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THE BEAR FACTS

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BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

MARCH 2024



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Boys reach final four

By Karlee Lawrence, Noelle Shepard

For the first time this century, the Brentwood Christian community had the opportunity to support our boys basketball team in the state tournament. The 1997-98 team held the solo honor for 26 years, but this year's Bears group left an impact and legacy that will be remembered for quite some time.

The team, which went 23-16 on the season overall, proudly represented BCS in Waco on March 1 in the state semifinals, narrowly missing out on an opportunity to compete for the TAPPS 4A state championship by the narrowest of margins.

In a rematch of an earlier season matchup with St. Thomas Episcopal from Houston, the Bears fell just short, losing 78-75 at Waco University High School, ending one of the best seasons in the history of the sport at Brentwood.

"I'm really proud of how our team has

grown and accepted the challenge of such a tough schedule," said head coach Dustin Karrer. "We have faced a lot of adversity as a team and it has been a privilege to see our guys meet every challenge and have such a successful season."

It was a season for the ages for the Bears, with newcomer and sophomore Marcus Zelee earning District 3-4A MVP honors, followed closely behind by returners Blake Petty (junior) and Colton McLain (senior) on the first-team all district list.

"Marcus and Blake have both been huge for us this year providing scoring, athleticism, and great energy," Karrer said. "Colton has been a great senior leader for us providing leadership, shooting, and maturity."

Karrer also lauded sophomore Zach Czarlinsky and junior Coleston Allen for being stars in their roles and bringing an edge

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Band eyes TAPPS repeat

By Levi Olewin, Alex Schehl

The Brentwood Christian band has had a successful year in their competitions and concerts.

Under the direction of new fine arts and band director, Jason Montier, one of the largest programs on campus has continued to bring pride back to the BCS community through the beauty of music.

Through numerous classes, practices and competitions thus far, the band is gearing up for another run at a TAPPS state championship.

The Waco Field Band Competition (FBC) took place back in October, and was a huge success in the band students' eyes. Junior Connor Schehl believes the FBC went very well, considering the weather. Schehl said the competition required flexibility, which everyone was able to overcome.

"I was proud of the unity that we all had with the choir and even

working alongside one of the dancers, and we were sharing the experiences of dressing up and all shared in this competition together," Schehl said.

Despite the day being rainy, the band played well and were proud of their forma-

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photo: BCS Yearbook

Warming up Band senior Clayton Rackley gets ready before his performance at the TAPPS Solo and Ensemble Contest held on February 23.

Banner year for Bellas

By Ava Cavada, Katie Pittner

The Lady Bellas have had an exciting year at Brentwood Christian after bringing home a state championship, placing first at American Dance and Drill, and performing at Disney World, in which they earned a trophy for their performance.

With awards covering the walls of their class room and new banners set to grace numerous buildings on campus, no one can doubt the effort the Bellas have put in to claim this year as their own.

At the TAPPS state competition of Jan. 13, the Bellas took their spot on the podium as state champions, beating the runner up by a quarter of a point. After coming in second and narrowly missing the championship by a quarter of a point last year, the girls worked hard to clench the top spot this year.

With proof soon to be hanging from the rafters of the Athletic Center, those efforts paid off.

"We brought solid choreography and well-rehearsed dances with improved technique that I was relieved the judges noticed, so it

felt great to win," director Lisa Warner said.

The Lady Bellas competed with two dances at the state, one Grease-themed, and the other taking influences from The Wizard of Oz. In order to perfect the routines, the Bellas practiced at all hours of the day, showing what determination and drive can do to help achieve goals.

"The early morning practices, the late night practices, coming in on non-school days, sending progress videos during breaks—they have done it all because they know the commitment it takes to win," Warner said.

Senior captain Lauren Rutt had a big day at state, as she performed a solo that earned a superior rating and competed in the high kicks competition in which she won first place, earning her the title of Miss High Kick 2024.

"I am happy with my performances and how I was able to represent my school," Rutt said. "I was a little nervous going into the high kicks because it was my first time

see **BELLAS**, page 12



photo: BCS Yearbook

A successful season The Lady Bellas were not only TAPPS State Champs this year, but also claimed first place at American Dance and Drill's annual competition, as well as performed at Disney World.

All the Right Questions with Lucy Belcik

Editor asks: How should Christians approach voting?

It's expected that a presidential election will bring heightened tension in both the political and domestic spheres. As the American party system has become increasingly opposed to each other's ideals and agendas, this is even more true. Add the fear of a re-

peated incident like the January 6th insurrection, the several end-of-term impeachment trials in motion on Capitol Hill against the incumbent Joe Biden administration, and Republican nominee hopeful Donald Trump already facing down accusations of election fraud in Georgia and one thing is clear: the presidential election of 2024 is certainly set up to be one for the history books.

What's behind all this strife? Is it simply the fact that the Republican and Democratic parties have become increasingly set against each other in recent years? Is it how quickly misinformation is able to be spread (sometimes by candidates themselves) on apps like Twitter? Is it that the American presidency has become far more of a bully pulpit than the Founding Fathers ever intended?

And what, exactly, are "we the people" supposed to do about any of it? Most seniors at Brentwood have turned 18. Many have already registered to vote. If you graduate in May, it's very likely that you'll be eligible to head to the polls on November 5th.

How do we, as Christians, respond to the mess that is modern presidential elections? Do we keep our heads down and out of it completely? Or do we try to make choices that represent our values? The first seems a bit too detached to many and the second almost impossible with the choices we are usually presented with. In third grade, we neatly colored campaign posters and gave one-minute speeches, then voted for each other - quickly, quietly, with our heads on our desks.

Obviously this simulation of democracy falls short of what we face now as newly christened adult voters. It's certainly hard to figure out how to make the right choice

when everything presented to us seems doused in controversy.

Choosing not to vote at all in a presidential election is certainly a decision that can be reasonably made as a Christian. A debate can be raised that regardless of opinion, it's our duty to participate in government as citizens of a country, since we are reaping the benefits of the organized society government provides, whether we like it or not. However, to some Christians, government is at its core "Caesar's" (Matt. 22:21)—essentially, a worldly institution—and that choosing not to participate in politics to any extent is certainly a justifiable decision, if not the only one that can be made.

In the end, choosing whether or not to vote in an upcoming election for a Christian is not a question of logical debate, but rather a matter between the believer and God, whatever conclusion is reached.

For some, that conclusion is that participation in government is important, even as a voter who will be mostly opposed to the agendas of both candidates and despite the many obstacles that have seemed to accumulate against modern voters, Christian or not.

Misinformation stands tall among these obstacles. It has certainly become rampant in past years as more and more candidates take to Twitter to campaign and voice opinions. Although voter turnout has increased with recent elections, as younger (and newly eligible to vote) generations tend towards more interest in areas like social justice and political involvement, voter education has not increased proportionally, especially in response to an age dominated by digital campaigning that is often fraught with

misinformation from both sides.

Another obstacle facing modern voters is the many ways in which the US has become a divided nation. Although not true for all controversial issues, it's true for most that there are two extremely polarized sides. To be on one side often demands that you can concede nothing to the

other. The middle ground has become a no-man's land, riddled with landmines. It seems that in many areas, we have lost the ability to compromise.

So what is the solution, in a political landscape increasingly dominated by the noise of misinformation and divided between two seemingly incompatible parties? We are told in Romans 13 to respect authorities, for "they have been established by God". Do we still follow this, even when it seems said authorities are as far as possible from a Biblical worldview as you can get?

It's important to remember that Jesus was born into a political landscape that resembled ours in many ways. Romans versus Jews, Jews versus Gentiles, Pharisees versus Zealots...the list goes on, but the point is that not only did Jesus face opposition from fellow Jews during his ministry, but that he was also constantly expected to pick sides or make some sort of political statement.

Instead, he did the opposite. He knew His purpose was greater than any political division or ploy. He often picked the middle ground, adhering to neither Roman nor Jewish philosophy, or chose to ignore such matters completely. Jesus' ultimate goal was to unite, not to divide. After all, He was able to bridge one of the most contentious gaps in history—the one between Jews and Gentiles, between the Law and his sacrifice.

It's often hard for us to follow this approach to politics exactly. We are (obviously) not Jesus and it's hard for us to not pick sides, especially when many issues are made out to be life or death by both sides. However, in the context of the US political landscape, it's sometimes important to remember that answers are often found in the middle. It's possible to be Christian and hold opinions from both sides of a political argument or issue. It's possible to ignore the noise and find compromises that fall between party lines. It's possible to make decisions based on personal morals and philosophies, rather than be swayed by the opinions of others.

We can be assured by the existence of Christ that any decision we make regarding the things of this Earth is tiny in comparison to the greatness of His promise. But our decisions do hold weight, whether we think so or not. So when making your choice at the polls this year, remind yourself: your voice *does* matter and the decisions you make should be based on what you actually believe, not what others believe for you. But for those Christian readers still here: you were made for so much more—the fate of our world will not be left to mortal hands.

THE BEAR FACTS

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The Bear Facts is published quarterly 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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photo: Getty Images

To vote or not to vote? With the outcome of the upcoming presidential election a hotly controversial issue, many eligible BCS seniors may wonder if participating in government is worth it.

Spring semester sees fresh hires

By Mason Foster, Jack Sutton

Spring has sprung, and you might have noticed some new faces “bouncing” around the halls. From the finance department to the classroom, Brentwood Christian has welcomed several new employees over the past few months.

Ashley Segovia is part of the Brentwood Christian finance office with a variety of experience in that discipline. Segovia previously attended and graduated from San Antonio College.

Her new role at BCS is payroll and benefits specialist, which began in the fall. Segovia felt led to and adores Brentwood’s mission of bringing people to Christ.

“Things at Brentwood have been going great,” Segovia said. “I enjoy working here and being of service to the brothers and sisters of Christ.”

Once a payroll assistant for a long-term care facility, Segovia has been an incredible addition to an already robust team of financial professionals.

Jennifer Smeltzer is the new Director of Development. Her main duties include

campus and school expansion, funding, and special events. She can be found in the Admissions office, where she manages the development of the school almost in its entirety.

Smeltzer graduated from the University of North Texas in 2004 with a major in interior design. She worked as a studio manager for KB Home before she started with BCS, and consequently, her main goal for this year is to figure out how to apply her skills and heart to this job fully.

Smeltzer has been essential in picking up



photo: Jake Hale

Smeltzer

where former director Sarah Wilson left off, and has been instrumental in events such as “The Chosen” movie night and the recent Partnership Dinner.

“I took the new Director of Development position to deepen my involvement with the Brentwood community and contribute to the school’s mission,” Smeltzer said. “Additionally, the opportunity allows me to interact with the school community in a new capacity, with the added bonus of seeing my daughter every day being a significant blessing to this mama bear.”

Caleb Davis is the new high school algebra teacher and can be found in room C238, where he teaches young minds about the wonders of math.

Davis graduated from Howard University in 2018 with a major in electrical engineering. A first-year full-time teacher, Davis spent time as a teaching assistant and tutor prior to joining BCS.

Davis also assisted with the Bears’ underclassmen basketball boys and will be assisting in track and field, as well.

He is looking forward to what the future holds in all of these areas and believes his time on this campus will be as fruitful for

him as it will be for his students.

“Leading youth to love God is important to my spiritual goals,” he said, “as well as understanding the infrastructure of an educational system within the church body.”

Corey Jennings is the new theater and speech teacher at Brentwood. Jennings is a former track and field coach who graduated from the University of Texas at San Antonio and majored in kinesiology with an interest in sports medicine.

Originally born and raised in the small town of Bandera, Texas (the cowboy capital of the world), Jennings hopes to bring his unique experiences to help enhance the already unique situation he enters jumping in during the middle of a school year.

“I have always had a calling to work at a Christian school,” Jennings said. “God’s plan always works in mysterious ways and provided me a way to come in during the middle of the school year and I knew it was a place I would love to be.”

Jennings lauded the students during his interview and the fact that they are always ready to have class and have fun during his first few weeks on the job.

New year to bring back TAPPS 5A alignment

By Karlee Lawrence

Brentwood Christian School’s athletic department dropped to the TAPPS 4A classification during the eventful times of Covid-19, reducing in size like other schools, putting the Bears in with the likes of Geneva School of Boerne, Hill Country Christian and Incarnate Word Academy of Corpus Christi the last couple of seasons.

The latest round of TAPPS realignment flipped the script, as BCS will once again be amongst the larger grouping in the 5A classification.

Brentwood will be gaining all different types of schools in the new district due to the switch and will be ending the long trips to San Antonio and Corpus Christi, trading them for trips to Dallas and Tyler. Our Bears will be matched up against two other Austin schools, those being Regents School and noted rival Hyde Park, as well as Cristo Rey College Prep (Dallas), Brighter Horizons Academy (Garland), Bishop Dunne (Dallas), Grace Community School (Tyler) and Brook Hill Academy (Bullard) in the major-

ity of team sports.

Here’s where things stand across the board for next year.

Football looks much different than the rest of our team sports. TAPPS will add Grace Prep alongside Hyde Park, Regents, Tyler Grace and Brook Hill.

The major addition is Regents, a team that went 7-0 in district and eventually lost in the state championship to Argyle Liberty Christian.

Brentwood’s hard-working **volleyball** team will match up the seven other schools referenced above, which make up a majority of the new district.

Hyde Park’s volleyball team had a down year in 2023, and the Lady Bears also swept Regents last year in their lone meeting. With a strong group of returning players, BCS has an opportunity to once again be the class of the volleyball district next season.

Brentwood **men’s basketball** team will match up with all seven of the teams listed in the new district.

The Bears have matched up with Regents many times before, most recently in a 72-59

win on Jan. 12. Adding Hyde Park back into mix will be fun, as the Bears swept the Panthers back in 2021 during the last meetings of the squads.

Brentwood’s **women’s basketball** team also beat the aforementioned Regents girls this year, 50-26, and will look to do the same next season. Hyde Park’s girls team went 3-3 in district, beating Regents, making for an interesting matchup next year.

Tyler Grace and Brook Hill both had incredible seasons in their current district, and project as two tough opponents for our Lady Bears moving forward.

The Bears **men’s soccer** team has had a very successful season and will match up with the same schools as basketball and volleyball, hopefully resulting in another great season.

Cristo Rey and Tyler Grace both made the playoffs from their boys soccer district this season, while Regents and Hyde Park were bested by St. Michael’s and St. Dominic Savio for the playoff spots from their district.

With two back-to-back quality seasons

under their belt, the Lady Bears **women’s soccer** team will look to make it three straight trips to the playoffs next year.

Bishop Dunne and Tyler Grace both made the playoffs this season up north, but the stiffest test will likely come in the form of Regents, which won its district and put together an impressive 16-2-2 record prior to the playoffs.

Baseball’s district will look identical to football’s. On the diamond, no one clear team from the mix has a clear hold on the district.

None of the seven schools, including the Bears, made the state tournament in 2023, hopefully creating an opportunity for parity and for BCS to jump to the head of the pack next season.

The **softball** team will play in the smallest district on campus, of only five teams total. Hyde Park will be the team to beat, having gone 40-4 last season and 19-3 to start the 2024 campaign.

Regents, Grace and Brook Hill, the last of whom defeated the Lady Bears in the 2023 playoffs, will round out the playing field.

Senior reviews...off-campus!

By John Youngdale

Once again, the Bear Facts is reviewing the student opinions of nearby off-campus lunch locations. In this issue's report, we will be covering H-E-B, P-Terry's, and Chipotle.

While it's not a conventional lunch location, **H-E-B** offers a plethora of options. You can find sushi, sandwiches, salads, and much more. Some seniors suggest making your own improvised meals out of food items.

For example, tacos consisting of pre-cooked and warmed chicken tenders with thick cut cheese wrapped in H-E-B butter tortillas have been a much beloved option by Brentwood theater kids and seniors Emily Mulcahy, Landon Hejl, Roy Zou, and Lucy Belcik.

There are two locations, one on I-35 and one on Mopac. H-E-B received a food rating of 9/10 and a stress level of 7/10.

Next, **P-Terry's**: a classic Austin burger joint. P-Terry's is known for its unique fries, great milkshakes, controversial burgers, and affordable prices.

"I get lost in the sauce when I eat at P-Terry's," senior Bryson Best said.

Like many, what keeps Bryson going back to P-Terry's is the fries and the milkshakes.

P-Terry's received a food rating of 8/10 and a stress level of 4/10.

Finally, **Chipotle**. Located on Parmer Lane, Chipotle features Mexican style burritos, bowls and tacos. Chipotle is arguably our most controversial off-campus location.

Multiple seniors engaged in a heated debate about the quality of the restaurant's cuisine.

"The guacamole is made DAILY. It's so fresh," senior Aubrey Acheson said.

Not everyone agreed.

"The guacamole just isn't good but everybody hypes it up," senior Macie Griswold said.

Aubrey claimed her favorite thing about Chipotle is shaking her bowl to mix up the ingredients, while Macie said that the ingredients, particularly the meat and beans, give her "the ick."

Despite its controversial food, Chipotle's beverages were given high acclaim.

"The lemonade," senior Elijah Catron pontificated.

Chipotle received an impressive food rating of 10/10 with a stress level of 8/10.

If you enjoyed these reviews, see the Bear Facts' next issue to hear what BCS students have to say about **Mod Pizza**, **Chick-fil-a**, and **Popeye's**.

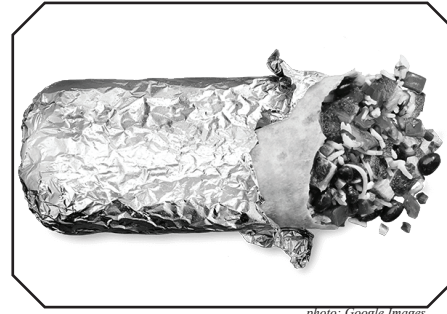


photo: Google Images



CHIPOTLE

Overall: 10/10

Stress Rating: 8/10



photo: Google Images

H-E-B

Overall: 9/10

Stress Rating: 7/10

Editor's Rec': HEB Croissant Sandwich
w/ Roasted Chicken and Muenster



photo: Google Images

P-TERRY'S

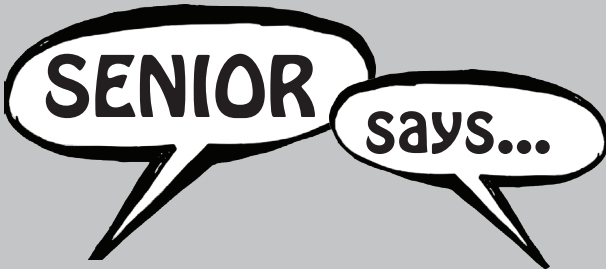
Overall: 8/10

Stress Rating: 4/10

"I get lost in the sauce."

- Bryson Best

*survey results from BCS Class of 2024



We asked BCS seniors a series of questions covering life, school, and everything in between...
Here are our favorite responses.

What's your skincare routine?

"Towel."

- Micah Riley



What did you have for lunch?

"Reese's Pieces."

- Ryder Shelton-Lamb

What will you miss most about your parents in college?

"My dad playing Mortal Kombat with me."

- Laynie Ruiz



What's your biggest pet peeve?

"Being falsely accused."

- Zachary Tran

What did you have for lunch?

"Aubrey Acheson's charcuterie."

- Macie Griswold



“From Sorrow to Sunset”

Please enjoy below the first-prize winner of the BCS freshman class' short story contest, written by Ames Peterson, entitled "From Sorrow to Sunset." The contest is facilitated and judged by Taylor Mayfield.

It was a day like any other; I was thirteen at the time, and I was enjoying my life, but I had gone to school and came home to find something tragic had happened. I was in 5th period when the office told me to pack my bags. I was confused why I'd be leaving early, but I carried along with no reluctance. As I entered the office, I saw my mom sobbing in a chair. Confused, I went up to her and asked, "Mom, what happened?"

She said, "Your father got sick last night and we didn't think much of it. Then when I got home from dropping you off, he was passed out on the floor." Stuttering, she said, "I called an ambulance, but it was too late."

A rush of emotions surged through me, and I fell on the ground and wept. I sat on the floor for a while, processing what I had just been told. After a while, my mom dragged me off the floor. Then, we drove home; it was a very quiet ride. By the time I got home, my life wasn't a swirl of colors - it was only black and white; yet, not even white felt bright; life was gray.

Weeks passed, months, and then years. Eventually, I had finished school, but my world never got any brighter or vibrant than before. I had a good paying job as a technician. I even bought my own house after saving money for five years. I was tired of not seeing the world, I was done feeling walked over, and I decided to finally try and brighten my world once again. I tried bowling, soccer, and basketball, none of which went well. Competitive race car driving, puzzle solving, video games, none went well either. After all of this, my world felt even lower, until, one day I met the woman of my dreams.

One day for my job as technician, I was sent to help repair a television in someone's house, so I packed up my stuff and drove there. It was a pretty long uneventful ride; I did stop and get some gas, but that was mostly it. As I arrived at the address, I walked out of the car and knocked on the door. The house was pretty simple and small, but who answered the door was the best thing to ever happen to me. Her name was Amelia, and I told her my name was Gavin. She then welcomed me into the house and showed me where the television was, so I began working to fix the television. It took me a while,

but I finished and was about to go. Then I felt a random feeling, a sense of hope. I haven't felt a feeling like it in years, and it told me to try. So before I left the house, I decided to ask Amelia out on a date. So then I said on my way out, "Any chance you want to grab a bite to eat?"

And to my surprise she said, "I've got some time, sure."

So then I decided to go to the most romantic place possible- McDonalds. And after the date Amelia decided to give me a chance, so I asked for her phone number, and we started dating once or twice a week. Each date brightened my day and gave me the beautiful bright world I hadn't seen since my youth. This relationship was something I cherished, and I hoped it would last forever. After about two years, I decided it was time to propose, so with some money I saved up, bought a diamond ring and on our next date, I'll do it. So on my next date I brought her back to the McDonalds we had our first date at, and I set up and got the table ready. So after a while I picked up Amelia and we started to drive.

"Where are we going?" asked Amelia.

"Somewhere very special." I said. And after a pretty long drive we made it to the McDonalds. Amelia and I sat for a while and we chatted about what's been going on since we hadn't seen each other in two weeks. Then on the way out, it was time. I got on my knees and Amelia said, "What are you doing?"

And then I said, "Amelia, would you marry me?"

I could tell from her face the sudden rush of emotions; I still wasn't exactly sure what she would say, but I thought I had made the right decision to ask today. It felt like that same gut feeling that told me to ask her out in the first place. Then finally, she said, "Yes!" A feeling as bright as ever filled my heart and every single color imaginable to the eye. Then I went over and gave her a huge hug. That night I saw a beautiful cloudy sky on the way home, and I felt that life had finally gone the right way for me.

After a month or so Amelia and I got married, it went smoothly and then Amelia moved in with me. We decided to not have kids for a while and just live in a quiet house with just me and her till we were ready, and I was fine with that. But after about 20 years, Amelia was diagnosed with cancer. This was a shock to me, and set my mood very low, but I thought everything would be fine and that she would be able to recover after che-

motherapy, but sadly this was not the case for my wife. We were in the hospital together, worried together and I saw one last sight of love from her, then I looked at the heart monitor. She died at the age of 50, and my life was at an all new low, my life was nothing more than black and white.

I lived like that for a while, finding no purpose, but that same gut feeling that helped me before told me to keep going, I don't know why I still listened to it. Weeks passed, then months, then years, nothing changed. Until my friend Evan decided to chat with me again for the first time in years. "Hey, how's life?" he said, and I told him what was happening. Then after a minute he sent me an address, "Meet me there, tomorrow morning at 9." I didn't resist and I decided to go. Evan had invited me to church, I

had known of Christianity, but never really thought about it. Evan and I sat together and enjoyed church. I went back the next week, and I kept on going after that for 25 years. My life had gotten a good bit brighter, but I never got to see color for a long time.

One day, when I was 90 years old, I went on a small walk and eventually found a bench that was over on a hill. I sat down and started talking to the Lord.

"God," I said, "if you're here with me, let me see the sunset one last time." I waited there a while, nothing, and then I started to feel unwell. So I went to sit on a nearby bench. Then I felt the soothing breeze of the sunset wind that almost pulled my eyes toward the horizon. I saw the most beautiful sunset I had ever seen.

2024 Partnership Dinner



photo: BCS Yearbook

Five and two This year's BCS Partnership Dinner took place on Saturday, March 2, at the Sheraton Austin Georgetown Hotel & Conference Center. The event featured Dallas Jenkins, above right, as the keynote speaker. Jenkins is known for his work on the hit Christian drama "The Chosen," and did a Q&A with Jay Burcham, Brentwood Christian School's president, during the event. Check back in the next edition of the paper for a recap of this year's marquee outing.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: *Carina Combs*

Seniors featured in the Bear Facts were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS Class of 2024.

Senior strengthens BCS, classmates

By Katie Pittner

Leading with a gentle spirit and determined heart, senior Carina Combs is known to be the ideal friend, student, and teammate. Friends and teachers describe her as kind, humble, creative, and always willing to lend a hand as she provides a good example for everyone on campus.

Everyone agrees - Carina's character and work ethic are like no other, and she always makes those around her better with her graceful personality.

"Carina is kind, loving, and beautiful inside and out," junior Eden Peterson said.

Combs was born in Austin, Texas, and has been at Brentwood ever since she was three years old. Having spent nearly 15 years at BCS, Combs has made a tremendous impact on the school and its community, as she is very involved in many different activities.

As a volleyball player, soccer player, track manager and class officer, those around her can only describe Combs as someone who always gives her all in everything she does. Her drive to be the best she can be does not go unrecognized.

"I think something that's hard to miss when talking about Carina is her determination," senior Elijah Catron said. "Whether it's art, school, leading worship, or playing soccer, she always gives 110 percent."

In addition to her determination, one of Combs most notable characteristics is her willingness to do whatever is needed in any situation for the betterment of others around her. The definition of a team player, Combs is always ready to share one of her possessions, accompany someone who's alone, or step up into an empty role.

One example of this is when the Lady Bears' soccer team had a vacancy for a goalie and Combs expressed her willingness to try it, purely because she wanted to play wherever the team needed her most instead of her favorite position.

In the end, it worked out well. In her first game in goal, Combs achieved what commentators de-

scribed as a "world-class save," popping up to keep a second shot out of the Lady Bears net immediately after diving to save the first.

"I've really enjoyed being able to step up as keeper and help my team in an area that we needed," said Combs.

After last year's impressive soccer season, Combs and the Lady Bears followed up with another playoff appearance, playoff win, and countless memories both on and off the field with senior and underclassmen teammates alike this year.

Soccer featured some of Combs' most skilled and memorable performances, but she was also an integral part of the last two volleyball teams, which have put together a two-year run which rivals some of the best in the history



of the school.

Volleyball took second place in the TAPPS state tournament in back-to-back years, with Combs adding much-needed veteran leadership and positivity to the locker room and relationships. She leaves behind a team and program which has won a staggering 81 games, helping cement her legacy as an amazing teammate and contributor to the athletic department and community at BCS.

Apart from athletics, Carina is also very talented in the arts, as she is a skilled painter, proficient guitar player, and wonderful singer. Combs thrives when exercising her creativity, and loves to make art that looks and sounds beautiful.

"Both music and art are key things in my life," Combs said. "They allow me to express what I am feeling or trying to say in a way other than verbal."

Combs also loves to use her musical talents to spread God's love by leading worship. Whether it be in chapel or another setting, Carina treasures the unity that comes from worship. One of her favorite memories is leading songs at the senior retreat when she was able to use her talents to lead her class in praising God.

"It was pretty life changing to see my class out there, not in cliques or separated groups, all worshipping God together in the sunset on a basketball court," Combs said.

After receiving her diploma, Combs plans to study either biology or astrophysics at Texas A&M University, where she will continue to spread God's love and help others, as she does at Brentwood.

Class of 2024 sponsor Cynthia Davis accurately depicts Combs' effect on the Brentwood community through reflection and the remembrance of a verse such as 1 Thessalonians 5:11.

"Carina makes me better," Davis said. "Her example inspires me to persevere through difficult circumstances and helps me to see others the way God sees them."

Behind-the-scenes staff recognized, valued

By Ally Robertson

There are many things on the Brentwood campus that constantly need fixing, managing, and cleaning. Students don't usually get to see the behind-the-scenes work that is constantly in progress, but it happens daily.

From making sure grass is tidy and cut, to fixing water leaks and electrical issues, our Brentwood maintenance staff works to keep

everyone safe.

Several daily things that are always in need of repair are bathrooms and water issues, as piping and drainage is hard to manage. Every classroom needs a working AC, heater, locked door, and many other items that can be broken easily.

With more than 50 teachers with these demands, it becomes difficult to get to everyone in a reasonable amount of time.

Jacinto Torres, the maintenance manager, works hard on all these requests. With a list longer than some of our homework requirements, we can show gratitude through patience.

"Staff and students make my job easier when they are patient and respectful with me when it's taking time for me to get something fixed," he said. "I always have a long list of work orders that takes time to get through so being understanding of this helps me not feel overwhelmed with all the work."

Torres is the only person that is responsible for fix-

ing everything on the Brentwood campus. By showing patience and leniency, we are being courteous and appreciative.

While Torres works on repairing items and larger tasks, the janitorial staff does the tremendous business of cleaning all bathrooms, floors, and anything else that keeps Brentwood sanitary and germ-free.

"We owe the janitorial crew a great deal of appreciation," Brentwood President Jay Burcham said. "They have the monumental task of taking facilities used by 700 students and 120 faculty and staff, and cleaning the entire campus every night so that we have a neat and hygienic environment every morning."

It is easy to view the Brentwood campus as just another public place with no regard to who will have to clean everything up. But, hours of work go into the grounds, buildings, and surrounding areas.

Furthermore, the choices we make as students cast a wider net than we might realize when we do so with selfish motives.

"I do have to be here on campus on week-ends and outside of normal staff hours," said Torres. "When everyone goes home for holiday breaks or summer vacation, I am here working on things I can't work on with people in the building."

"Students make my job harder when I have

to fix something that was clearly vandalism and broken on purpose. This makes me feel like my job is not appreciated and it's just adding to my workload."

Brentwood is beautiful and used by many people. By cleaning up and making sure the grounds stay in the same beautiful condition as before it was used, we are being considerate, and allowing opportunities for others to enjoy it next.

Brentwood is also blessed with people such as Murry Walker and Karson Dick. Walker makes sure all athletic grounds and equipment stay in prime condition. From striping fields to preparing courts and fields for games, Walker does so much for Brentwood.

Dick makes sure Brentwoods wifi, chrome-books, projectors, speakers, and everything else electrical continues to run smoothly. When issues arise, being able to fix the problem means having to run wires through walls and roofs.

These people do so much for the students and staff. A great way to show gratitude would be giving them a "thank you" and a smile whenever you see them, and show you care by picking up after yourself. Put effort into how you treat the campus; it is a beautiful place that so many people have been blessed with.



photo: Alyssa Pennies

A job well done Without the leadership and hard work of some of BCS' finest, we wouldn't have the beautiful landscape and greenery on campus students enjoy daily.

Fishing, Bible lead list of possible clubs

By Alyssa Pennies

It is essential to understand the vast numbers of hobbies and interests throughout our student body. Clubs are an exciting way for students to express themselves through these shared interests and accomplish just that.

The latest proposals below for new clubs are a fun way to spice up life at school. Brentwood Christian School's collection of clubs could use some new additions, and according to the students at BCS, some potential ideas include a deeper dive into the gospels, melodic bonding, culinary training, and outdoor leisurely activities.

Although BCS students have chapel and Bible class built into their schedules, some Bears believe a club might further supplement and improve our knowledge of God's word.

"I think Brentwood needs a Bible study club, not just a class where we sit and

listen and get homework, but an actual place where we can sit and talk about the Bible and implement it into our everyday lives," said freshman Cameron Hudson. "A club with no judgment that can help us strengthen our walk with God [would be awesome.]"

Although we are taught about the bible here at Brentwood, as Hudson said, it would be nice to have a place with a student-led emphasis on deepening our spiritual growth. It would provide room for deeper connections with God through his word, as well as deeper bonds through student leadership in this pursuit.

Music is another way to promote unity and fellowship in a community.

"I'd like to have a music club because personally, music is like an escape for me and it allows me to express myself," said junior Jocelyn Galvan. "Music brings people together, so I think bringing people together to talk about it would let them form friendships with people that have similar

taste or help them discover new music."

Having a music club could guide students to a healthy outlet for anything they may be thinking or feeling. Students could bond over their favorite genres and share their unique style with others.

Whether you're looking for friendship or new baking skills, a baking club could benefit us in many ways.

Junior Elisha Burkes believes a dive into the culinary arts would be a fresh way of connecting our student body.

"A baking club would be really nice to have at Brentwood, to help people that are interested in learning," Burks said.

There are a handful of people that have little to no experience in the kitchen, and to keep it that way would keep them from having abilities that are much needed later in life. Cooking/baking helps one lead a wholesome lifestyle and build nutritious habits. Preparing food is also a cheerful, hands-on activity that's fun to share with your classmates.

What would they make, you might ask? Maybe something from the seas.

Fishing is a hobby which encourages collective bonding and can teach patience, as well as teamwork, when done with others.

"I would really enjoy having a fishing club here at Brentwood," said junior Victor Koncaba. "It would be a fun way to help people come together and enjoy fishing with new groups."

With some help from all that are interested in a fishing club, Brentwood could hold these club meetings at a local pond in Austin and organize times to meet frequently.

These ideas are just a few of many and when great minds come together, it's amazing what can happen. With the right student push and interest, any of these clubs, or another not even thought of yet, could be a reality in the near future.

Program wins 20-plus once more

continued from page 1

defensively that allowed the Bears to peak at the right time.

After faltering early in district play with close losses to rivals Geneva School of Boerne and Hill Country Christian, the Bears came storming back, winning 9 straight games to earn the district championship and the number one seed for the playoffs.

“We all improved not just as individuals but as a team too, resulting in a great productive season,” Petty said.

That luck continued in the first round of the playoffs, as BCS took down rival Incarnate Word of Corpus Christi and Legacy Preparatory Christian Academy in the first two rounds to reach the state tournament.

Those wins set up a rematch with St. Thomas; the two teams played a close game in December which Brentwood also lost by three, setting the stage for an epic rematch in Waco. For Karrer, it was the culmination of maturity and growth his boys showed

throughout the year.

“We have grown in our toughness and ability to trust each other in pressure situations,” Karrer said.

At the state tournament, the boys played one of their most complete games of the season, going to halftime tied with St. Thomas, 41-41. After a huge 3-pointer by Allen with 30 seconds to play, Brentwood led, 75-73, in the final seconds of the game, but a late putback by St. Thomas ended BCS’ hopes to advance.

The team will lose seniors McLain and Bryson Best to graduation, but they will leave an important impact and culture for the team to use to excel in the next season. With three consecutive seasons of 20-plus wins under their belt, expectations will continue to be high.

Allen, Zelee, Czerlinksy and Petty’s return will give the Bears four returning starters next year, while juniors Jake Elvin and Gavin Martinez, as well as sophomore Caleb Catron, who will step into increased roles in the fall.



photo: Rachael Nguyen

Prime time Junior Coleston Allen skies for a slam dunk in the Athletic Center during the boys basketball home game on Dec. 12 versus Geneva School of Boerne.

Girls hoops shines, improves win total in ‘24

By Anu Oguntade, Ella Kennedy

The Lady Bears varsity basketball team began its season with four new freshmen, a new assistant coach, and a team of only nine varsity players. The team ended with a 15-16 record, just barely missing the playoffs after losing to district rival John Paul II Corpus Christi, 42-37, in the district tournament finale.

Despite that result, it was a season that saw the program improve on their win total from last year (13 to 15) and compete well despite a huge turnover of talent and new faces. This new group of girls grew very close together, and could even be called a family.

“With a very new group, we [built] better chemistry than we had at the beginning of the season,” junior Zaniah Williams said.

“We’ve improved a lot in just playing together as a team,” added senior Lauren Self. “Our team was very new and the people on it never really had the chance to play together but we created a bond.”

One of the key games of the season was the last game of the home tournament versus St. Michael’s. The Brentwood girls are

not known for beating this team, but they got up early on a Saturday and won, 44-43.

Other key wins included defeating a much-improved TSD squad, 45-27 at their home court, two wins against John Paul II Schertz and a demolition of rival Regents School, 50-26.

They will sadly be losing three seniors, Self, Zariah Williams, and Yasmim Seibert. Each were a crucial part of the program, being three of the five starters, and an awesome example to the underclassmen.

“I will miss the personalities and contributions of our seniors,” head coach Julie Walker said. “Everytime you lose seniors... you always lose an element of your team.”

The seniors feel the same way about leaving the rest of the team.

“I’m going to miss the team,” Self said. “They’ve honestly been really fun and have been super awesome to me.”

Sophomore Sophia Tolliver led BCS in points this season, averaging just over 17 a game. Tolliver, with two more years of play, will be within striking distance of the all-time points record at Brentwood, held by alum Nicole Glenn (1502 points), who graduated in 2015.

Tolliver scored 540 points for the Lady Bears in her first full year at Brentwood, and also led the team in rebounds and assists.

“I am looking forward to taking my game to the next level, and playing even better than I did this year,” she said.

Seibert had 52 blocks this season, the highest on the team. Zaniah Williams led the team in steals, and Self was tops in three pointers made.

The Lady Bears will look to build on their season next year, facing tough competition with the likes of Brook Hill School and Hyde Park joining the district. No matter the opponent, the focus

of the program remains on competing for Christ.

“Remember what you’re playing for,” said Zaniah Williams, “and don’t play for things that are gonna let you down.”



photo: Rachael Nguyen

Locked in Junior Zaniah Williams (5) and the Lady Bears finished their season with 15 wins, two more than last season and the most since the 2018-19 campaign.

Playoff win helps Lady Bears finish strong

By Ava Cavada, Kali Whitmire

For the second straight season, the girls soccer program at BCS put together a playoff-caliber season. The Brentwood Christian School varsity girls soccer team finished 10-7 this year, earning third place from Division III District 3, and won their bi-district playoff game on Feb. 23 against Carrollton Prince of Peace, 2-1. The team consisted of 9 new players and 8 returning players. Overall, it was a successful season for all the girls and head coach Emma Hinson. “I thought overall, we grew a lot this year, both as a team and individually,” Hinson said. “We were challenged more than we were last year. “We learned how to fight through adversity, and respond well. I thought overall, the girls did a fantastic job this year, and I am already looking forward to next year.” Carina Combs, a senior and four-year returner, took on the role of goalie. Playing there for the first time, Combs anchored

the team’s defense and enjoyed her role in the net the most. The girls dominated the first non-district games with wins over Hyde Park (3-2) and St. Anthony’s (7-0). The Lady Bears lost their first district game to Live Oak Classical School, 2-1, but bounced back throughout district play to finish 7-3 and earn the third seed and a playoff spot. A marquee win occurred in the second matchup with Veritas School, where the Lady Bears battled back for a 2-1 win. “As a team, I am most proud of our improvement from before district to now. We’ve come a long, long way,” said senior Mattie Hannah. Although the squad lost to McKinney Christian Academy, 6-0, to end its season, there was much to be proud of within the program. “We were really motivated this season, and overall, just a really great team,” said senior Macie Griswold. The squad will have to replace seniors Hannah, Griswold, Katie Pittner, Tori

Koncaba and Combs, but will return 12 highly motivated athletes next season, including key juniors Charis McGaughy and Eden Peterson. The Lady Bears will join a new district this winter with teams such as Hyde Park, Regents and Brook Hill School. “The future is bright for the girls soccer program,” Hinson said. “I think that overall, we will continue to grow and be successful, but at the core, [we will]

keep our values of playing for each other, and holding each other to a high standard, while glorifying God in all that we do.”



photo: Jackson Hager

Quick turn Senior Mattie Hannah (middle, above) and the Lady Bears soccer team won 10 games this season, including a playoff victory over Carrollton Prince of Peace on Feb. 23.

Soccer soars, reaches regional final

By Grey Nyby, Brian Wu

Brentwood Christian boys soccer coach Cash Miller believed early on in the process that this year’s team had a chance to be special. The squad didn’t progress to the state championship level this time around, but the season was indeed special for the Bears. With a finishing record of 16-3-1, BCS put together one of its best boys soccer seasons to date. An undefeated (14-0) district season left the boys as Division III District 3 champions, and an exhilarating win in penalty kicks in the team’s home playoff game versus The Covenant School of Dallas left each member of the team with many strong memories. “The season started a little slow,” Miller said, “but I am proud of the way the boys practiced and the total effort they put forth this year.” A team that enjoyed practicing together and spending time on and off the field, the soccer boys blazed through every facet of the season. One marquee win included a victory over Holy Trinity (11-0), in which senior Ryder Shelton-Lamb netted five goals. Elsewhere, the team set a new school record of only allowing 1 goal in 14 district matches, a mark that will surely be hard to top for any future soccer team on campus.

To put a specific number on it, the boys outscored their district opponents 63-1, including huge goal-scoring games against the likes of Waco Vanguard (7-0) and Live Oak Classical School (8-0). This was a senior-heavy group of players, consisting of seasoned veterans such as Shelton-Lamb, Andrew Davis, Ike Ruiz, Landon Hejl, Chase Allen, Gavin Garcia, Anh Truong and Nathan Thom. Miller said he will miss the chemistry and effort the class of 2024 put forth. Davis played hero in the team’s playoff win at home on Feb. 27; the keeper stopped a pair of shots in the penalty kick round and then netted the game-winner with his foot to send the group to the next round. It was Miller’s favorite moment of the season. The Bears ultimately lost to Brook Hill School, 4-0, in the regional final on March 2; however, BCS will get multiple shots for redemption next year with the school moving into the new soccer district in TAPPS 5A. Every team has something to work on, and the returning players mentioned finishing accuracy, communication and work ethic moving forward. However, the future looks bright, with returning players such as freshman Ali Dadashazar and sophomore Jacob Valladares, among

others, back in action next winter. “Our team has definitely improved, and we can do better with more training,” Valladares

said. “We are excited for the new experiences [in 5A],” Miller added.



photo: Tanner Hunka

Free and clear Senior Andrew Davis (pictured above, kicking the ball) and the Bears soccer team put together an undefeated district championship season on the pitch.

Track and field takes off, eye state championships

By Nico Napper, Anu Oguntade

The 2024 Brentwood Christian School Track and Field teams are starting off the season strong with bigger teams than ever, a new boy's head coach, and full of hope to win two state championships.

The track and field girls team consists of 19 runners and is being led by head coach Katie Smith, who has 23 years of coaching experience, and fourth grade BCS teacher Veronica Eke, who serves as assistant coach.

The BCS boys track and field team has a large number of returners as well; this includes key runners and throwers in seniors Renne Cooper and Jakob Megilligan, and sophomores Joshua Gonzales and Trey Campbell.

David Waters will be the head coach for

the boys, assisted by football's Kyle Maxfield and new teacher Caleb Davis.

"The life lessons and spiritual applications are endless as every individual must look beyond what they are enduring physically in order to achieve their goals," said Waters.

The track and field teams expect to face tough competition on the district, regional, and state level. Some teams to look out for include Cypress Christian, who placed first overall in state a year ago.

But Brentwood has some big-time runners of its own, including reigning state champs on the girls side in 200 meter winner and senior Juliet Booker, 1600 and 3200 meter winner Harper Counts and multiple state-level relay teams.

Seniors Lucy Belcik, Mattie Hannah, Lyla

Kate Jackson, Emily Mulcahy, Katie Pittner, and Lauren Self will also bring leadership and experience to the team, in their respective events.

Last season the team placed second in state and has potential to go even further this year with incoming runners including freshmen Ava Johnson and Lynden Worley.

"I want my players to learn how to be a part of a team, working together, and overcoming challenges together," said Smith.

"I'm so proud of all the girls; we've been working so hard in practice and I'm so excited for the upcoming meets," added Worley.

The boys will return all of their runners from the state champion 4x200 relay as well as the state runner-up 4x100. Megilligan was a member of both, as well as a medalist (silver) in the 100 meter dash.

Cooper, who won the 3200 and earned second in the mile, will also be counted on for major points at each meet.

"I'm looking forward to the success I know our team will earn this year," said senior Renne Cooper.

The squad performed well at the Pflugerville Connally Invitational on Feb. 29, and will continue to compete leading up to the district championships at Holy Cross on April 10.

For both teams, the goal is simple.

"We finna win state baby," said senior John Youngdale.

Time will tell how close the squad comes to achieving those lofty goals on both the boys and girls sides, but hopes are high that two more banners will soon be gracing the top of the Athletic Center rafters.

Ball and bat sports begin seasons

By Jack Henry Gonzalez, Everett Merrell

Baseball and softball season are fully underway for 2024, with both programs featuring new coaches and an exciting roster of BCS athletes. Here are the updates for both programs below.

Three dominant wins at the Nixon-Smiley tournament gave the Brentwood Christian **baseball** team an impressive 8-2 start to their season on March 1.

This year's team will be following a very successful 2023 season with much to look forward to, especially considering that the team will be returning every starter from last year's undefeated district champion team.

After finishing one game away from state, the goal this year is simple.

"Our main goal is to win district and make it to the state tournament," said senior Jamie Nauman.

"With all of our guys returning this year, we should be better than before, which gives us a strong chance of going farther than last year," added senior Braden Darling.

Long-time assistant coach, Charles Bollinger, has taken over as this year's head coach.

"I am excited to see everyone back from last year and a good senior class," Bollinger said. "More experience will help from last year and the work ethic."

As the early games of the season continue, the team has had a few opportunities to both examine and reflect on their performance.

Junior Jack Copeland leads the team in batting average, followed by sophomore Tanner Hunka.

Copeland also leads the team in RBIs and on base percentage. On the defensive side, senior Giovanni Perez leads the team in ERA while Nauman leads the team in fielding percentage.

"Right now in practice, we're starting to get the rust off and get ready to improve our game altogether in every aspect," said Darling.

When asked about his expectations for the rest of the season, Bollinger said he expects the Bears' long-time heavy hitters to carry the load.

"I expect the seniors to step up and be leaders," Bollinger said.

With many games left in their season, the Bears have both much to look forward to as well as much to accomplish this year.

The Bracken Christian tournament on March 7 and 8 will wrap up three straight weekends of tournament baseball for the Bears, who begin district play on March 22 at Waco Vanguard.

The Lady Bears' **softball** season has also begun, as the team has already played 15 games with a 7-8 record, the most recent of which being a 12-4 win against Manor New Tech in the Hallettsville Sacred Heart tournament on March 2.

This year's team is coming off a successful season last year, losing only 2 district games to champion Veritas Academy and qualifying for the playoffs. Additionally, with two new coaches, the Lady Bears have high expectations for the 2024 season.

Coach Sydney Trees leads the team as head coach this year. It is her first year at Brentwood and she comes with 5 years of softball experience

see **STRONG**, page 12

2024 Varsity Lady Bears

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| #1 Keira Black (Sr.) | #15 Harper Counts (So.) |
| #2 Ella Kennedy (Fr.) | #16 Reese Hertel (So.) |
| #4 Ava Cavada (Fr.) | #18 Arden Haertl (Fr.) |
| #5 Hannah Hanrahan (So.) | #21 Jolie Shepard (So.) |
| #6 Jisoo Han (Sr.) | #22 Alyssa Pennies (Fr.) |
| #7 Jocelyn Galvan (Jr.) | #23 Kali Whitmire (Fr.) |
| #8 Joy Wilson (Sr.) | #32 Ally Robertson (So.) |
| #13 McKenna Counts (Sr.) | #12 Haven Peterson (Fr.) |
| #14 Hailyn Counts (So.) | #24 Ella Dannhaus (Fr.) |

2024 Varsity Bears

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| #1 Jamie Nauman (Sr.) | #11 Andrew Davis (Sr.) |
| #2 Giovanni Perez (Sr.) | #12 Jack Henry Gonzales (So.) |
| #3 Tanner Hunka (So.) | #13 Colton McLain (Sr.) |
| #4 Griffin Smith (Jr.) | #14 Dalton Griswold (Fr.) |
| #5 Jaden Alvarado (So.) | #15 Taylor Cunningham (Sr.) |
| #8 Parker Saxon (So.) | #16 Jack Copeland (Jr.) |
| #9 Braden Darling (Sr.) | #18 Zach Bolden (Jr.) |
| #10 Jack Hansen (So.) | |

BCS welcomes tennis

By Arden Haertl, Cam Hudson

BCS added a new TAPPS sport to the list of offerings this school year, grouping tennis in with the long list of athletic offerings on campus.

As the team prepares to cement its legacy as the first group of Bears ever to compete in TAPPS tennis, the short and long-term benefits have led the school to pursue all of the necessary resources to make it happen.

"I think tennis is overall a nice lifetime sport, it's something you can do for the rest of your life," said Julie Walker, BCS athletic director.

Those resources include new head coach Terry Osborne.

Osborne recently accepted the role for Brentwood, and his experience will be of great support to the student-athletes who venture onto the court this year for tennis.

In addition to competing in several USTA (United States Tennis Association) tournaments and leagues through his career, Osborne has a certification of Tennis Teaching Professional. It was during completion of the certification that Osborne knew he wanted to pursue

coaching tennis more regularly.

"I truly discovered I had a special eye for problems in a player's game and the knowledge to make the necessary corrections," he said. "The same love for playing the game transferred to the love to teach others this wonderful sport."

Some of the Brentwood students currently signed up for tennis include seniors Jael Rubin and Clayton Rackley, as well as junior Quinn Kirchoff.

Thus far, the group is enjoying the challenge.

"It's not as easy as I thought it would be but, it is really fun," said sophomore Lily Wright.

The squad will be practicing at Leander Glenn high school most days, and had their first official match with Hyde Park on Feb. 29. Upcoming matches include an April 8 showdown with St. Dominic Savio.

Most members are looking forward to the memories sure to come in the matches ahead.

"I signed up because I'm a senior and I wanted to do something new," said Rubin. "I may never get an opportunity like this again and so I wanted to take advantage of it."

Golf ready 'fore' season

By Elli Harlan

Going into the 2024 spring season, the Brentwood Christian School golf team is starting off strong. This year's program will consist of a boys varsity and JV and Brentwood's first official girls varsity team.

New head coach Jake Hale will be leading this year's golf team with assistant coach Connor White. Hale, in his first year on staff at BCS, also assisted with the foot-ball team and serves as the school's Director of Communication. White is entering his second year assisting the program along with his duties as boys basketball assistant.

The coaches are excited to start off the season with an experienced boys team and a strong girls team.

On the girls side, returners and juniors Karlee Lawrence and Julia Sabin will look to help the new faces get acclimated in early tournaments. Newcomers include freshmen Noelle Shepard, Peyton Tucker and Ella Dannhaus, rounding out the fivesome.

Returning to the Bears golf team are juniors Armani Mohamed and Jack Flu-

itt, senior Kai Nyby, sophomores Grey Nyby and Luke Sheth and juniors Ralph Castillo and Gavin Phillips. Newcomers are seniors Alexander Jackson, Mark Caesar and Ryder Shelton-Lamb, sophomores Kale Anderson, Liam McGaughy and Amir Dadashazar, and freshmen Joshua Howe, Sergio Spehar, Henrik Dawson and AJ Koncaba.

"The main goal for this year is to compete well at district and make it out of our district tournament as a team with the boys," White said. "We are excited to hopefully have a full girls team and to be able to advance with them as a team, as well."

The teams plan to start the season by attending several varsity and JV tournaments, and for the first time ever, Brentwood hosted its own golf tournament at Teravista Golf Club in Round Rock on March 5.

State golf for TAPPS 4A will be in Glen Rose this year at the Squaw Valley Golf Course starting April 28.

"We hope to be playing all the way through the season as individuals and as a team towards state," said White.

Swim team completes excellent season

By Gavin Edmonson, Rachael Nguyen

Brentwood Christian's first boys and girls swim team in the school's existence made it all the way to the TAPPS state

meet this year. The inaugural team featured 11 student-athletes and braved early mornings, complicated practice schedules and varying levels of experience to produce an amazing season.

Even through various forms of adversity, every member of the team embraced the difficult environment, and it paved the way for a strong season across the board.

"The practices are challenging, but they motivate me to grow my skills in swimming," said freshman Vale-ria Sandoval.

Even though the swim team is new, it was blessed with many talented members. At this year's state meet on Feb. 14 in San Antonio, Jennifer Montier, a junior, broke the school record and placed second overall in TAPPS Division III in both the 100-yard butterfly and 100-yard backstroke.

Montier was the lone Brentwood swimmer to medal at the state meet, setting her up for a big senior season next year in hopes of gold. However, BCS had many qualify for state—a major accomplishment—after an impressive showing in the regional round.

Alexander Reid, a junior, placed second in the boys 200-yard freestyle. Junior Gus Ebner was third in the boys 50-yard freestyle at regionals.

Unfortunately, the girls relay team was disqualified due to a false start, but the boys relay team placed third in the 200-yard freestyle and second in the 200-yard medley.

"I am proud to have seen each swimmer swimming their fastest times at the regional meet," said head coach Jason Mon-

tier. "The boys were a breakout success.

"With a few more boys, next year we can compete in all three relay events and try to win regionals."

Other members of the boys team this year included sophomore Gavin Edmondson, who finished eighth in the 100-yard butterfly at state, and freshman Evan Berger. Both were members of the two relays which competed at state.

Girls swimmers included Montier and freshmen Rachael Nguyen, Natalie McGee, Sandoval, Zoe Ruiz, and Gracyn Mayle.

The entire squad anticipates returning next year and is looking forward to more coaching from Montier.

"The way Mr. Montier coaches helps me keep on going even when it is really hard," said Nguyen.

His advice for the time in between seasons is simple.

"Stay in the water and we will dive back in even faster next fall," said Montier.

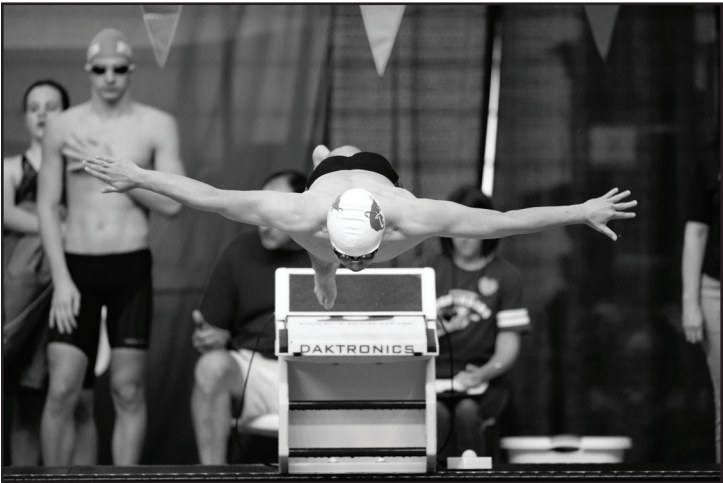


photo: BCS Yearbook

Love that form Gavin Edmonson, above, is seen diving into the pool at TAPPS State Meet, held on Feb. 14 in San Antonio.

Bellas finish strong

continued from page 1

competing in an elimination rounds portion, but I was very excited to be picked as the winner.”

Before winning the state championship, the Lady Bellas traveled to Orlando for a performance and learning experience at Walt Disney World back in November. Before departing, Warner filled out an application for the team that resulted in an eager invitation for the Bellas to perform.

While in Orlando, the Bellas were able to partake in a choreography workshop taught by a Disney dancer in addition to their performance. The girls were able to gain experience that will help them in their future as dancers.

“The choreography was from a Disney show and taught to the girls as if they were going through an audition process, which was invaluable training for them,” Warner said.

When the team performed, they exhibited a compilation of nine dances on the Water Stage at the Disney Springs park. The Bellas displayed their hard work for Disney guests and their excellent technique and performance earned them a trophy for their performance.

“Even with nine dances the girls kept up the energy and the packed crowd made it an experience I will never forget,” 1st Lieutenant and senior Lyla Kate Jackson said. “After months of hard work, we were extra excited

to receive the first gold trophy of our season!”

After their performance, the Lady Bellas were able to spend free time in various Disney parks and spend time together as a team.

“The free time allowed us to become closer not only as a team but as friends,” 2nd Lieutenant and senior Kora Simon said. “We really were able to become more like sisters than teammates because of the trip.”

In future years, the Lady Bellas hope to continue to gain more accolades both locally and as far as God’s plan takes them.

“I will most definitely seek any and all opportunities for the Lady Bellas and intend to pursue another trip soon,” Warner said.

Lastly, the Bellas competed in their final competition of the year—American Drill and Dance—in which they swept the competition again, winning first place for their varsity routines, and earning Division I ratings on all eight of the routines they showcased.

In addition to their dancing, the Lady Bellas took home the Highest Team GPA award and the Best Sportsmanship award—an award voted on by other teams and competitors at the competition.

While the Lady Bellas dominated this year in their competition season, students and faculty look forward to the Spring Showcase and next year’s competition. With tryouts and clinics underway, there’s sure to be another strong group in the works to build on the amazing year the Bellas have put together.

Strong seniors lead SB

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ence in NCAA Division II as a catcher at St. Cloud State University, equipping her with the necessary knowledge and skills to lead the up-and-coming program.

The Lady Bears come with a lot of experience, as they will be returning every starter but one. Some of the returning starters are seniors, including Keira Black, McKenna Counts, Jisoo Han and Joy Wilson, all of whom have big-time experience at the varsity level.

“[Our seniors] stepped up and showed to be good leaders in the early weeks of practice,” said Trees.

One of the key players to the team is sophomore, and starting catcher, Harper Counts, who was a crucial starter in her freshman season with a .483 batting average, second only to

sophomore returner Jolie Shepard.

Shepard is another big boon to the Lady Bears; she led last year’s team in both batting average and on-base percentage.

The team has ambitious goals for the season, with both high expectations for growth and success.

“Our goals are to play our best, sharpen our skills, and win a championship,” said Wilson.

“Hitting as a whole and being more confident in the batters box as a team is one of our most important goals for this season,” said McKenna Counts.

The squad will play at the Pflugerville tournament starting March 7, and after spring break, will return to the diamond to prepare for against Veritas, Hill Country Christian and Texas School for the Deaf in district play.

Band ready for state

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tion. Not only that, many of the students didn’t miss a note during the competition.

That excellence carried over into the holiday season, too.

The Brentwood Christian concert that took place on Dec. 7th was seemingly well received. Hosted in the CSA, band Bears of all ages were thrilled with the outcome.

“The Christmas concert was a huge success,” said sophomore Jose Azua. “It sounded so beautiful... it was one of the best concerts I’ve played.”

“I think we put on a really good show, we had good tune selection, and just had a lot of fun,” added senior Roy Zou.

Comedy was another aspect of what made the concert so fun, with “The audience laughed when I jumped to play the whip crack during sleigh ride,” Azua said.

Under the direction of previous director Travis Pollard, the band took home the state title

last year, a crucial feat not only for the excellence of the program, but for the Bears’ spot in the TAPPS Henderson Cup standings.

The band’s 10 points for winning state were crucial to BCS bringing home the overall trophy for the first time, and this year’s group will look to extend that streak to two years in a row with a senior-heavy and experienced band across the board.

With their past success, the band is hoping to do well in the upcoming TAPPS competitions. Feb. 23 was the Solo and Ensemble competition, and the squad performed well in preparation for the big event forthcoming.

March 25 and 26 at the Waco Convention Center will give the Bears their opportunity to defend their state championship from a year ago.

From the director on down, the team is confident and ready for that challenge.

“We have a lot of strong seniors... I think we can get ourselves enough points to win again,” said Zou.

Spirited cheer wraps

By Sevastiana Riveron, Ally Robertson

The 2023-24 cheer season ended on a positive note for Brentwood Christian High School, with competition, pep rallies, and games going well.

Complicated hours and early mornings made practicing difficult for the cheerleaders, but their work ethic and dedication pulled them through.

“This year, the cheerleaders worked really hard in the mornings to prepare for the pep rallies and competition, and I think this is one of the biggest things that helped pull them closer,” said Julie Ann Harper, head coach. “Those mornings were pitch black and often cold, but everyone came with a great attitude.”

“We got a lot of work done and made many memories.”

The cheer squad cheered at football and basketball games, pep rallies, and competitions. They also represented BCS well at the TAPPS state cheer championships in December.

When interviewed, many cheerleaders said their favorite memories about this cheer season were games and bus rides as they were able to spend time together and be closer as a team.

“I’ve had a blast growing with my new friends on the cheer team,” said junior Jenna Flemming.

Favorite cheers from various members included “Red Hot,” “Dynamite,” and “YELL!” which have motivated fans and student sections alike all year long.

The cheerleaders also received new uniforms this year, allowing them to match the crowd on nights like “White Out” and “Black Out” to keep school spirit high. New uniforms bring more opportunities and in turn, more school spirit.

During summer cheer camps, holiday parties, and everyday practices, the cheerleaders became a close-knit community that shows communication, teamwork, commitment, and friendship to everyone that gets to see them all in action.

Next year the team will welcome Kris Worley, the current middle school cheerleading coach, who is stepping up to the role of high school coach.



Varsity Cheer 2023-2024

photo: BCS Yearbook