

BAND
Dominic Valenti

Band Director Jim Miller has many reasons to compliment Dominic, who participates Revolutionists, Wind Symphony and Marching Band. “He is without question a strong leader in our program. He was a section leader for the drum line and was very instrumental in their success this season in the absence of any drum line instructor,” says Miller. “His character and commitment to the program have made him a role model for all. A tireless worker with an extremely positive can-do attitude makes Dominic an easy choice for this honor.”

In addition to the mentioned ensembles, Dominic, a senior, is in back-up bands for WHS Show Choirs, and Slice of Jazz, and is a member of the jazz combo KSR. Along with playing instruments (including guitar and harmonica), he enjoys many modes of transportation: flying airplanes, driving his car and riding his motorcycle. His family includes parents Corri and Brian and younger brother Anthony. He also has a turtle named Doug.

One memory that stands out for Dominic was in spring of 2010 at the Iowa Band Masters Association. “Upon finishing our performance, the Wind Symphony received a standing ovation that lasted over five minutes,” he recalls. After graduating this spring, Dominic is probably going to Utah State to study Aeronautical Science.

For younger performers, Dominic suggests, “Enjoy it while it lasts because it’s over before you know it. Also make good decisions because they will affect you the rest of your life.”



TECHNICAL THEATER
Talia Ciemnoczolowski (White)

“Talia has been rock solid dependable all year long,” remarks Technical Theater Director Bill Lammers. “She came into this year working props and on the set for Little Shop of Horrors, and co-stage managed The Wizard of Oz, with its huge cast and complicated set. She has been a constant presence when we've needed people to set up for special events and assemblies, and her work backstage as a show choir techie has been invaluable to the new vocal staff. We really rely upon her a lot, and she has never disappointed.”

In addition to her involvement in technical theater, which she has been doing since 6th grade, Talia is in the Color Guard and on the Bowling team at WHS. Outside of school she enjoys hanging out with friends and family, listening to music, attempting to knit, going to church and being involved with the youth group there. Talia has been a Girl Scout since 1st grade. Some interesting information she shares that most people don't know: “I really want a dog. I loathe feet. I'm addicted to sunglasses, EOS chapstick, and watermelon. I just got my driver's permit when I turned 18. I am kind of crazy...but most people know that.”

Talia had a difficult time choosing just one special memory. “A couple of mine are when I got to make the house fly across the stage in Wizard of Oz or when the techies got to dress as nuns for Nonsense.” She also enjoys getting to know new people, all of the little inside jokes, and having the satisfaction of knowing the show won't go on without the efforts of the techies. “Mr. Lammers in general is a favorite memory. I mean, he is awesome,” adds Talia.

Although she is currently in a Kirkwood nursing class, Talia plans to attend UNI to double major in Secondary English and Theater Education. “I'll be an awesome high school teacher!” she boasts. Her family includes parents Mark and Kathy White and two younger brothers, Colin and Adam.

Talia, who met a lot of her closest friends through Performing Arts, encourages younger performers to get involved ASAP. They shouldn't obsess over being perfect but just do their best and try new things. “On top of homework and everything else, you will get stressed out, but there is a difference between that and overwhelming yourself! So either suck it up or learn to only participate in what you can handle,” she says. “As cliché as it sounds, enjoy and appreciate everything in high school, because it's what makes you, you (good or bad). Oh, and don't throw scissors, especially around Mr. Lammers.”



DRAMA
Gabby Hughes

Drama/Speech Director Carrie Tinkham praises Gabby for her efforts at WHS. "She has worked tirelessly this speech season, not only on her own events, but also has worked with helping plan and organize state speech contest. She is always willing to lend a hand to help, and sets an excellent example for younger students that hard work and dedication really does pay off!"

Gabby is a senior and is involved in Show Choir and Speech at WHS. She has always loved acting and singing. Outside of school she says, "I enjoy writing stories to get my creative juices flowing, but to calm myself down, nothing is better than curling up with a book in front of the fireplace." Gabby's family includes her parents Teresa Smith and Greg Hughes.

A special memory for Gabby was during speech night her sophomore year. "I think that is when I fell in love with the Drama Department here at WHS; being able to watch everyone doing what they loved." Last year she considered going to another high school, but once she shadowed there for a day, she remembered why she loves WHS so much. "People truly care about who you are and if you succeed," says Gabby.

Next year Gabby plans to attend UNI to major in Biology. She hopes to stay involved in the Fine Arts through theater and choir.

For younger performers, Gabby emphasizes to never stop trying. "I can't tell you how many times I have not been chosen for the part that I want. If this is what you love doing, never stop doing it,"



CHOIR
Clayton Willett

Clayton is a senior who participates in Momentum, Madrigals, Concert Choir and is co-president of Slice of Jazz. "He is a leader in the bass section, with phenomenal talent," praises Choir Director Peter Westphelan. "Clayton brings a positive attitude to each rehearsal and is an excellent role model for the other students."

In addition to his involvement in choir, Clayton is also in Aadastra and WHS Soccer. Outside of WHS he enjoys listening to music, playing his acoustic guitar, working out, camping and hiking. He admits that he wishes he were in an Indie Rock Band, specifically Fleet Foxes or Vampire Weekend. His family includes parents Alfred and Lori and an older sister, Amy.

His golden memory took place at the American Choral Directors Association conference in Chicago last year. "It was such an amazing experience with the best possible people. I miss our performance there and wish I could relive it," remarks Clayton.

"I'm definitely going to college but haven't narrowed down my choices yet. I'll probably continue singing as a hobby," says Clayton. He has been accepted to University of Iowa, Nebraska-Lincoln and Minnesota-Twin Cities.

Clayton advises younger performers that are passionate about singing to really pursue it. "Listen to music that you are interested in and try to make music that makes you happy or fits your interest," suggests Clayton. "Music isn't about hard work, but instead creativity and how far you're willing to go to enhance your abilities as a performer."