

The



Signal

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Phase One of Fenton Makeover Nears Completion

by Julia Gainski

Good news! Fenton's construction is scheduled to be finally finished when students come back from winter break in January. In addition, the Board of Education plans on continuing to update different areas in the building as long as the funding allows.

At the moment, the plans are undecided for the next stage in the process. It is safe to say that Fenton's renovation is moving fairly quickly as the remainder of the construction project includes building a new student commons that flows into the cafeteria, a community room, a new ChromeZone, and 8 additional classrooms, explains Superintendent Kathie Pierce.

During the construction, there were a few small issues having to deal with electrical and steel work that needed to be done. A larger issue dealt with the gas line being disconnected for the first nine weeks of the school year, which initially caused the problem with being unable to use the gas in the labs for science classes. Thankfully, the gas is turned on now and science labs can go on as planned.

The Board of Education's vision to renovate was their desire to move to a 21st century learning environment and considering that Fenton is sixty years old, they plan on making the classrooms bigger for collaborating.

The Board also intends on providing an engaging and spacious learning environment so students can feel valued, trusted, and cared for.

Dr. Pierce says, "I am really excited about the new spaces opening up in January. I hope our students enjoy the new areas and treat the spaces respectively."



A view from the new student cafeteria.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Kathie Pierce

IMEA Auditions Fruitful For Bison Band, Choir Students

by Allie Brzys

To many choir and band students throughout Illinois, IMEA is one of the most prestigious and memorable experiences. However, many of us don't even know, or really understand, what IMEA is. IMEA stands for the Illinois Music Education Association. IMEA provides District and Statewide auditions to students for recognition.

Depending on their audition, students are selected to participate in elite ensembles. Fenton students audition for District 1, in which over 2500 students auditioned for earlier this year. Only approximately 150 are selected for each ensemble. Obviously, this audition process is very rigorous.

Students prepare several pieces from which audition material is selected. This audition consists of sight reading, scales, and etudes.

There are three ensembles, band, choir and orchestra. Once they are selected, the students no longer compete against each other, but they instead spend a day rehearsing as an ensemble to prepare for a large

performance. Furthermore, students are also able to be selected for the All-State Ensemble. All-State members are selected based on their initial audition scores or a re-audition at the District Festival.

Only the top scores from the entire state are selected for the All-State Ensemble. Every year, sophomores, juniors and seniors are allowed to try out. However, only juniors and seniors are eligible for All-State.

This year, the choir students selected were sophomores Madeleine Subach-Alto II & Jacob Trzeciak-Tenor II. (Jacob Trzeciak was also selected for trumpet). As a part of the orchestra, senior Spencer Franke-Bassoon was selected. For the band, sophomore Danielle Ferbrache-French Horn, freshman Alex Krynski-Alto Sax & junior Samantha Ward-Flute were all selected.

When asked about his experience, senior Spencer Franke, who qualified for the All-State Festival said, "It was amazing. I had a ton of fun, and it was awesome meeting other musicians."



Danielle Ferbrache, Alex Krynski, Jacob Trzeciak, Spencer Franke & Samantha Ward.

Photo courtesy of Garrett George



Madeleine Subach & Jacob Trzeciak

Photo courtesy of Seredy Williams

Tutors Available for Essay Help During Bison Time

by Ava-Clare Steed

Have you ever been given a writing assignment with a prompt so convoluted that you have absolutely no idea where to begin? Or maybe, you've been arduously trying to make an appointment with your English teacher to have him/her look over your writing, but to no avail? What do you do when you know that your essay is disorganized, unclear, or lacks any spelling or grammar proficiency? You need to visit the English Resource Center during Bison Time.

The English Resource Center is the place you want to be, fully stocked with peer tutors (who must have some affinity with English if they decided they want to give up their Bison Time to help out), and the likes of Mr. Escobedo, Mrs. Jackson, Mrs. Millman, and Mr. Oakson, all at your disposal.

Junior Emily Patterson, a current tutor in the English Resource Center, provided a more in depth

view of what actually happens during Bison Time. As a tutor, it is of the utmost importance to understand that you are agreeing to help a student work towards his or her goals. And for the students who are wary about seeing a tutor for help? Emily's goal is to become an English teacher in the future, and she, just like the other tutors, was handpicked to become an English tutor by English teachers.

In other words, you'll be in good hands.

Plus, it's much easier to complain about a prompt to a fellow student than the adult who gave it to you.

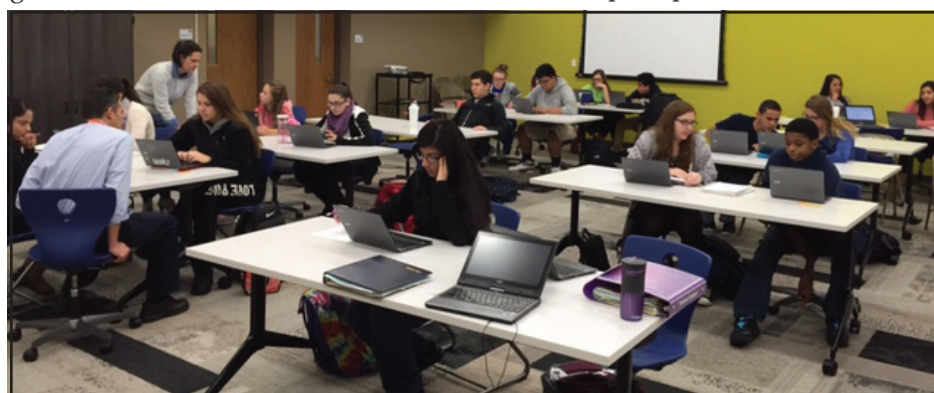
Mrs. Jackson, one of the English teachers who supervises the resource center and tutors, said, "Sometimes, we see that students are even better able to aide other students than one of us because they have a better understanding of how students might feel or be faster to recognize their misperceptions, and these older

student tutors are also familiar with a lot of the writing assignments because they completed them when they were underclassmen."

According to Emily, "There are 12 tutors, and there are usually 3 per day."

Let the 7 available people in English Resource Center be an assurance to you, that is, depending on the amount of traffic and time necessary per person, it is highly likely that a student who needs help will be able to receive one on one or very small group help during Bison Time. For the potential tutors out there: Emily would sum up that her overall experience tutoring has been positive and satisfying, and she is excited to continue tutoring, or take it one step further to become a senior mentor.

There is always the option to receive assistance in any essays, research assignments, or other English projects available to students here at Fenton during Bison Time at the English Resource Center.



Writing tutors assisting in the English resource center.

Photo courtesy of Patrick Escobedo

Student Council Blood Drive Donations Impact 100+ Lives

by Karsen Idelman

According to the American Red Cross although an estimated 38% of the U.S. population is eligible to donate blood, less than 10% actually do each year. Fenton student council wants to change that. On November 10th, 2015 student council held their annual blood drive.

A total of 73 people showed up to donate blood, but only 55 units of blood, donated to Heartland Blood Center, were collected. The other 18 were not able to donate because they did not meet all of the criteria for donating. Their iron levels might have been too low, or they may not have weighed enough. Being that each unit of blood can impact up to 3 lives, it's possible over 100 lives were affected by the drive at Fenton.

Mr. Porter, the student council Advisor, said, "Student council has long held the belief that we lead by doing. The blood drive is something that we believe needs to be done to benefit others, and that makes it a perfect activity for our group. On a personal level, blood donations have saved the lives of two family members close to me, so it is something that I am glad to continue doing."

Student council members helped set up, facilitate and possibly even donated. Senior and student council president, Heena Amin, worked for most of the day.

Amin said, "My favorite part of the day was working the blood drive because it gave me the opportunity to see many people donate blood to save other lives. We had so many donors, and the thought of saving those lives, is amazing."

While Rucha Shastri, Senior and student council secretary, said, "My favorite part of the day is definitely helping the donors once they've donated and asking them how their experience was. Many of the students have never donated before so it's interesting to hear what they thought and how they felt about the experience."

Students who donate are offered two community service hours. While student council members also receive community service for working as well. Although neither girls donated blood this year, they have in the past.

Shastri said "I volunteered to work the blood drive because first of all I love volunteering! But I especially like working the blood drive because it's for a really great cause and I love seeing how many people come out to donate!"

Amin likes volunteering at the blood drive for different reasons. She said, "I love making a change or being a part of one. Everyone who helped make the day so successful really made a difference whether or not they realized it. Only one donor has to donate to save three lives."



Chess Team Competes, Builds Camaraderie

by Sonya Martinez

This year chess team has some pretty ambitious goals. Coached by Mr. Kekstadt and Mrs. Downen, they aim to finish in the top half at state in February. They also plan to develop each player's ability throughout the year.

According to Coach Kekstadt, chess impacts academics in a positive way and at the very least teaches students about consequences as a result of actions (moves).

Ms. Downen says, "My favorite part of chess team is how much our team enjoys being together and how much fun they have while getting better at the game and representing Fenton in competition."

On chess team, schools in the top 8 play against other schools in the top 8. During each match, each player gets assigned a board. Depending on the board, the player has a chance of win a specific number of points. If the player wins, those points go towards the school's collective total.

For less competitive players, there's also chess club. A person can come as they like and simply get better playing against other students. It's more of a social club than a competitive team. Practices are on Monday and Wednesday while meets are on Thursday and Saturday.

While explaining the inner workings of the team and club, Coach Kekstadt mentioned a few interesting facts. For one thing, our new principal, Principal Ongtengco, played chess as a student. He also mentioned that our team is one of the more fashionable teams and may have even influenced ISH to mandate uniforms for state matches.

I asked a few members for tips for playing chess.

Senior Sam Saunders said, "In the words of Sun Tzu: 'Know yourself and know thy enemy and you shall win 100 battles,'" while another senior, Ryan Fagan merely said, "Bishop to d5."



Photo courtesy of Stephanie Downen.

Speech Team Racks Up Wins

by Allie Brzys

Most of us cannot even remember Fenton's Speech Team having a bad season in recent years, and this year is no exception.

When asked how the team is doing so far, head coach, Ms. Hendricks said, "The team is doing very well. We placed 3rd as a team at Huntley and that is how we kicked off our season."

During the team's first tourney, the team took 3rd place at Huntley High School. For the varsity team Senior and Captain Spencer Franke took 1st place in Dramatic Interp, 1st in Original Comedy, and

2nd in Special Occasion Speaking, meeting his season goal of advancing to finals in each event. He managed to do this in his first tourney of the year! The second tourney took place at Downer's Grove North High School.

In the novice division, first year members Alex Krynski took 1st place in Informative Speaking, and he also took 5th in Radio Speaking. First year member Joy Bullis took 7th place in Original Oratory. In these tournaments, only the top 6 make it to the final round in each of the 14 events, and the typical number of students competing in each event averages 70.

Furthermore, Ms. Hendricks said, "Overall, the coaches are very pleased as we head into the second half of our season. We only take the team to the most competitive of tournaments, and this team has the grit and determination to better themselves each year, which are exactly the qualities they need to compete in forensics."

When asked his opinion of the season so far, junior Enoc Hernandez said, "Speech is a fun way to meet new people and be able to see their insight and it is also a unique way to express yourself in a creative manner. Speech is a very rewarding activity. All of your hard work pays off."



Wheaton North finalists.
Photo courtesy of
Nicole Hendricks.

Veterans Speak to History Students

by Rina Focht

On Veteran's Day this year, all of the Intro to Soc and Military History classes had an opportunity to get a better understanding of what it was like to be a veteran. There were eight veterans, all with very different stories.

Kevin was the first veteran to speak. He joined the Navy right after high school, but while in combat, suffered a severe back injury. Tom, who was next to speak, was in the military as a part of the Airborne Infantry, and he moved on to be Staff Sergeant. Ralph went to boot camp right after school. He saw combat in one war, and was a part of the Army.

Arthur gave the troops the information they needed to do whatever it was they had to do while in combat. He was in the army from 1999-2007, and he began right after his daughter Iza was born. Roy was in the Marine Corps from 1965-69. After Roy came Tony, who was different in one way from all of the others: he was drafted into the Vietnam War in 1969 and stayed until 1971.

Henry was next, and he was a member of the Marine Corps as well. Henry had one thing that he made sure everyone listening heard loud and clear, "If you are planning on joining the Army in any sort of way, go to college first." Last but certainly not least, was the only female veteran we had the pleasure of talking to: Rebecca. Rebecca worked in Army Intelligence. While doing her job Rebecca made sure that all of the troops got to where they were supposed to be.

Tom's story really caught my attention. When he was in high school he had a really hard time. He was not getting good grades, drinking, doing drugs, and he kept getting caught in the wrong crowd. He thought he had hit rock bottom, and there was only one way out. Tom joined the military to get his life back together. He knew that if there was one place that he would be able to get back on track, this would be it. Tom made a complete recovery.

We had some questions, so we got to know a little bit more about them all personally. When we asked what kind of stuff they did when they had their free time, Roy said very loudly, "We aren't allowed to talk about that here!"

This was an enjoyable experience for students who go to hear these stories straight from the source and was a unique learning experience.

District 211 Controversy Sheds Light on Student Advocacy

by Emily Patterson

In recent years, there has been more acceptance for those in the LGBTQ+ community. All over the country, more and more people are able to be who they truly are and find acceptance in their friends and family. But even with this acceptance, people in the LGBTQ+ community still face more obstacles as a result of their identity.

One such obstacle that is now being addressed is that of transgender people using public bathrooms and locker rooms that correspond to their gender identity. Township High School District 211, a school district headquartered in Schaumburg, is one such place where this obstacle has become an issue.

A student who attends a high school in the district is male to female transgender and has been identifying as a girl for several years. While at the school, the staff has used her correct name and pronouns, changing them on school records, allowed her and other transgender students use of their identified gender, and play on the girls' sports teams. However, she has been using a private dressing area near the gym, instead of the actual locker room.

The student requested unrestricted access to the girls' locker room, just like any other female student would have, and she and her parents later filed a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights in late 2013 after being denied this request, the *Chicago Tribune* reported on November 5th.

After months of negotiation, the district recently put up privacy curtains in the girls' locker room as a solution. However, after learning the student would be required to use the privacy curtains instead of it being her choice, the organization that is representing the girl, the LGBT and ACLU was not satisfied. The director of the organization in a statement said that the school is still discriminating against the teen because it is saying that she alone is required to use the privacy curtains.

The school argues that her access is restricted to protect the privacy of the other students in the district and that students are not separated by gender but by physical anatomy. The LGBTQ+ rights organization backing the student argues the district's decision is in violation of Title IX, a federal law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex.

The courts ruled in favor of the student. As a result, District 211 will have 30 days to find a solution or else risk having their federal funding suspended or terminated.

Obviously, this is a steadfast, strong decision on the court's part, and could have sweeping effects on how other schools handle cases like this.

On Fenton's part at least, "Our school is already taking measures to protect the rights of the students. 'Fenton has counselors, social workers if they need them,' Superintendent Dr. Pierce said. 'We leave it up to individual students: everyone is different, has different needs. The staff call them by preferred gender and name, and support them like any other student.'"

Dr. Pierce mentioned Fenton students play on the sports teams with whatever gender they identify as. As well, Dr. Pierce and our principal, Mr. Ongtengco, mentioned how some of the staff and leadership team was able to go to a workshop on the topic. Both of them and additionally one of Fenton's social workers, Ms. Velez, all agreed on one general theme: no matter who you are, transgender or not, Fenton wants to support you in any way possible.

"I believe we have to listen to our transgender students," Mr. Ongtengco said. "We have to ask them, 'How can we support you? Are there any issues you want to share? What are your concerns?' In addition to listening to our students, we must provide them with academic and social-emotional supports, just like the rest of our students."

Dr. Pierce said, "It seems to me that teenagers are more accepting than the older generation: students wouldn't have had too many feelings about it; the adults are just passing their prejudices on now... A lot of schools have made different decisions. Now schools are probably getting more phone calls and complaints. This raised rhetoric that didn't need to be there."

Even though the decision that was made in District 211 may seem a bit harsh to some, Ongtengco had a very positive view on it.

"I think the decision will have a positive effect on students. It will demonstrate that transgender students' rights matter and are protected by the law."

State Brings XCcountry to an End

by Gerardo Garcia

Everyone was excited this year for the five Fenton state qualifiers.

The boys team came very close to qualifying as a team this year, but fell just short at sectionals. Luckily, three boys still qualified: Sam Hernandez, Cristian Sanchez and Jose Vasquez.

The girls team qualified two runners: Marisol Garcia and Jessica McCauley. The girls were even interviewed by the Bensenville Independent newspaper over their achievement!

Sam gave his insight into qualifying for state, saying "The excitement in the few days leading up to the meet might be filled nervousness yet it gives off a vibe of happiness and intensity like you just can't wait to start the race and give it your all. Its an opportunity to see the true passion in the hearts of the runners I have faced and teammates that have accompanied me along the way it truly is an experience to remember."

All the runners were proud to have earned their spots, but qualifying was extra special for Marisol.

"It felt like a dream come true. Ever since freshman year it was my goal to make it to state so when they called my name I couldn't believe it. It meant the world to me," she said.

Both girls also managed to beat their personal records with times under twenty minutes for the three mile course! Marisol also said, "I've never ran so fast in my life I felt so much pain but a good kind of pain, pain that showed how hard I was working."

The boys also ran good races but some weren't quite as satisfied.

After a stressful season along with some recurring health issues, Sam scored a bit lower than he was hoping. Sam said, "It wasn't what I expected to accomplish but it's a lost battle that I will use to fuel my future success."

Runner Christian Sanchez

was able to make his best time so far this meet.

He said, "My favorite part of the meet was the race and my favorite part of the race was the beginning and end. In the beginning I felt like I was flying and the end felt like I had finished, not just the race, but something I started months ago."

Coach Fritch said that they had been particularly impressed



with Cristian. "We were surprised by Christian and how well he ran throughout the year. We're glad he was able to finish very strong."

Marisol's favorite part was, having the support of her team. "Every time I heard one of my teammates cheering me on, because that's what helped me to push through the pain."

Jessica and coach Fritsch actually loved running on state course before the race (it's beautiful there by the way), and coach Norris loved seeing how happy the girls were to be there.

For next year all the runners hope to qualify again and do even better. They'd also like to sincerely thank their coaches and teammates who supported them every step of the way. Coach Norris would like to invite any girls interested in running XC, even if they don't have any experience running.

Padres Unidos Offers Parental Support

by Gerardo Garcia

Padres Unidos has been a group at Fenton for over a decade. Assistant Principal Mr. Castro says the group exists to "provide parents with information and resources."

Some of the resources and information are as simple as internet when meeting at the Bensenville library, or by giving contact information for Spanish-speaking administrators. The group also has their meetings entirely in Spanish, although bilingual parents are also welcome. At the meetings they discuss topics selected by the parents, which include depression, drugs, nutrition, financial aid, and communicating with their children among others. Parents can also suggest more topics to be covered.

Sometimes Mr. Castro presents at the meetings, and other times they have guest presenters like social workers, psychologists, and officers from gang units. These presenters provide great information and insight, and parents also learn from and support each other. Mr. Castro, with daughters of his own in various grade levels, swaps experiences and establishes connections with the parents at PU. The goal of the meetings isn't to tell parents how to raise their children but to help improve their relationship with them and to encourage parents to get involved with their student's education.

"The school belongs to the community, and we want them to feel comfortable here. There's also a strong correlation between parents' presence/ involvement at school and their student's academic achievement," said Mr. Castro. Padres Unidos is also open to parents who might have children in 8th grade and want to get a jump on high school life.

Students are encouraged to tell their parents about Padres Unidos, there is no membership involved so parents can come and go as they please. There is also a babysitting service available for parents that may need somewhere safe to leave their younger children while attending PU (these positions are open to students for community service hours).

Help Pack the Place Tonight

by Julia Gainski

Mark your calendars for this Friday, December 11th and come to Pack the Place sponsored by Bison Buddies at 7:00 pm and support the Special Olympics basketball team.

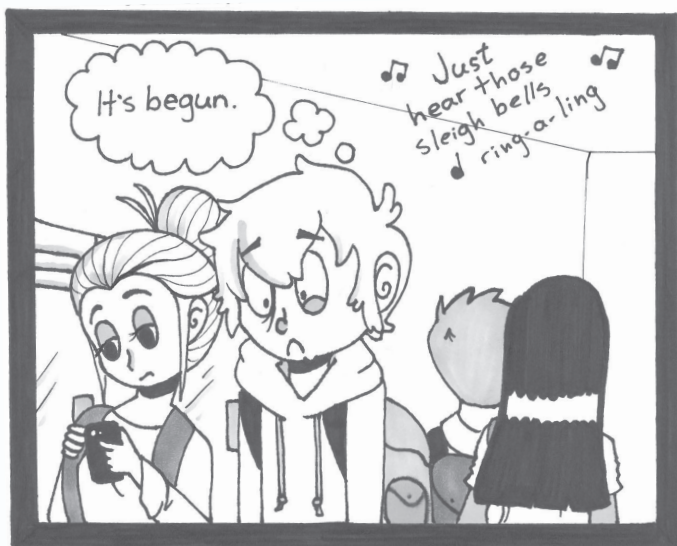
There will be a bake sale and an event called "split the pot," which is when raffle tickets are sold and later during the game a raffle ticket is chosen and the winner receives half of the money that was made from the entrance. In the past, Pack the Place has been a very successful fundraisers.

The Bison Buddies club sponsors this fundraising event, but many students might not be aware of what Bison Buddies does here at Fenton.

Bison Buddies is a club that was established around three years ago and is run by Ms. Wysopal and Ms. Weegar.

General education and multi-needs special education students are paired up. Bison Buddies meets once a week during lunch and twice a month both inside and outside of school. The fun activities done outside of school have varied locations and include baking cookies, watching a movie, and going bowling.

Bison Buddies has made a remarkable impact on its members by giving them skills and making connections with students that they may have not made on their own. The program positively affects Fenton by allowing students who normally do not participate in clubs like these to do so.



by Kristen Borshell

Boys' Wrestling Working Hard, Improving

by Amber Azim

The wrestling season has recently started, and the boys are already working hard.

Coach Hastings stated, "The boys have been working hard and improving."

Big turnouts this year for freshmen: 22 boys joined this year who are ready to win. The coaches this year are Coach Hastings, Coach Chappell, Coach Butz, Coach Butz, and Coach Manganiello.

Coach Hastings also stated, "We have great leaders." The captains this year are

Sebastian Kaspar, Ryan Mencini, Angel Nava, and Dylan Butts.

Mr. Hastings has been coaching for 18 years and has been coaching at Fenton for the past nine years. Last year the team had 17-4 season and won conference, they are ready for another great year. The Fenton wrestling team had their first meet on Tuesday, November 24.

Great job to Nikko Castaneda, Dylan Butts, and Sebastian Kaspar with a win at their first meet this season!