

Spirit of Christmas Music Conquers Flu Menace ...

A.K.A ...'The Case of The Counterfeit Santa' overcomes G-Bola in Groom

▲Author and Illustrator...

"One of the best parts of Christmas and of teaching Cari Weinheimer is making her Christmas card list," English teacher Mrs. Lisa Roskens said. "Because you know you are going to receive a one-of-a-kind illustration complete with her one-of-a-kind humor."

Senior Cari Weinheimer wrote numerous reviews, articles and stories for The Times of The Tiger online newspaper during her time at Groom School. The review on the next page that accompanies this Cari Weinheimer Christmas Card is one that she wrote for this year's elementary Christmas musical, which allowed the Mid-Point sixth-graders to lead those kindergarten through fifth-graders, who were still "Starting from Square One," in putting on an annual production, under the direction of Mrs. Melanie Britten.



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Dec. 11, the Kindergarten through sixth-grade students performed the annual Christmas program. For the audience, this event began at 6:30 p.m., but for the students the production started weeks ago.

"They've been working hard," director, Mrs. Melanie Britten said.

But, all the Lysol in the world couldn't contain the flu epidemic that had lurked the school halls. (Though, we did try this approach.) The flu, a.k.a G-Bola, had taken a hit on the performers. In fact, the week before the performance, 26 students were out sick.

"We didn't even know who would be here," Mrs. Britten said. Despite the numerous odds, the resilient performers overcame G-Bola and put on "The Case of the Counterfeit Santa." Before the main performance, Christmas songs were sung, and recorders played.

Following the last melodic squeak of the recorders, intermission ensued. Students hurried to their classrooms to put on costumes

(though, I'm sure no hallway rules were broken during this process), and tip-toed as quiet as mice behind the velvet-red curtain. (That is, if mice were 50 times larger and were wearing belled-shoes.) Once the lights dimmed, the opening credits rolled in (literally), and the curtains pulled back to reveal a scene full of color, bright eyes and rosy cheeks (which might be partially due to the lingering G-Bola.) From the very beginning, the students' excitement and energy foretold that "The Case of the Counterfeit Santa" was going to be nothing short of amazing. After the opening song, the audience met the villain of the story, Counter Claus (played by Zander Mays.) Judging by Counter Claus's black cape, sinister laugh, and mustache (sorry to all you mustache-growers, but this is an iconic symbol for villains), we knew he planned on causing problems for Santa Claus (played by Braedon Williams) and the gang. The conflict of the story

was introduced right off the bat, as Counter Claus wreaked havoc throughout Santa's workshop. Santa's Carpenters (played by the Kindergarten and first-grade classes) were the first affected by Counter Claus's evil scheme to ruin Christmas. The Messenger Elves (played by Tanis Terbush, Tre Byers, Colby Linquist, Graci Treadwell, Shawn Meaker, and Mallie Williams), kept Santa informed of all the growing problems. The next victims were the Kitchen Elves (played by the second and third graders), the Toy Wrappers (played by the fourth- and fifth-grade girls), and finally the Stable Boys (played by the fourth- and fifth-grade boys.) Santa Claus was concerned that they might have to cancel Christmas because of all the bickering. Fortunately, Mrs. Claus (played by Aubrey Ritter) helped Santa realize that 'they had a problem that needed figuring out.' Bright Eyes, the detective elf

(played by Gunner Lamb), investigated the situation. After a thorough search, Santa announced that there was only one plausible solution for defeating Counter Claus — Cheer Gas. Now before you jump to conclusions, nobody was 'gassed' during this play (though there for a minute, I was sure we would be 'Cheer Gassed'). However, there was an abundance of silly string (a.k.a Cheer Gas.) The "gas" had a dramatic effect on Counter Claus, who was suddenly overwhelmed with Christmas spirit and joy. The performance ended with one final song as all the arguing parties made amends, and Christmas was not canceled. At the end of play, everyone sang "Silent Night," the traditional finale. Overall, it was an excellent evening with community, entertainment, and a few suppressed coughs (maybe a few more than a few.)

-Cari Weinheimer

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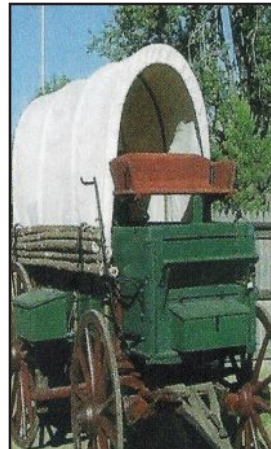
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