



# THE BEAR FACTS

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BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

APRIL 2017



## Back on top: Bears win big at TCSIT

By Camille Sunshine

Although they had less time this year to prepare, Brentwood Christian's high school team won first place at TCSIT by over 80 points on April 6-8. Seventy-two of students in high school and middle school competed at the annual academic tournament in Abilene, and this is the second time the high school has won in the past four years.

"We have a reputation of winning," school coordinator Kaleen Graessle said. "And I was so pleased with the way our students handled themselves."

Graessle told her students to live by the rule from the TAPPS bylaws: "Win without boast, lose without bitterness."

Even after losing prolific TCSIT scorer Andrew Armstrong (Class of 2016) and not placing in the one-act play, Brentwood's high school team managed to beat the other teams by



photo: Kaleen Graessle

**One last time** BCS seniors who competed at TCSIT and helped lead the school to victory reach out to grasp the trophy.

a huge margin.

Senior Gabie Nguyen took first in calculator and fourth in number sense; classmate Yunxi Wei earned gold in comprehensive math and silver in number sense. Brentwood also got third in team math, which consisted of Wei, juniors Benjamin Helyer and Linh Bui, and senior InYoung Choi.

Bui also took first in number sense, second in calculator, and third in comprehensive math. Choi placed fifth in physics, and Helyer took first in comprehensive science and fourth in calculator. Senior Uyen Phan won physics and came in second in news writing and third in comprehensive science.

Freshman Noah Joseph (geometry), sophomore Micah Best (chemistry), and juniors Alex Sass (photography) and Kaitlyn Baird

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## Seniors take in Italian history, culture, gelato

*Twenty-seven members of Brentwood Christian's Class of 2017 spent their spring break on a tour of the historic and picturesque country of Italy. The following is Mary Womack's account of the numerous adventures the group enjoyed during the 10-day trip.*

"Buongiorno!" The voice of our tour guide, Stefania, rang out as we boarded a bus outside the Milan International Airport. And despite our sleepy eyes and jet-lagged brains we excitedly looked at the surrounding Alps as our journey to Venice began.

On our bus ride to Venice, we discovered that we would have the opportunity to take a short break in the town of Verona, which is the setting for Shakespeare's literary masterpiece *Romeo and Juliet*. After arriving, we grabbed a quick lunch and went on an abbreviated tour of the quaint town. Some of us were even able to see a balcony representative of the one where Romeo wooed Juliet in the play.

We arrived in Venice and settled into the hotel before taking the ferry to the main island for supper. The following morning we boarded the ferry once again and headed to an

see **ITALY**, page 8



photo: Nick Dunagan

**Good times** Nick Dunagan and friends enjoy a gondola ride on spring break.

## Helyer, Wei lead BCS to first in TAPPS

By Uyen Phan

Weeks of training have finally paid off for BCS students as they took first place in this year's TAPPS Academic 4A Championship on April 4-5 at the Waco Convention Center.

After the first day of competition, the Bears ranked fifth but were only one point away from third place. After a series of decisive wins, Brentwood climbed to first place with 90 points overall, beating the second place team, McKinney Christian, by nine points.

"We jumped to a very big lead with the writing events," this year's TAPPS coordinator Kaleen Graessle said. "Really, it was a bit nerve wracking to see the point totals."

Brentwood had 22 students competing in 16 events this year. Senior Khue Tran won ready writing, while junior Khang Phan placed fourth in current events. Juniors Kaitlyn Baird and Katie Griffith placed fifth and eighth, respectively, in social studies. The BCS yearbook ranked fifth.

In oral events, senior Camille Sunshine won third in solo acting with her performance of Neil Simon's "Lost in Yonkers." Sunshine's and freshman Lorenzo Rivera's reenactment of "My Life is Proof" took fifth place.

This year's math events were expected to be more of a challenge for the Bears with the graduation of renowned math genius Andrew Armstrong. However, Graessle expressed little concern on this.

"I remember when we questioned, 'How are we going to do without Matthew Gardner (Class of '10)?', and before that, how are we going to do without other people?" she recalled. "With the number of people successfully competing in math and science events, it's obvious we are still doing well."

Indeed, junior Benjamin Helyer and senior Yunxi Wei took the math events by storm. Helyer placed first in calculator and third in number sense and mathematics, while Wei won number sense and advanced math and

came third in calculator. Helyer also took second place in comprehensive science. Together, they earned more points (56) than nearly three-fourths of the schools competing.

Helyer's 30 points was the highest individual total in 4A this year.

Graessle said the after-school math training sessions with Armstrong's father, David, and the new Competition Math class helped a lot.

"I'm excited about next year, because there are some students who were not eligible for TAPPS because they only started at Brentwood this year, who would have done really well," she said.

The leadership of this year's competition was transferred from science teacher Michelle Mallett to Graessle. Being the coordinator of TAPPS and TCSIT, Graessle shared that she had to juggle between tasks with both events happening during the same week.

"I learned a lot this year, and I am thankful for the things Mrs. Mallett had in place," she said.

*With a Nguyening Smile:* Gabie Nguyen

# Healthy habits 101: Get more sleep

"I got about four hours of sleep last night. Pretty good, for me at least," mused my friend.

She smirked with the classic air of teenage regret and nonchalance. Another classmate stared at her with a barely disguised look of horror.

"I have to get at least nine hours. I go to bed around 9:30!" she exclaimed. There was a chorus of wistful, envious, and surprised responses from the seniors in Government.

We have this exchange often:

"I slept for like three hours last night."

"Ugh, same."

Sometimes the conversation is followed up with "Didn't really get breakfast. Oh well."

No one really bats an eye during such conversations; they, too, relate.

So here's the million-dollar question: Why are such unhealthy habits normalized, even encouraged?

Sometimes, an all-nighter is necessary to complete your tasks. Is it the first solution we should turn to? No, but sometimes you have to put in that Fdcosθ (work) to get a good grade on your Physics test, and the ungodly hours of the morning are the not-so hallowed ground in which you perform your sacrifice of sleep. It happens. Still, there aren't Physics tests every day, and yet we have an epidemic of tired high schoolers.

Perhaps the problem lies in the culture of achievement. "Colleges love to see extra-curriculars!" we are told. So we rehearse for our plays, train for our games, volunteer and give back to our community – sometimes out of our own passion for our interests. Colleges

also like to see excellent test scores and a stellar GPA. So we study, we pore over our notes. And as youths, we like to socialize. The opportunity cost of the previous activities is too valuable to miss out on, so what's cut out? Sleep. Breakfast. Your skincare routine. You get the idea.

Maybe the problem is in the length of our days. Sure, we're accustomed to a Terran day-night cycle of 24 hours, but what if we're on a planet in which a day is longer than 24 hours?

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*As students, we should not be going to school exhausted or hungry because we decided that our grades were more important than our health.*

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All joking aside, everything requires time, but it's easy to get so caught up in the quest for stand-out credentials that we forget that we are mortals who need to rest. There isn't currently a device that allows the user to transcend the boundaries of time, so we resort to a cheaper and tastier short-term solution: coffee.

The National Coffee Association (NCA) held a convention in Austin, where the results of the 2017 National Coffee Drinking Trends report (NCDT) was released. The study showed a dominant trend of increased coffee consump-

tion across age groups, with the youth leading the way. The NCA also released a second study focusing on the coffee drinking habits of Generation Z (ages 13-18) and found a growing trend of increased "gourmet" coffee consumption ("Gourmet" being loosely defined as non-instant Arabica coffee found in K-cups, bagged coffee found in grocery chains, and coffee served in local and chain stores).

You don't need a study to see the ubiquity of coffee culture. Check social media. Walk into a Starbucks. Coffee culture has spread to the youth – even middle school students. I'm not denouncing the evils of this wonderful caffeinated beverage. I like coffee as much as the next person. Coffee, however, is not sleep. Caffeine is merely a stimulant and not a substitute, which is something we forget in our hyper-aware state after consumption. It is unicorn's blood, "and you will have but a half-life, a cursed life." Dramatization aside, caffeine dependence and withdrawal are very real phenomena.

In our quest for success, to live as fulfilling of a life as possible, we forget to take care of ourselves. As students, we should not be going to school exhausted or hungry because we decided that our grades were more important than our health. And don't get me wrong: Grades are extremely important, coming from the perspective of a senior with high aspirations. But grades aren't worth getting sick over.

Take time to take care of yourself. Start healthier habits now. Success is not worth sacrificing your health for. Everyone's situation with regards to how they treat themselves is unique, but the first step to fixing something like a lack of sleep is to acknowledge its presence.

## THE BEAR FACTS

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The Bear Facts is published monthly by the journalism classes of BCHS. The paper is a learning tool which informs the student body while teaching students to become critical observers of their environment and to validate Truth within the context of the Christian world view.

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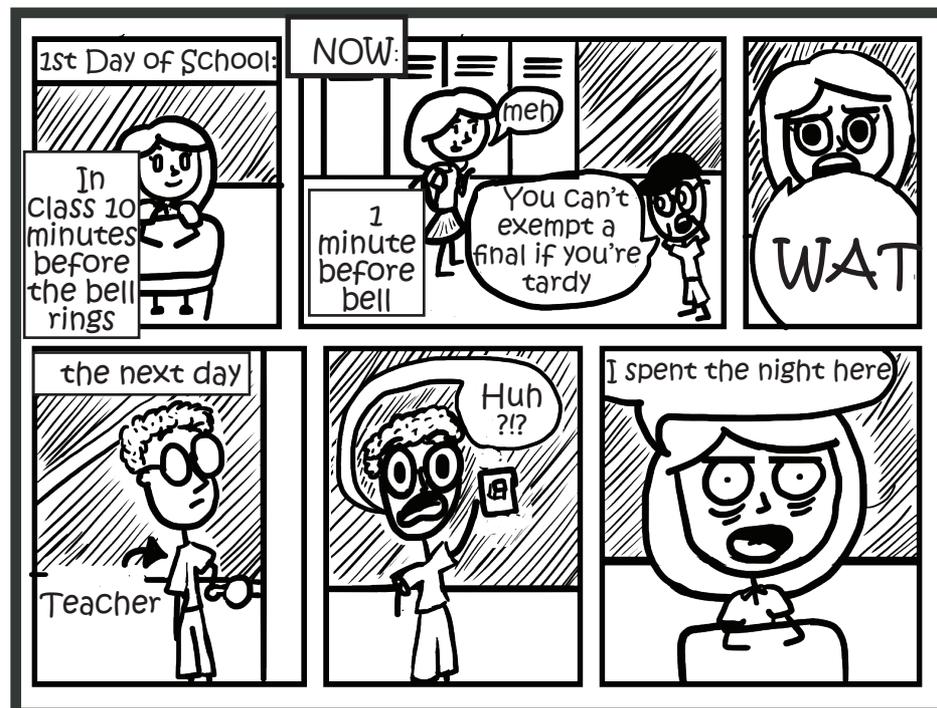
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The Bear Facts is available online at  
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## THE DEAR EDNA COLUMN

by the lovely Ms. Edna

**READER:** Why is a root beer float called that if it doesn't float?

**EDNA:** Because when you're done it's a root beer sink.

**READER:** Why is mac & cheese so good?

**EDNA:** Probably the loving tears the Kraft employees cry into each and every box.

**READER:** What's the deal with dabbing?

**EDNA:** It's the physical manifestation of every poor choice put into one convenient motion.

**READER:** How do I get a significant other?

**EDNA:** Gather acorns, the tears of your enemies, and a single red Skittle, and place

these objects into a crystal goblet. At precisely 3:28 a.m. when the full moon is out, shake the goblet three times while whispering the *Friends* theme song, and you will find a result of sorts.

**READER:** On a scale of one to ten, what is your favorite color of the alphabet?

**EDNA:** Please review your dictionary before trying to form a question.

**READER:** How tall are you?

**EDNA:** Are you a cop? I told you, you have no proof!

**READER:** How can I buy a panda?

**EDNA:** Well, buying or smuggling one is probably out of the question. Try finding a pale boxer with two black eyes.

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# U.S.S. Lexington tradition continues

By Kaitlyn Baird

The flight deck crew waved in the approaching pilot as he prepared to land aboard the U.S.S. Lexington. However, it wasn't World War II naval officers on the deck of the aircraft carrier. These were BCS fifth graders on their recent field trip to the U.S.S. Lexington, bringing imaginary planes in for a safe landing.

The students left on March 29 for their annual overnight trip to the U.S.S. Lexington in Corpus Christi. The Lexington trip is one of Brentwood's most memorable field trips, and students and parents alike counted down the days.

"It was great," fifth-grader Joy Wilson said. "I really liked it."

There were 48 students on the trip, accompanied by 47 parents and fifth-grade teachers Cynthia Davis and Paul Morrow. The group left at 8 a.m. and arrived at around 12:15 p.m. The fun learning experience began shortly after their arrival with a flight ops tour on the flight deck of the ship.

During the tour, some students were assigned specific jobs on the ship that people from World War II would have had. They got to act out and go through the motions of that job. The students also had the opportunity to sit in the cockpit of a plane.

A scavenger hunt around the Lexington was another popular activity students experienced. Fifth graders explored the hangar deck and

learned how to navigate their way around the ship. The students had to go to different locations and answer questions based on where they were on the ship.

Fifth-grader Abigail Munoz said her favorite part of the trip was the scavenger hunt. She explained that she enjoyed taking a tour of the boat and going to different places.

To find their way to each place, fifth graders were given the "shipboard address" of the different locations. The first number in the address was the deck number, the second number was the frame number, which told whether the location was closer to the stern or bow of the ship, and the last number was for the sides of the ship.

Fifth-grader Amare Whitney said he also enjoyed the scavenger hunt, and it was overall a great trip.

"I learned about different people in the war and different groups," Whitney said.

The group also took part in the morning and evening colors on the aircraft carrier, which are U.S. Naval ceremonies in which the American flag is put up or taken down. A few of the students got the opportunity to help take down the flag in the evening and put it back up the next morning.

After a devotional led by some of the fifth-grade boys, students went to bed in bunks in the Lexington's sleeping quarters.

"It was no worse than sleeping in my own bed," fifth-grader Landon Hejl said.

After morning colors and breakfast the next day, the fifth graders headed to the Texas State Aquarium nearby. Students got to look into

see **FIFTH-GRADERS**, page 8



photo: Cynthia Davis

**Simulation** Julia Wilson (front) and Darin Fowler learn to direct airplanes onto the U.S.S. Lexington during their field trip.

## Band, choir sitting pretty at TAPPS state

BCS high school band and choir students competed at the TAPPS 4A vocal and band solo and small ensemble state championships on March 29 at St. Mary's University in San Antonio.

While both did well, Brentwood will have to wait until after large group competition later this week to determine their state rank.

"Nobody's won anything," band director Travis Pollard said. "We're at halftime right now."

But the halftime score looks pretty good for the Bears. The band submitted its most entries ever at 28 total events. The choir ranked first overall and had 18 students and one ensemble earn a superior, or "one," rating.

Pollard noted that the solo and ensemble competition takes place at five different sites, which makes it difficult to gauge how Brentwood is stacking up against other schools.

Pollard also pointed out that some schools are able to enter a lot more events, making it nearly impossible for BCS to outscore some schools with large and well established programs.

Every band student participated in either a solo or small ensemble on March 29. A total of 30 students earned a superior rating. Pollard said that two students – freshman Emma Nguyen and senior Nicholas Dunagan – earned "ones" on "class 1" solos, which is the most difficult level.

Band competition will wrap up on April 18 in Temple with the concert band and jazz band performances.

Choir competition finishes on April 22, also in Belton. Director Whitney Wick pointed out that 10 of the students who earned a "one" did so with a "class 1" solo. All of the students who performed solos began the process of memorizing these back in December.

"I am so proud of their hard work and dedication to the Brentwood choir program," Wick said.

The state art competition took place in Waco on April 3-4. First-year art teacher Mere Rowlett said she was not surprised or bothered by the fact that BCS did not place, since the school just moved up from TAPPS 3A to 4A. She also said she was proud of Brentwood's showing and is "excited about next year."

Top individuals for Brentwood included freshman Genevieve Graessle, who took first place in art history. Senior Samantha Mack earned second for her quilt, and freshman Keri Ogle got second place in black-and-white photography.

Several other students placed or earned honorable mention in their events.

## Studies reveal positive results of gaming

By Zack Haswell

On most Friday nights, Brentwood students will still be hanging out together – online playing their favorite video games. The pride of being the winner of the game will be talked about at school on Monday, as well as how much fun the friends had.

This regular scene for Brentwood students is typical of students everywhere. Today in America 42 percent of students play video games on a daily basis, according to a study done by the Entertainment Software Association. The use of video games has grown dramatically since the invention of some of the first games in the 1970s. In 2015, 155 million Americans played regularly, and four out of five households owned a video game console.

Over the past 40 years since video games have emerged, large volumes of research have been conducted and numerous articles and studies published on the effects of gaming. Most of this work has focused on vid-



eo games containing mild to heavy violence. Much research indicates that violent video games can have negative effects such as unrest and anti-empathetic qualities.

For example, a study done by a task force from the American Psychological Association concludes that students who play more violent video games are less empathetic.

However, research does indicate there can be some positive benefits from playing even violent video games. While educational games are for stimulating the mind, violent games offer a different kind of stimulation. For example, they can contribute to improvement in hand-eye coordination and can help relieve stress more than games without violence.

Problems associated with video gaming are often due to overuse. Overplaying is caused when the users lacks the self-control to stop playing within a reasonable amount of time, which is typically considered 1 to 2 hours. It does not matter what is being played. Overplaying any type of video game will have a negative impact even if the game has positive benefits.

Many studies about overplaying video games state that they cause violence or unrest, such as a 2014 study by *Psychiatric Quarterly* titled "Unrest in Video Games."

see **VIDEO**, page 5

**SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: Timothy Lee**

*Seniors featured in the Bear Facts were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS Class of 2017.*

# Humble, loyal Tim entertains with offbeat humor

By Lauren Weilemann

“My grandfather used to believe in a rock,” says senior Timothy Lee when asked about faith in his family.

Seemingly random statements are commonplace when Tim is around, and rarely does he elaborate on them. Often he weaves his wacky declarations into the middle of a conversation, puzzling all those involved.

His short stature stands in stark contrast with his big personality. Despite his crazy and mysterious facade, Tim is humble and loyal deep down.

Good friend Daniel Ayala, says Tim is the kind of person who is quiet at first but can make friends with anyone.

“He’s the kind of friend you can trust with anything and know he’ll be cool with it,” Daniel says.

Tim joined the Student Council for his senior year, and says that his journey with them has been fun and stressful, building a family-like environment.

“It feels good to serve the school,” Tim says.

He says his main goal in being a part of StuCo is to help the new students adjust smoothly to Brentwood, since his own transition was a little rough. Overall, his experiences in Student Council have taught him about serving, having the courage to speak in front of crowds, and how to work cohesively with other people.

Tim moved to Texas the day before his junior year to start his Brentwood career. He says he was surprised that Texans weren’t all giant hat-wearing, gun-wielding cowboys who rode horses. Before moving to Austin, he lived in Oregon and Washington. Homeschooled through fourth grade while in Oregon, Tim says his transition into private school in fifth grade was a formative time in his life.

“I came into contact with people outside my comfort zone,” Tim says. “My mom was not there to help me make friends.”

In fifth grade, young Tim was not the goofy leader he is known to be at Brentwood. He was a troublemaker, being loud in class, moving random-

ly about the classroom, and being a distraction to other students.

Tim says that all changed for the better when he switched to public school in ninth grade and his dad left for Washington due to his mechanical engineering job at REC Silicon.

“I had to become the man of the household,” he says.

During this time, Tim lived with mom and his younger sister, Rachel. He describes his sister as being the better version of himself. The two are very close, and Tim says they spend a lot of time

talking about relationships and the future.

“I’ll be the one shedding tears when I leave. She won’t,” he says.

Tim says he hopes his Brentwood legacy is that he is funny, friendly, and not annoying.

“I wish to be the someone that people wanted to be around when they felt down, that anyone would always get a good laugh out of,” Tim says.

Tim will be attending Texas A&M next year, majoring in computer engineering with an emphasis in virtual and augmented reality. When asked why he chose this major, he said his dad was a big influence, and he has learned that he is good at hacking. There is no need for concern; Tim says he hopes he can use this talent for good, not evil.

“I want to create better security systems, because Norton is not strong enough,” Tim says.

Tim grew up in a Christian household, but he accepted his faith as his own at Bible camp when he was eight years old. He was baptized in fifth grade, but says he didn’t truly understand his faith until his freshman year.

This is the same time his dad left for Washington, and it’s when Tim says he fell into a “deep, dark hole.”

At Bible camp, he says God told him to step back and reflect on his faith and whether he truly loved God or was putting up a facade. He says God instructed him to listen, think, evaluate, and stop fighting. This is when Tim stopped making trouble at school.

The necklace Tim wears every day, a wooden eagle on a black cord, is symbolic of this time in his life. He says his dad gave it to him before he left for Washington.

“It symbolizes that in order to get better you must change,” Tim says.

Tim says he also realized his passion for music and God’s wish for him to offer praise through music. On the senior trip to Italy last month, Tim astounded his classmates with his talent on the piano. He says he has been playing for 14 years, but he only uses the talent for the “occasional show-off” opportunity.

Tim’s hobbies also include psychology, programming, gaming, and math.

“Tim never fails to confuse me, never fails to make me laugh, never fails to brighten my day, and never fails to be there for me, no matter how ridiculous I’m being,” senior Camille Sunshine says.



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# Angelic mentor treasures relationships

By Hannah Odom

"I love Mrs. Tindel dearly. She is an oasis of calm in our ..." teacher Mel Witcher pauses, and senior Alicia Dixon helps him to find the words: "... in our Brentwood tsunami."

Nancy Tindel has been Brentwood's registrar since March of 1996. Even though she stays busy enough with keeping track of academic records, issuing report cards, sending transcripts, doing paperwork for international students, and being one of the most beloved mentor group leaders in Brentwood's history, she always makes time to give candy, make tea, talk, and give hugs to anyone that is in need of a little cheering up.

One of Tindel's favorite parts of her job is "getting to know the students and getting to watch them grow."

As a mentor group leader, Tindel feels especially close to her girls and grows closer to them through sharing prayer requests.

"She's like a mother figure to all of us," senior Daniella Mendez says.

After another mentor group member, senior Addison Hardin, told Tindel that she would be going on road trip to visit a college, Tindel brought chocolate chip cookie bars for Hardin to snack on during the drive.

"It's the little thoughtful things like this that makes Mrs. Tindel so lovable," Hardin says.

Watching the students grow up and getting to keep in contact with them after they graduate is very special to Tindel.

"The relationships don't end when they graduate," Tindel says. "It is wonderful to watch students have that joy of flying away to reach their dreams." For example, Mallory Howell, Class of 2003, fulfilled her dream of becoming a veterinarian and now takes care of Tindel's dog.

Part of Tindel's job includes helping international students attain their visas.

"I treasure these relationships even after they graduate, because they will keep in contact, and I get to see what life is like in other countries. It's very special," Tindel says.

Another one of Tindel's favorite parts of working at BCS is "working with people that consider the school a ministry working for God."

When Tindel has something that is resting on her heart that needs prayer, she "feels comfortable" sharing it with her coworkers; and in turn, she prays for their burdens as

well.

"That is the way that relationships develop and become more than just working relationships," Tindel says.

Teacher Jonathan Weed has fond memories of playing at the Tindel house with her youngest son, Trey (Class of 1991). They would often spend Sunday afternoons together after church, and Weed recalls plenty of good meals and lots of kindness.

"For me, Nancy Tindel is the picture of gentleness and composure," Weed says. "She has



long been a great example of so many Christian virtues for both the church and school community, but she's about the last person to seek attention, so this often goes unrecognized. But I'm sure everyone notices."

After growing up in in a "little close-knit community" outside of Elgin, Tindel married her hubby, Jerry Tindel, 52 years ago. Though Tindel still looks too young to be a grandmother, she has three children – Todd, Tammy, and Trey – and six grandchildren, four of whom are students at Brentwood ranging from first to ninth grade. Seeing them on campus is a "special little perk" for Tindel.

"Sometimes Baileigh breaks rank to give me a hug," she says with a smile.

Tindel has attended Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ since she was married.

"Of course people come and go, but the love of the church is to honor Christ and to follow his teachings. It is home," Tindel says.

Tindel likes to spend her free time cooking, especially baking, and making chalk drawings, and sometimes oil paintings, when she has time in her busy schedule.

According to Tindel, the key to being so sweet is to give all thanks to God.

"God's spirit is living within me," Tindel says. "Daily, I ask God's spirit for wisdom."

This is reflected in Tindel's philosophy on how to handle anger. She says that "when something upsets you, try to look at it from a Scriptural perspective."

"She is one of the most compassionate people I've ever met," academic adviser Leah Smith says.

In order to avoid anger, Tindel recommends listening well, taking time to process the situation, and answering quietly.

"Scripture is right. It's always right," Tindel says in reference to Proverbs 15:1, which says, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

Tindel's attitude is constantly positive, and her smile has the power to brighten any room. It's not one of those huge, cheesy smiles, but it's pleasant and genuine. Her tone is always optimistic, and she is one of the most angelic people at Brentwood. She has perhaps the warmest face on campus.

As senior mentor group member Abby White phrases it, "No human is perfect, but she comes the closest."

"It is an honor and a privilege to do what I do and to be a part of the students' lives," Tindel says. "My job is a gift from God."

Brentwood thanks God for the gift of Nancy Tindel.

## Video games

continued from page 3

This study examined the results from an analysis of how stressed and tired students felt after playing some video games for more than six hours. Seventy percent of the 25 students felt tired and stressed. The study indicated that unrest is caused by both how much a person uses video games and the way he or she uses them. If games distract from work and social life, then the user will experience side effects.

Moderation is important when it comes to playing video games, according to a study by Berni Good titled "Games in Moderation." This study shows that those who play moderately for one or two hours a day will have benefits such as improved reaction time, better hand-eye coordination, and relaxation. If played in excessive amounts, the games can cause fatigue, poor personal hygiene, eye strain, and irritability.

"Sometimes playing with friends, I don't keep track of the time and end up staying up too late and feeling tired the next day," BCS freshman Chris Lee said.

Adults, especially parents of school-aged children, sometimes look down on the usage of video games, but some see benefits in their use. BCS English teacher Mark Cotham said he enjoys playing video games.

"Video games can give you stories in a very powerful way, and if the educational community harnessed the ability of interaction and storytelling in video games, kids would be more focused," Cotham said. "It can do a lot to get kids into learning, and modern games have a highly interactive experience unlike a book."

According to "The Essential Facts about the Computer Game Industry," published by the Entertainment Software Association, 75 percent of people surveyed said they believe playing video games provides mental stimulation or education. A new Yale University study by professor Bruce Wexler showed that students who played a brain-training video game for 20 minutes three times a week for four months performed better on reading and math tests than their peers who did not.

In stark contrast to the image of an isolated gamer locked away in a dark basement for hours on end, gaming appears to have a significant social element to it. Fifty-three percent of the most frequent game players say video games help them connect with friends, and 42 percent say they feel video games help them spend time with family.

Video games today are very social and have a real effect on society. They can be used to gather with friends, for relaxation, or for learning, but if played too much, they can have negative consequences.

## Golf teams play in district tourney today

Brentwood's student golfers are ready for the district tournament on April 17, after impressing head coach John Vandygriff with their improvement in recent tournaments.

"I love seeing the progress that all the players are making," Vandygriff said. "They are starting to understand the meaning of the old golf saying, 'The more I practice, the luckier I get.'"

On April 4 at Teravista, BCS played in a tournament hosted by Savio. While neither team placed, senior Graham Marks shot an 81 to finish second among individuals. Junior David Tiner's 84 also put him near the top.

In the Regents Invitational at Grey Rock on March 27, the girls finished third overall, and the boys came in fourth. Freshmen Kirsten Morgan shot a 109 and finished eighth individually. For the boys, Marks got second place with a 74, and Tiner was fourth with a 77.

Sophomore Connor Troutman has been the boys' third-best scorer in each tournament, while the girls have been led by seniors Nicole Dobos and Kayleigh Lawrence.



photo: Nick Weston

**Smooth** Sophomore Connor Troutman takes a practice swing at a recent tourney. BCS competes in district on April 17.

## BCS third in PSIA district meet

By Nicholas Hunka

BCS placed third overall at the PSIA district meet on March 25 at Holy Family. Brentwood also placed third in both the elementary and middle school competitions.

Brentwood had 80 students participate. Overall, they had 55 top-six placements in the 40 events. Ten students finished first or second and are advancing to the state meet on April 29 at TCU in Ft. Worth.

In the middle school, 63 percent of Brentwood participants placing in events. Eighth grader Zoe Hamiyeh placed first in Dictionary 6-8.

In elementary, 43 percent of BCS students placed in events. Juliet Booker and Leah Ankutse tied for first in Music Memory 5-6. Renne Cooper won Number Sense 5. Caitlin Kahan was first in Storytelling 1.

Third grader Michael Kolagani placed first in both Music Memory 3-4 and in Spelling 3.

## Track competes at district

By Michael Milicia

The varsity girls came in fourth while the boys finished fifth at their district track meet in San Antonio on April 12, shortly before press time for the Bear Facts.

"I'm proud of their effort against tough competition," girls' head coach Katie Smith said. "We are young and inexperienced and have a great future ahead of us."

Competing against area Christian schools on April 8, both teams both came in fourth place overall at the Round Rock Christian Invitational in Florence. The boys won the 4x100 and 4x200 relays. Junior Tyler Hughes participated in both relays and also took second place in two events: the 100 meters (11.6) and long jump (20-10.75).

Sophomore Gavin Damra took second in discus (102-04.25) and third in shot put (35-04.5). Sophomore Chase Blackman was third in triple jump (37-06.25), and sophomore Blake Benton was third in discus (101-09).

For the girls, sophomore Jaelyn Wishard took first place in long jump (15-10.5) and second in high jump (4-08). Sophomore Mackenzie Gatlin got second in the 100 (13.6) and third in the long jump (15-0). Sophomore Jane Hughes won pole vault (8-06), and junior Trinity Ragsdill was third in discus (92-01).

On March 30, Brentwood competed in a meet in Cameron that ended before several events were completed, since meet organizers invited too many teams for an afternoon meet.

Wishard took first in the 100-meter hurdles (17.48), and junior Trinity Ragsdill placed second in discus (86-6.5).

Gatlin finished second in the 100 (13.48), and sophomore Faith Loving got third in the 800 (2:46).

For the boys, Hughes came in second in the long jump, leaping 20-5. Senior Jordan Johnson was fourth with a high jump of 5-10.

A week earlier, the teams had their third meet of the season on March 23 in Lexington against

a few private and many public schools.

Loving got second place (2:50) in the 800, and freshman Genevieve Graessle came in fifth (2:56) in the same race. Loving also finished fifth in the mile (6:37).

The girls' 4x100 relay team finished fourth (55.53). Their 4x200 relay team got fifth (2:00).

Ragsdill won first in the discus (87-11), and junior Mallory Lesko came in second (77-9).

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Ragsdill won first in the discus (87-11), and junior Mallory Lesko came in second (77-9).

For the boys, Hughes took first in the 300 hurdles (42.70) and second in long jump (20-07). Junior Aedan Atcheson came in third in the varsity 800 meters (2:12). Johnson tied for second in the high jump (5-10).



photo: Faith Loving

**Speedy** Isaac Drew carries the baton on his leg of the 4x100 relay at a recent meet. The boys were fourth overall at district.

## Softball team tired of losses, frustrated by lack of practice, games

By Savannah Jowers

It's been a difficult season for the BCS softball team because of multiple game cancellations due to weather and a team dropping out of the district. And when the Bears have been able to play, they have struggled to compete against mostly older and more experienced teams.

The team is 1-6 overall, and 0-2 in district. Head coach Paul Sladek said five of the losses came against teams in the states' top 10.

But lately the team has had nothing but rain-outs.

"It's been one thing or another," Sladek said,

referring to weather, field issues, and lack of practice time. "It's been frustrating for the girls, and for me and the coaches."

Brentwood will begin making up games this week, as they will play road games on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday.

has two district games left, including senior night on April 24.

Sophomore Kori Howell and senior Hillarie Carpenter have been pitching for the team this season. Carpenter, who is normally found at first base, stepped up to the roll after Howell broke her wrist before the season started.

"I was surprised I was going to have to pitch,

but I was willing to take on the position," Carpenter said. "I'll do anything to help my team."

Carpenter, who recently signed to play softball for Hardin Simmons next year, has been named to an all-star team of some of the best local high school seniors. She has been selected to play for the North team in the Greater Austin Area All Star Game at Westlake High School on June 14.

Following are the most recent game results:

**3/21: Marble Falls Faith 17-2 L**

District started with a rough three-inning game. The girls were down 17 runs in the second inning but were able to get two around the

bases and kept Marble Falls from scoring in the third inning.

**3/30: Reicher 22-0 L**

Playing against another one of the top teams, Brentwood knew it was going to a rough game. The girls had trouble getting outs on Reicher, giving up 12 runs in the first inning. The Bears only went through the lineup once, and few girls made contact with the ball.

**4/3: @ Hyde Park 15-5 L**

The Lady Bears held the Panthers scoreless in the first inning, but everything fell apart in the second inning when Hyde Park scored 13.

# Ryberg leads red-hot Bears toward playoffs

By Benjamin Helyer

With a four-game winning streak and an overall record of 8-3, the varsity baseball team is confidently entering the final stretch of games. Head Coach Mike Bando said that he fully intends on making playoffs.

"I expect that we shouldn't lose another game," he said. "I'm very confident in our team's ability and how we have been playing lately. There is no doubt in my mind that we will make playoffs."

Bando also said that while the team is meeting their goals and has "improved drastically" in pitching and offensive approaches, there is room for improvement in the areas of baserunning and situational defense. He also noted that some younger members on the team are having difficulties.

"It just takes time to instill the fundamentals of the game in their minds," he said.

Senior Garrison Ryberg leads the Bears with a .469 batting average. He also leads the team with 14 runs, 15 hits, eight doubles, and 19 RBIs.

Alongside Ryberg, Bando mentioned sophomore Jack Oberwortmann and junior Dillon Smith as key offensive performers. He went on to praise the "dominant" pitching performances of Ryberg and junior Diego Escobedo. He is also proud of the character of the team as a whole.

"Championship teams are built upon championship character. Our team has demonstrated that we have the character and ability to be champions this year," he said.

The Bears' next home game is also their Senior Night, scheduled for Friday, April 21.

Following are the team's most recent game results:

**3/9: St. Mary's Hall 5-2 L**

The Bears took a one-run lead in the second inning and held the lead until the sixth, when a Saint Mary's batter won the game with a three-run home run. Oberwortmann and freshman Isaac Copeland each scored a run in the first and second innings, respectively.

**3/10: Faith Academy 7-0 W**

Brentwood jumped out to a two-run lead in the first inning and continued to score at least one run in each of the first five innings. Escobedo pitched all seven innings, allowing no runs and only five hits, and striking out seven batters. Brentwood benefited from 10 errors by Faith Academy.

**3/14: St. John Paul II 3-1 L**

After their opponent went ahead by two runs in the second inning, freshman Travis Whitaker scored a run for BCS in the third inning. Whitaker, who came in for Ryberg and pitched the final three innings, allowed only one more run, but Brentwood hitters could only manage two hits in the game.

**3/21: Texas School for the Deaf 22-0 W**

Brentwood scored three runs in the first inning, five runs in the second, and then 14 in the



photo: Marcia Ryberg

**He's out!** Senior Garrison Ryberg awaits the umpire's call after tagging out a St. Mary's Hall runner at second base on March 9.

third, ending the game early. Leading the Bears with four runs each were senior Michael Hickl, freshman Austin Balogh, and Oberwortmann.

**3/25: Boerne Geneva 14-2 L**

Brentwood fell behind 4-1 in the first inning. Geneva broke the game wide open with 10 runs in the third. Smith scored the Bears' only runs; he and Oberwortmann had two hits

apiece – the team's only hits.

**3/31: San Marcos Acad 13-3 W**

BCS scored 10 runs in the second inning and coasted to an easy victory. The team's freshmen led in runs during this game, with Sam Orick scoring three, while Daniel Hickl and Nicholas Hunka each scored two runs. Escobedo pitched all six innings, striking out six and walking none.

**4/4: Concordia 6-2 W**

Whitaker pitched, giving up two runs in the first before shutting down Concordia over four innings. Smith pitched the final three innings. Brentwood scored three in the fourth and three in the fifth, led by two hits apiece from Escobedo, Ryberg, and junior Alec Shelby.

**4/7: @ Faith Academy 10-3 W**

Ryberg hit three doubles and knocked in five runs, leading the Bears to victory after an early 2-0 deficit. Ryberg also

pitched into the fifth inning, striking out seven batters. Escobedo hit two doubles and finished the game on the mound, striking out five more batters. Copeland had two singles, and Whitaker scored three runs.

**4/10: Texas School for the Deaf 23-1 W**

Freshman Daniel Hickl pitched all four innings. Whitaker had three hits and four RBIs.

## Brentwood high school storms to TCSIT sweepstakes win

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(news writing) each took home a gold medal in an event. Baird also came in second in social studies, and Joseph took third in biology. Sophomore Adrian Batlle placed second in chemistry and fifth in Spanish comprehension; classmate Esther Shin took third in Algebra II and sixth in chemistry.

Senior Khue Tran placed second, third, and fourth in ready writing, physics, and comprehensive science, respectively. Junior Courtney Min took second in on-site drawing and sixth in Spanish girls' Bible reading. Eighth-graders Andrew Geevarghese and Grant Martinez took the top two places in Algebra I. Senior Hannah Odom placed third in ready writing and sixth in news writing.

Freshman Genevieve Graessle placed second in geometry and third in poetry interpretation and editorial writing; classmate Adrie Gruis took second in English girls' Bible reading and fifth in humorous duet with junior Lauren Wei-

lemann. Weilemann also took fifth in dramatic duets with senior Hope Hutson. Freshman Addie McDaniel earned a bronze in humorous interpretation, and sophomore Whit Allee did the same in Spanish boys' Bible reading.

Juniors Katie Griffith and Merideth Mallett took third with their humorous duet, and Griffith also was fifth in computer-aided graphics. Senior Camille Sunshine and freshman Lorenzo Rivera placed third with their dramatic duet, and Sunshine placed fourth in dramatic interpretation and headline writing.

The Bear Facts, the school newspaper, and the Bear Tracks, the school yearbook, both took third place.

Middle school did not place in the top three this year but did have several top finishers.

Eighth-graders Aaron Sass and Andrew Geevarghese placed first and second in number sense, respectively; Sass was also second in calculator. Seventh-graders Parker Combs (comprehensive math), Sophie Grooms (picture memory), Sydney Cooper (original ora-

tory), and eighth-grader Carlie Walters (extemporaneous speaking) each earned a gold medal.

Sixth-grader Leah Ankutse placed third in music memory and sixth in girls' Bible reading. Eighth-grader Julia Glenn was second in original oratory; sixth-grader Abbie Burcham earned a bronze in poetry interpretation, and eighth-grader Noble Wilson and seventh-grader James Oberwortmann tied for third in social studies.

Twelve vehicles left on Thursday morning, April 6, loaded with more than 70 students ready to compete. Thursday and Friday were competition days, and Friday ended with a trip to Gattiland. Saturday concluded the competition with a few finals and a lengthy award ceremony. Over the trip, three birthdays were celebrated with cake, most notably English teacher Kay Taylor's.

Several of the students who competed in TCSIT also competed in TAPPS on Tuesday and Wednesday, some missing four days of school. TCSIT director Kaleen Graessle went to both

TCSIT and TAPPS and stayed patient and sweet through it all.

"Mrs. Graessle is quite remarkable in her ability to organize and lead the TCSIT and TAPPS trips in the same week, overcoming several difficult challenges, but what impressed me the most this week is her heart for the students," math coach David Armstrong said. "When seeking input, one of the questions she would ask is how it would affect the individual students involved. Brentwood is really blessed to have her."

The high school one-act play did not win this year, although it has won six years in a row before this year. The competition took place Jan. 21, and Brentwood did a production of *The Miracle Worker*, which earned the highest possible score, along with all but one of the other seven schools. The grand champion was not named until the rest of TCSIT on April 8.

Sunshine and Weilemann were named all-star cast, and senior Kristyn Chambers received honorable mention.

THE BEAR FACTS APRIL 2017

# McCoy brings in record proceeds

By Blake Benton

From an interview with a Texas football legend to bidding for an irresistible black lab puppy, March 24 was a memorable night for families who attended the 26th annual Partnership Dinner.

According to events coordinator Sarah Wilson, the dinner was a huge success. There were 576 ticketed attendees, and BCS set records for both total revenue and net proceeds to the school.

"It was a wonderful evening with an inspiring message, and the final outcome will have a positive effect on our school," Wilson said.

Brentwood hosted the dinner once again at the Renaissance Hotel in the Arboretum. The doors opened at 6 p.m. for a silent auction set up by BCS moms Christa Copeland and Kristi Jackson. VIP guests got the opportunity to take pictures with a former University of Texas all-American quarterback, Colt McCoy, before the dinner.

The main event started at 7 p.m. when dinner guests were brought salad, Cajun spiced chicken breast, and desserts as BCS dad and board member Brian Jackson welcomed the at-

tendees and thanked those who made the night possible. After dinner, Jackson introduced BCS dad Brent Allen and Colt McCoy. Allen, a worship leader at the church McCoy attended while playing for the Longhorns, interviewed

McCoy on stage.

The Washington Redskins quarterback answered Allen's questions about faith and football. McCoy talked about how he made his mind up when he got to UT that he was going to work to be the quarterback. McCoy gave advice to parents to let their kids play multiple sports so they can better enjoy the thrill of youth athletics.

After the interview, the live auction began. The first items up for grabs were signed Colt McCoy memorabilia. As the bidding continued to rise on a Redskins number 16 jersey, officials worked out a deal in which McCoy agreed to supply an additional jersey so that both bidders could have a signed jersey for \$4,700. One of these bidders, Ron Knight, immediately donated the jersey signed with Colossians 3:23 and the words "Work for the team and for the Lord" to school president Jay Burcham to place in the Athletics Center.

Autographed Texas Longhorns jerseys and a Longhorns helmet were next, followed by the much-hyped black lab.

Donations made during the auctions went straight toward the school's operating budget.



photo: Oriana Gonzalez

**Fan favorite** Legendary Longhorn quarterback Colt McCoy, here with senior Alicia Dixon, spoke at Partnership Dinner on March 24.

## Fifth-graders sleep on board historic ship

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pools of stingrays, sharks, and jellyfish, and some fifth graders touched a few of the marine animals. The group also watched a dolphin and dive show at the aquarium.

The students left Corpus Christi and returned home at 3:30 p.m. on March 30.

"It was a really good experience," fifth-grader Brinton Loftis said.

Davis said fifth grade is a big year for American history. On the Lexington, students not only get to learn about American history, but they get to dive into World War II history as well.

Davis said students also get to learn "an appreciation for those who have fought for our freedom."

"I learned that I take for granted the people who fought in wars for us, and now I know what they actually did," Wilson said.

Many high schoolers still remember the fun times they had on their elementary field trips.

"The Lexington field trip was a really fun and valuable trip," junior Katie Griffith said. She added that she "got to get closer to my classmates and learn more about history on an actual battleship, which was super cool."

## Italy trip features beautiful art, large meals, sunsets, mafia man

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authentic glass blowing factory. Inside we were able to see a maestro of the art shape a ferrari glass horse in just minutes. Many students purchased beautiful pieces from the shop.

Next we began a tour of Venice with a local guide. That day seniors went on a scavenger hunt that led them through the sights of Venice. Some of these included Saint Mark's Square, the Doge's Palace, and a hidden bookstore. Some of us even got lost during the hunt and truly were able to experience the city. Afterwards we went on a peaceful gondola ride through The Grand Canal. It felt like another time period as we peacefully glided through the waters of Venice and watched the sun set on the ancient buildings.

After traveling to Florence the next day, we arrived in time for the tour guide to show us the Duomo just as the sun was setting. Then we left for dinner and enjoyed one of our typical four-course meals.

The next day we once again met at the Duomo and took a quick tour around the city with a local guide. Then we visited one of the oldest existing leather shops and learned useful tips for distinguishing real leather from fake. Free time was next, and we were able to explore the historic city for six hours. Some of us climbed the steps to the top of the Duomo, while others took a long lunch break and shopped.

After Florence we boarded the bus and drove to the quaint town of Assisi, the famed hometown of Saint Francis. Upon our arrival a local guide walked us through the picturesque and steeply sloped Italian town. We saw the church of Saint Francis, which was covered in frescoes by famous artists. Sponsor Jimmie Harper then led a verse of "Amazing Grace" in the mausoleum of Saint Francis. Afterwards, some seniors climbed the mountain while others enjoyed a lunch with authentic Italian focaccia bread.

Next, we began our long bus ride to the city of Sorrento. We spent a few hours the next

morning wandering around this beautiful city that is built on the mountain and neighboring the Amalfi Coast.

Soon after our short day in Sorrento, we headed back to the bus and started our journey to Rome. But first we took a brief stop in Pompeii, the city that was covered in ash during 79 A.D. when Mt. Vesuvius erupted and effectively ended all surrounding life. Having finished some delicious pizza, we drove to the ruins, where we met up with a local guide. Many of us were convinced that this man was a member of the Italian mafia. He wore Cartier glasses, a large gold ring, and answered his flip phone multiple times during the tour.

After we arrived in Rome that evening, many of the seniors headed off to a soccer game of Roma versus Leon.

Many of us were exhausted the following morning but were nonetheless excited for our final day in Italy. We started by touring the Colosseum and standing in awe as we took in the massive structure that held so much history.

Next, our guide took us to the famed Roman Forum, where we even got to see where Julius Caesar would've stood many a time.

After our Forum tour we headed to the Vatican. On our long walk through we saw many beautiful paintings and artwork, including the Sistine Chapel. Then we headed off to lunch before taking a walking tour of Rome.

The final destination of the tour was a pizza restaurant where we enjoyed our final meal in Italy. That was followed by another walking tour of Rome at night. Once we stopped at a crowded square where a musician was playing beautiful music such as "Moon River." That night some students made it their mission to get gelato every time we took a break.

Unfortunately, we had to wake up at 3 a.m. and stumble our way to the airport. And as I sleepily ate my cheap airline snack on the flight back, I couldn't wait to inform my friends and family about the fascinating things I had done and seen. Traveling the world with my friends was an experience I will never forget.