other. As well, the two parties may experience a schedule change in order to not have them in classes with each other. If multiple fights occur that involve the same student(s), then that student can expect to be placed in an alternative school, which has already been the case for several students this year.

According to Pomahac, most fights that occur are avoidable. "Kids don't realize there are other options," she said. "Most fights are about rumors, hurt feelings, dating. What I hear a lot is 'we used to be best friends.'"

To any student that may be in such a situation, Pomahac says that the last thing the administration wants to do is add to the problem. In an instance like this, the cameras that we all know are everywhere in the building are often used to search for interactions between students that can be used as reason to call an aggressor down to discuss the problem.

In the case of a fight, if you're a bystander get an adult immediately. A common reaction that's been seen is videotaping fights as they occur. Videotaping fights in school is also against the law and will also result in a 2 day suspension. As a bystander, Pomahac warns to not intervene except by getting an administrator or other staff member. In the case of getting involved in a fight unwillingly in that another person throws the first punch, Pomahac says do your best to restrain the aggressor or get away. "The minute you throw a punch you get suspended too."

Speech Team: Conquering Fear One Competition at a Time

By Karsen Idelman

It is estimated that 75% of people suffer from speech anxiety, Fenton Speech Team is conquering that fear, one tournament at a time.

Many first year members such as, Alex Krynski, Gabe Aranki and Georgio Moran, had great success during the season, showing how exceptional the speech coaches here are at Fenton. Ms. Hendricks, who has coached speech for 12 years at Fenton, then 6 years before that at Elk Grove High School, has had a hand in the success of Speech Team for the past decade. She helps the students improve and refine their performances each week in preparation for the invitationals they attend.

Speech Team has been yet another team at Fenton that repeatedly attends the IHSA State Competition each year. "This year Spencer Franke returns to state in Original Comedy (an eight minute comedy he writes and refines with me", said Hendricks.

Junior Ripal Shah and Senior Captain Chelsea Cabanada missed advancing by a single point. Members also have another form of guidance that come in the form of Captains, four in total. Chelsea Cabanada has been a four-year member and two-year captain, of Speech Team. Cabanada has competed in almost all of the different types of events, but competed in Poetry and Original Oratory this year.

Chelsea enjoys speech and when asked what her favorite thing about it was she answered with this, "My favorite part of speech is being able to spend so much time with your friends. Yes we compete every Saturday, and even though we compete individually we still work together as one team. Between



Photo courtesy of Nicole Hendricks

rounds you can hang out and talk to friends, and if you have time you can even go to your friends round and watch them compete. I love how supportive the whole team is and how everyone wants everyone to succeed." Also, Sophomore Captain and two-year team member Nicole Rybak has competed in a variety of events, while she competed with Informative Speaking this year.

Speech has not only helped Nicole become a better speaker, but also made her come out of her shell, "Speech has definitely helped me throughout high school; I opened up so much more and I turned into a really outgoing person, as opposed to being shy for the last 14 years of my life."

Impressive Season for Girls' Basketball

By Julia Gainski

The girls' varsity basketball has had an impressive season with showing marked progress and dedication. Coach Anderson notes that the main focus has been on improvement of individual and team skills. The season's duration is from the first week of November until mid-February. Nevertheless, Coach Anderson is very proud with the level of growth the girls have shown since the beginning of the season.

It is his 29th season coaching basketball and 35th overall, he acknowledges the initiative the girls took and remarks, "their performance as a team is outstanding, and alongside from putting the ball in basketball, they treat each other with respect." Motivation for the games has been key for the season and Coach Anderson uses the quote said by Arthur Ashe as a barometer and to show his happiness for their solid performances knowing that it will get challenging, "Success is a journey, not a destination. The doing is often more important than the outcome." Throughout the season, the team's drive was to build confidence and consistently monitor improvement. Senior, Courtney Susmarski, reflects on the season and states, "Definitely wasn't what I expected but I wouldn't take any of it back." Additionally she mentions that Coach Anderson "helped me grow so much in the past four years."

This is Courtney's third year on varsity and has been leading the team with her scoring and leadership. A tremendous milestone for the team has been when they took second place at the Northside Prep Christmas Tournament. They had their most impressive win against the skilled Prosser team.

Girls' Bowling Team Wraps Up Season

By Gerardo Garcia

The Fenton girls bowling team was excited to send sophomore Katherine Prejzner and senior Shelly Laughlin to the sectional meet on February 12 after having placed 6th and 2nd at the regional meet. Coach Cassidy said, "They both peaked at the right time...Katherine bowled forty pins higher than her average and Shelly bowled twenty pins higher than her average...they both did a phenomenal job and bowled their best when it was most important."

Cassidy said the girls had learned a lot from Coach Janik and that the two team mates were "both willing to learn new things and try new things every day...they come to practice every day and work really hard." As a result of their work Katherine developed great accuracy while Shelly had consistency, which only makes it easier for the coaches to help her advance her skill. Katherine said that on the day of the sectional meet they "Weren't so sure how we would do, but we were pretty confident we had been practicing the week before, all week."

Though the pressure was high, Shelly enjoyed her last meet as a senior saying she "relaxed and had fun" while also watching "some pretty awesome bowlers" from Schaumburg. Shelly said that in the end the meet "was not my best, but not atrocious either... but we found it very fitting that I ended my career with the pin that is usually the hardest for me to pick up."

Reflecting on the sectional meet Katherine said, "I think I did pretty good but the competition was really tough," and as for the season as a whole she said, "as a sophomore I did pretty good. Practicing was fun, the meets were fun and as long as you tried your best it was great." Cassidy said, "Shelly had a great senior year, Katherine has two more years to get to the state level and we expect her next year to bowl even better."

Varsity Cheer Team Ends Season on High Note

By Julia Gainski

Consistent improvement, setting new records, and coming in first place as conference champs has been the ultimate highlights of the 2015-2016 Varsity Cheer Season. It has been Jamie Cademartori's first year as head coach and the team has shown an immense amount of growth alongside their numerous accomplishments throughout the season.

Coach Cademartori expresses her pride in the team as she states, "The cheerleaders and I had a blast. From our first competition to our last, we improved our score by over 15 points, which is unheard of!"

On top of making great advancements in their competitions another tremendous accomplishment has also been when the girls won the MSC West Division Conference Championship on Saturday, January 20th, hosted by Fenton. Significantly, it has been the first ever conference championship in Fenton cheer history!

Coach Cademartori's goals for the upcoming seasons involve rigorous improvements as she is determined for the team to score even higher, win another conference championship, and qualify for state. Additionally, she plans on expanding the program even further. Although the team practices during the summer, the season officially starts in beginning of fall and ends around beginning of February.

