



# THE BEAR FACTS

VOL. 30 NO. 3 BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL DECEMBER 2017



## Christmas in the air as students continue customs

By Natalie Barry and Emily Walker

Walking down the festive halls of Brentwood Christian brings a reminder that Christmas is approaching. Twinkling lights are strung in classrooms, evergreen trees are placed, and Santa-themed crafts are hung on doors.

The fifth graders sang and visited at Village Christian Apartments, the fourth-grade classes went to the Nutcracker, and students donated hard-earned money to Angel Tree. First graders came back with a tree from the Elgin Christmas Tree Farm, Santa visited with children at a Saturday breakfast, and elementary students had their traditional pageant.

As soon as the Thanksgiving break was over, teachers and students participated in Angel Tree, a program that supports the children of incarcerated parents.

"I like giving to Angel Tree, because if my parents were in jail, I'd want to have toys and feel normal," fourth-grader Aysia Ooi said.

Elementary kids do extra chores and look beneath couch cushions for coins to donate.

"We always have some spare change in a jar in my house, so I took some of that," fourth-grader Vanessa Roa said.

On Dec. 13, fourth graders headed to the Long Center to see "The Nutcracker," an act of the classic Christmas-time ballet. They then headed back to Brentwood to participate in a

fancy dinner in order to show the manners they had learned about in class and practiced at home. The students with the best manners earned the Silver Spoon award.

K-4 through third-grade students collaborated for a night of entertainment on Dec. 14. The tradition of the Christmas pageant, which has gone on since 1963, includes singing Christmas songs on risers and enjoying cookies and hot chocolate with family. This year, the playing of ukuleles accompanied some of the festive caroling, which displayed the students' hard work over the last two months.

Fifth graders experienced the annual trip to the Village Christian Apartments on Dec. 13. The students brought refreshments and shared a Christmas inspired devotional with the residents. Students were in charge of different roles like reading scripture and leading in songs and prayer.

"The students get to bond with an older generation, and it really challenges them to lead by example for other students," fifth-grade teacher Paul Morrow said.

Evelyn Ellis, who taught third grade until moving to fifth this year, said she was very excited to join in this tradition.

"I think when young people interact with another generation they learn so much and they get to see how they can build a friendship with people," she said.

On Nov. 30, the first-grade classes again visited the Elgin Tree Farm, where they participated in a maze run, duck races, a hay ride, and more. They came back to the school with beautiful evergreens for their classrooms.

The junior class hosted the annual Breakfast

with Santa fundraiser on Saturday, Dec. 9. Students from ages two to 12 attended breakfast with families and took photos with Santa.

"We want to provide an easy, stress-free way for families to take pictures with Santa," Dr. Brooke Hollingsworth said.



photo: Vaughn Amann

**Ho, ho, ho!** First-grader Mila Newman was one of many people who stopped by and visited with Santa Claus before the Don Irwin concert at the Iva Lea Worley Barton Theater on Dec. 5. A slightly smaller Santa posed for photos at a breakfast on Dec. 9.

## Four concerts fill theater with music

By Ethan Rutt

During the first two weeks after Thanksgiving, the BCS campus was blessed with four different musical performances in the Iva Lea Worley Barton theater from middle school, high school, and professional ensembles.

Choir and Encore started things off on with a concert on Nov. 30. The middle school girls opened, and with an Encore transition the middle school boys followed. After another song by Encore, the curtains rolled back revealing the high school choir. This group of 68 students sang "City Called Heaven," which included two solos from sophomores Phillip Mach and Addie McDaniel.

see **CONCERTS**, page 3



photo: Vaughn Amann

**Showman** Master pianist Don Irwin returned to BCS and delighted a packed house in the theater on Dec. 5.

## BCS to offer bus pick-up

By Benjamin Helyer

Beginning next school year, BCS will have a full-time driver who will bus students to school each morning from the Westside Church of Christ in Round Rock. The bus will return students to the church after school; both trips will be non-stop.

President Jay Burcham explained that the system will be instituted to make Brentwood Christian more accessible to families who increasingly are living farther north of campus.

"What we're really trying to do is make Brentwood more accessible for our community," Burcham said.

Parents will have the opportunity to drive their children each morning to Westside, and then their children will be returned to Westside in the afternoon after school. According to Burcham, the fee will be less than the cost of

gas and time for this daily commute. To make this endeavor possible, a new bus will be purchased and a full-time and permanent staff position will be created to hire a bus driver and overseer for the school's fleet of vehicles.

The area around Westside in the North Round Rock and Cedar Park corridor is one of the state's highest growth areas, especially with young families. Due to this, Westside's pre-school is overflowing with children, highlighting the fact that the church's neighborhood is a great opportunity to offer Christ-centered education.

The system was decided upon after joint discussions by the school administration and church leadership at Westside. Burcham said the Westside leadership recognized Brentwood's need coupled with their community's growth and were willing to reach out to their community and to support BCS.

Quite surprising: Pittner spoke

# Interview with Scrooge reveals holiday aversions

The Bear Facts' Alex Pittner sat down with Ebenezer Scrooge in a coffee shop recently and asked him a few questions.

**Q:** How is business these days?  
**A:** Business goes well and keeps me occupied constantly.

**Q:** Why do you hate Christmas, Mr. Scrooge? What's so bad about it?

**A:** Let's begin with the music. Christmas music is of its own genre, special and set apart from all other music because it is quite simply the worst collection of sounds humanity has managed to put together thus far. In addition to its terrible sound, there are only about ten Christmas songs in total, unless you count ones like that Paul McCartney song, or the one about the hippopotamus, so you get the privilege of hearing the same "song" over and over and over and over again until you slowly go insane. I was DONE with "Jingle Bells" after hearing it once, let alone to hear it 15 times a day every Christmas since 1850. That's when Jingle Bells was written – humanity shows no progress!

**Q:** So you're saying that the way to fix this problem is to write more songs, giving Christmas more variety?

**A:** I'm not saying that the way to solve the problem regarding the lack of songs is to make more of them, by no means! We don't need more stupid stories about magic snow, magic animals, trees, the demand for figgy pudding, or the fat bearded man accompanied by an overly joyous tune written by a child.

**Q:** Clearly you don't like the music. How do you feel about the movies? I'll bet a guy like you could get into Christmas films?

**A:** The oh-so famous Christmas classics. "Look! A movie about Santa!" "Oh my gosh, they're making a Santa movie!" "Santa's in this movie?! No way!" Can we go one movie without having Santa in it? He's really not that great.

**Q:** Regardless of the use of Santa, many of the movies have a wonderful message, do they not?

**A:** The whole "magic of belief"-type theme has been played out since 1930.

**Q:** I bet you love *The Grinch*, huh?  
**A:** Ending ruined it.

**Q:** Is there any Christmas movie you do like?  
**A:** *Krampus* wasn't bad.

**Q:** Christmas is a wonderful season that inspires love for family and friends! People all around the world sacrifice their time and money to get other people presents. You can't hate that!

**A:** People always talk about how amazing the gift exchanges are on Christmas when in reality it's a terrible system with a disappointing outcome. You are going to be caught in one of two scenarios. One, you go out of your way to get someone a really special gift that you think they will absolutely love. You put your blood, sweat, tears, and most importantly money into getting them the perfect gift. And what do they get you? A \$15 gift card to Target. You're left feeling empty, unappreciated, and strapped for cash.

Or two, there is someone in your life who you want to get a gift for, but you have no idea what to get them. You toss and turn at night trying to think of something – anything this person might like. Then, one day you have an idea. You race down to the store and pick up a \$15 gift card to Target. On Christmas they hand you an elegantly wrapped present containing a gift they put a lot of thought into, and you end up feeling like a chump because all

you got them was a cop out without the courtesy of a note.

**Q:** Wow, Mr. Scrooge. You've put a lot of thought into buying the right gifts. You're more of a romantic than people might think!  
**A:** Humbug!

**Q:** There's so much generosity and kindness around Christmas time. How can that possibly be bad?

**A:** Actually, I would say it inspires more selfishness than generosity. If you want to see what I mean, go shopping. The people in the stores are less than animals, running rampant and getting whatever they want no matter the cost, physical or moral. It is humans at their absolute worst, with no regard or care for one another, just for themselves and the action figure their kid put on his list. You ever seen two fully developed human beings get into a fist fight over a "Tickle Me Elmo"? I have.

**Q:** \*sigh\* Quick, who's your Super Bowl pick?

**A:** Lions

**Q:** OK, back to Christmas. Anything else you wanted to criticize?

**A:** The red noses some people attach to their cars is the most ridiculous thing anyone has ever seen. It's not cute. Your car still looks like a car but with the addition of a zit.

**Q:** OK, good talking with you Mr. Scrooge. May you have a Mer- um, Happy New Year.

**A:** You too.

## 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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The Bear Facts is available online at [www.brentwoodchristian.org](http://www.brentwoodchristian.org).

## THE DEAR EDNA COLUMN

by the lovely Ms. Edna

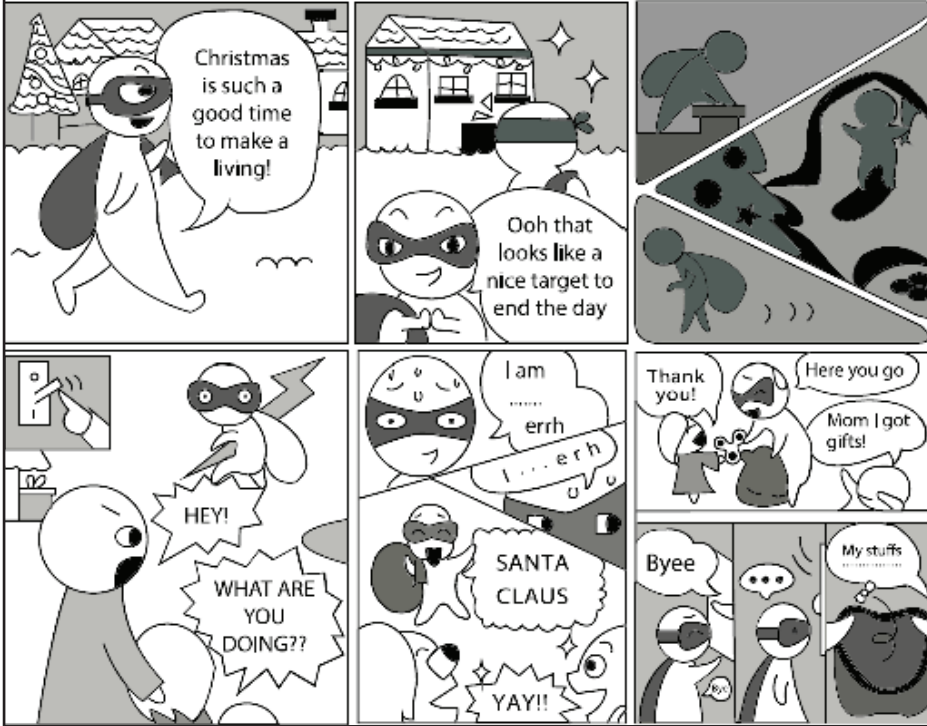
**READER:** Why is the number 13 unlucky?  
**EDNA:** If you count exactly 13 sheep, you'll never fall asleep.

**READER:** What's the deal with fidget spinners?  
**EDNA:** Well, fidget bricks wouldn't be any fun, would they?

**READER:** Why do people think dogs are better than cats?  
**EDNA:** People don't think dogs are better than cats. They KNOW dogs are better than cats.

**READER:** Why was math invented?  
**EDNA:** Math is what Santa gives the bad children instead of coal now.

**READER:** Did you get *Star Wars* tickets?  
**EDNA:** Is Darth Vader Luke's father?





# Jog-a-fun features films, funds, families, fleet feet

By Andrew Geevarghese

Capes and running shorts were common sights on Nov. 15 at Brentwood Christian’s Jog-a-fun. High school and middle school students ran in the annual cross-campus 5K “color-run,” while elementary students ran laps in the baseball outfield.

“Jog-a-fun was a great success, and we could not have done it without family, students, and Brentwood supporters,” events manager Sarah Wilson said.

Through Dec. 11, the fundraiser has brought in \$102,577.

Elementary students ran before lunch, while secondary students ran after lunch and had a morning filled with special activities. Classes watched various movies such as *The Incredibles* or *Prince of Egypt*. High school had a powder-puff volleyball game between the junior and senior boys in which the juniors won. Middle school students started their day with a scavenger hunt featuring fun facts about teachers.

The route for secondary joggers began on the baseball field and took runners through the upper elementary playground, along the western edge of campus, through the lower elementary

playground, and through the parking lot by the athletic center. They ran the course five times to complete the distance of approximately 5K.

Colored corn starch was thrown at them along the way by Student Council members and fourth graders, who earned the right to join based on the amount of money raised per student.

The overall top 5K runner was junior Riley Walker, while the fastest girl was freshman Hannah Womack.

Seventh-grader Brecken Lee was the top middle school runner, and sixth-graders Lyla Kate Jackson and Lauren Self were the top girls, finishing only seconds apart.

The top lap runners among elementary boys were fourth-graders Tanner Hunka, Judah Walker, and Luke Weed who all had 35 laps. Leading the way for the girls with 34 laps was fourth-grader Kylie Snell.

Students who turned in 20 sponsors and raised a minimum of \$150 had their names in a drawing for special prizes. The lower elementary drawing winner was first-grader Violet Browne, who won a Round Rock Express Grand Slam Party Package. The upper elementary drawing winner was Hunka, who received an iFLY Austin experience for up to five people.

Middle school drawing winner Izaak Mora received two hours of Top Golf for up to six people. High school drawing winners Adrie

Gruis, Connor White, Grace McDaniel, and Dillon Smith won four season passes to Six Flags (four per person).



photo: Mere Rowlett

**Jog-a-friends** Seniors Preston Glenn, David Tiner, Shaun Amann, Alec Shelby, and Diego Escobedo burst off the starting line in their Jog-a-fun 5K on Nov. 15.



photo: Doeun Kim

**All together** Under the direction of Whitney Wick, high school choir members sing during the secondary school’s choir concert in the theater on Nov. 30. Wick said she carefully selects songs that fit well with the voices of her choirs.

## Concerts bring joy to BCS

continued from page 6

Choir director Whitney Wick said there was a lot of thought put into the songs, as she had spent lots of time researching pieces that fit well with the choirs’ voices and would be possible to put together before the concert date.

“These kids have been working a lot to make these songs sound good,” Wick said.

The following Tuesday, Dec. 5, was the fifth-annual piano concert with Steinway pianist Don Irwin. With a prelude of Christmas carols from the orchestra, Irwin played to a full house, along with other groups such as BCS elementary singers, the church chorus, and soloists.

During the school day before the concert, Irwin performed separate shows for secondary and elementary students.

On Thursday, the BCS band performed. The jazz band opened up the concert, playing the Aretha Franklin classic “Think” as well as “Hit the Road Jack.” The sixth-grade band followed with three songs, including “The Little Drummer Boy.” The seventh and eighth grade continued the show with four Christmas songs, including “O Come Emmanuel,” and “Fanfare Noel.”

To finish the concert off the high school band performed four arrangements of popular

Christmas songs. Before the finale selection, director Travis Pollard had each section of the band demonstrate what they played during a particular section of music. This allowed the audience to hear how the various parts of the band work together and to better appreciate the music.

When selecting music for a concert, Pollard said he tries to pick music that will challenge the band but is an appropriate difficulty level. The band has a tradition of including certain music in every Christmas concert, such as Leroy Anderson’s “Sleigh Ride.” New music is selected based on the strengths of the musicians in band and audience appeal.

The orchestra concert scheduled for Friday, Dec. 8, was postponed until Tuesday, Dec. 12, due to the fact that school was closed for the day after a rare snowfall the night before. Led by director Audrey Lee, the group includes a beginning strings ensemble and a chamber orchestra. The students performed excerpts from Handel’s “Messiah” and a Christmas carol medley at their rescheduled concert.

Founded in 2016, the school orchestra program has practices twice a week after school in the band hall. Lee said there will be a new beginner-level group next semester for fifth to eighth graders that will rehearse before school twice a week.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: Alex Pittner

Seniors featured in the Bear Facts were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS Class of 2018.

Creative comedian serious about faith, books, pizza

By Benjamin Helyer

A circle of six boys and one teacher lean in closely to hear the exact words of a voice coming from the middle of the room. The voice discourses, detailing a tale in a way never told before, to an audience captivated by its majesty. Just as the listeners are getting their bearings, they gasp in shock, as the story has taken an unexpected turn. A few seconds later, another twist enters into the monologue, and laughter breaks out.

Though the voice may seem as if it comes from the divine, it comes from one of the rare mortals who can design a captivating story with such ease: Alex Pittner. His humor, creativity, and quick thinking is recognized across campus, and he has told many similar tales while walking through the halls of Brentwood Christian.

“He’s a really funny, generous, loving, Godly man,” says senior Alec Shelby.

English teacher Dr. Paul Robison was one of the lucky few to hear the retelling of the movie *Brother Bear* by Alex on that day in mentor groups, and he recalls being enthralled by Pittner’s satire, despite the fact Alex had never actually watched *Brother Bear*.

“He knew every feature that the scene should have,” Dr. Robison says. “Not only did he entertain us, but he intrigued us. In true Pittner style, it did not follow the expected course.”

Perhaps somewhat surprising given his unusual abilities, Alex’s life has followed a fairly normal path. He was born in Phoenix, Ariz., and moved to Round Rock when he was nine months old. He has attended Brentwood since the third grade.

Behind him is his loving family, which consists of his parents, brother Nick, and two sisters, Claire and Katie. Nick is a Brentwood alum, and is currently in his second year at Trinity University in San Antonio. Claire and Katie are in the eighth and sixth grades at Brentwood, respectively. Alex finds that he is close to each member of his family in different ways, and notes that his parents have been especially impactful on him.

“My mother is my rock. That woman has always been there for me,” Alex says. “My dad was very influential in the forming of my faith.”

Alex has drawn close to his siblings over the years as well. He recalls dressing up in whale suits with Claire and “spelunking” around the fish section in H-E-B, and loves watching movies with Katie at home. And despite the fact that Nick is away at college, Alex states that their relationship has only become stronger.

“When Nick comes home, it’s so much more special. We really click and get along,” he says.

With regards to his humorous abilities, Alex says he thinks his upbringing impacted his personality, because he encountered many humorous events as a child.

“I was always weird and didn’t really care about being embarrassed. I like laughing,” he says.

When he was three, he painted the kitchen floor with Nick while his mom was sick.

Around the same age, he opened all of the Christmas presents at a gathering with extended family. His dad later found out and shouted, “What are we going to do with you?” Alex replied:

“Take me to Chuck-E-Cheese?” And throughout

all of his younger years, he recalls Nick going to the door and yelling “Three, two, one ... blast off!”, sending Alex running out into the street with only his underwear on.

To this day, his humor remains clear. Whether it’s reading Macbeth in funny voices alongside fellow senior Diego Escobedo, naming senior Avery Miller the Thane of Elgin in Economics class, or simply making jokes at lunch, Alex has a humorous response to every situation.

Outside of school, he loves spending time at the library, and visits the Round Rock Public Library nearly every day of the week.

“If someone needs me, I’ll be at the library,” he says.

In addition to books, he also has a tremendous love for food.

“I don’t get why people stop at three cookies. I say if there’s 16 on the table, why don’t you eat them all?” Pittner declares. “I treat eating as an extracurricular. If I can

leave you with one thing, go to Nikki’s Pizza. If you want the best pizza in the world, call 512-386-1632.”

Alex committed to Texas State University during the last week of October and is planning to be involved with “living-learning communities” – where one lives and goes to class with the same people – during his time at the school. He plans to major in English, which he says is due to a combination of his talents and interests.

“I really like stories. I love to read. I’ve always felt confident in my writing abilities,” he says. “A lot of time it feels like music to me in that a lot of deep literature is layered with hidden meaning.”

Teachers also see a talent for language in Pittner. Dr. Robison says it is clear that Alex has a knack for understanding literature.

“Alex knows good literature – and good art – when he sees it,” he says.

Social studies teacher Mel Witcher recalls a time in Government when he held a spontaneous alliteration contest with Alex for several minutes.

“He knows how to use words as toys,” Witcher says.

At the core of all Alex’s abilities lies a firm faith. He attends St. William Catholic Church with his family and several other Brentwood students, and his passion for understanding and defending Christianity is evident in his daily life.

Bible teacher Dr. Brooke Hollingsworth says Alex has “deep theological thinking.” She recalls that in 7th or 8th grade, when the issue of predestination was being discussed in class, Alex said that this issue was one thing that, like the concept of the Trinity, might just have to be kept a mystery.

Although Alex will be moving on from Brentwood next year to conquer the world with a combination of words, wit, and worship of the Lord, he will not be forgotten by his classmates.

“Alex leaves an impression. From the moment you meet him, you are not going to forget this kid,” senior David Reich says.





# Graceful Benton spreads love, peace, creativity

By Blake Benton

From Austin to San Antonio and back again, Suzy Benton has a history of teaching at BCS. She started teaching at Brentwood in 1995 and taught second grade for two years before she left teaching when she had her first child, Nancy. When her husband Wade moved the family to San Antonio in 2006 to accept a position with HNTB, an engineering and architectural firm, Benton had no idea that she would return 10 years later and teach again.

Things around Brentwood have changed a bit since 1995.

“It was much smaller, and we made a lot less money,” Benton says jokingly.

Suzanne Green was born on May 19, 1970, in Austin. After years of moving around the country due to her father’s law enforcement career, the family finally settled down in Buda at their century-old home built by her great-great grandparents. She went to high school at Hays, where she met her husband; they married in college while they both were attending the University of Texas.

Benton has three kids: Nancy, a junior at Texas A&M; Blake, a junior at BCS; and Sam, an eighth-grader at BCS.

“It was and is still a blessing to work at Brentwood, but I have no regrets for staying home with my kids for 18 years,” Benton says.

During the family’s 10 years in San Antonio, Benton volunteered at her children’s schools and enjoyed working at an interior design shop which she left when her husband took another position with HNTB. This time they were moving back home to Austin.

“I was thrilled to be moving back to our Brentwood Oaks church family, and we knew



**Devoted** First-grade teacher Suzy Benton listens to Kinley Daniel read while Life Oguntade works nearby. Benton joined the BCS community more than 20 years ago.

we wanted our boys to attend BCS,” Benton says.

When a first-grade teaching job opened up in the summer of 2015 as the family moved back to Austin, Benton decided she would return to a profession she loved.

“I was excited to return to teaching with Sylvia Burcham, Diane Troutman, and others whom I had taught with years ago,” Benton says. “My only hesitation was leaving my sister and a wonderful church family in San Antonio.”

Benton says her husband took the job in Austin for several reasons, but high on the list was the opportunity for the boys to attend school at Brentwood Christian.

“We enrolled the boys at Brentwood because

we knew they would get a quality Christian education, and because we wanted Christian coaches and teachers to influence them every-day,” Benton says.

Benton’s love for teaching is evident to those who have seen her at work in the classroom.

“I am always impressed with how Mrs. Benton has creative activities to go along with what she is teaching,” says senior Jenna Beggs, a student aide for Mrs. Benton.

Kindergarten teacher Diane Troutman is a good friend of Benton’s who taught with her more than 20 years ago.

“I admire Suzy for her ability to balance her life as a wife, mother, and teacher, and yet always find the time to serve others,” Trout-

man says. “If I ever need anything – advice, prayers, or a yummy meal – I know I can count on Suzy.”

Elementary principal Mara Ashley says Benton brings God’s grace and peace into the classroom.

“It is a delight to walk into Mrs. Benton’s classroom and see the the students engaged in writing and sharing their writing with each other,” Ashley said.

One of Benton’s funniest memories came last year when she accidentally dropped a live tadpole in the trash in front of her shocked and appalled class and then proceeded to reach in the trash to retrieve it.

“I really do not like touching slimy animals,” Benton says, “but I knew there was no way I could leave that tadpole in the trash.”

Benton loves to travel with her family in the summer. They have driven to many of the 48 contiguous states. They frequent Colorado, where they have gone several times to ski and to camp in the Rocky Mountains. Benton says she plans on continuing to travel around the States and hopes to travel overseas someday soon.

Along with traveling and reading, Benton likes to bake and cook in her free time.

“I bake some tried-and-true family recipes, but I enjoy trying new dishes,” she says.

A former second-grade teacher who moved away and never thought she would return to Brentwood, Benton is happy to be at BCS and plans on continuing doing what she loves for years to come.

“It was a little tough for my family for me to start working again, but we are in a good rhythm now, and I love being at school with my boys, seeing them around campus with their friends, and watching them play football.”

## Small flood brings fire truck, disrupts routine in Building B

By Michael Milicia

Have you ever seen water spew out of a ceiling, inside a building?

On Monday, Nov. 13, a water heater in the ceiling in front of the teacher workroom in Building B started releasing water. The water knocked out the ceiling tiles and damaged the rubber wall base, also entering the Extended Care room, staining the entire carpet. Fortunately, no one was in the hallway at the time, and no injuries were reported.

For the next few days, classes were forced to relocate while all the damage was fixed and cleaned up. Students returned to the building on Thursday.

Senior Connor White was the first person to see the leak, going to the teachers’ workroom to get papers for computer teacher Brandon Greene, where he saw water coming out of the ceiling.

“I was in complete shock, but it was a little funny to look at because it’s not every day that it starts raining inside,” White said.

Third-grade teacher Carolyn B’Smith was in her room with her class when she heard what sounded like gushing water. The alarm sounded, and she took the class outside and called the BCS safety hotline.

“I walked out the door and saw water falling in great big splashes coming from the ceiling on the floor,” B’Smith said.

The leak caused the fire alarm to go off, alerting the fire department, who arrived in about five minutes to get into the ceiling and turn off the water heater. They also got squeegees and pushed the water into the bathrooms down the drain before it could get into any classrooms.

“It barely moved into our rooms and they prevented it from moving down the halls,” explained fourth-grade teacher Summer Best.

According to school CFO Jeff Morris, two companies fixed the hot water heater and cleaned and dried out the affected rooms. Roto-Rooter came after the fire department and repaired the water heater completely. After that, Servpro started working on remediation. They brought in dehumidifiers to get all the ex-

cess water and placed fans in all the rooms to help dry out the affected areas. They also removed the wall base and drilled holes to allow the drywall to air out. Work will be finished over the Christmas break and will be handled by Sky-Lan Services.

Morris added that the incident will be covered by insurance.

“Nothing like this has happened before, but we were committed to handling it correctly to avoid any issues of mold,” he said.

After the incident, the teachers had to teach class in Building A for about two and a half days. They were allowed to get some things from their classroom like laptops, tests, and other belongings.



# Soccer teams eager to play more matches

By Jackson Baird and Molly Stewart

Brentwood Christian's varsity soccer teams have been practicing for many weeks, but so far they have experienced very few games.

The girls opened their season with a 4-1 loss at Hyde Park on Nov. 27, while the boys started with a 2-1 loss to Veritas on Dec. 11.

For the boys, it was a hard-fought game that came down to the wire, but several costly mistakes in the first half that led to two goals for Veritas ended up being too much for the Bears to overcome.

After regrouping at halftime, Brentwood came out and controlled the ball for most of the second half. But they couldn't quite get over the hump and only managed to score one goal courtesy of sophomore Zach Myers, who was assisted by classmate Frank Guerrero.

Senior goalkeeper Patrick Hanrahan had seven saves for the Bears.

"I'm disappointed we lost and feel like this is a game we could've won," senior Preston Glenn said. "But I'm proud of the way we fought back in the second half."

The Bears play tonight, Dec. 15, at Savio. This is Brentwood's last game before the break. But practice will be held over the break to keep the team in shape.

The next district game will be Jan. 4 against Hill Country.

The girls fought hard at the non-district Hyde Park game with eight shots on goal, 16 saves by senior goalie Alex Sass, and wall-like defense that kept the Panthers at bay. Sophomore Kelli Tindel scored a goal by heading the ball in off a corner kick by junior Madison Mosely.

The fighting spirit was not only in the team on the field but was also in the parents and fans that traveled with them.

"Despite the bitter cold, Brentwood Bears fans travel well!" BCS parent Teresa Glenn exclaimed after the game was over.

Having a long stretch without games is taking its toll on some players.

"It is nerve-racking, but I feel that it gives us time to reflect back on the Hyde Park game and correct mistakes that we made," Sass said.

The girls' first game was supposed to occur on Nov. 16 against St. Michael's, but due to Coach Cash Miller's illness, the game was rescheduled. They played at St. Michael's on Dec. 15, and the first district game will take place on Jan 4.

# Impressive football season draws to close

By Noah Islas

The BCS football team ended their season in round two of the playoffs against Cypress Christian, losing 56-14 on Nov. 25 in Navasota. In the school's second year playing 11-man football the Bears finished the season with a 9-3 record and a 4-2 district record.

Brentwood actually scored first against Cypress. But they quickly fell behind, and by half-time they were down 42-14.

"Our team got drained when Cypress ran its no-huddle offense," junior quarterback Blake Benton said. "We didn't have the subs to put on the field to give other players a break."

A week earlier the Bears hosted their first playoff game in school history and pulled out a 28-27 victory in a tight matchup against TSD. The Bears were down at halftime 21-13.

Brentwood's defense had three sacks, and in the fourth quarter they stopped TSD from scoring four times after TSD had a first down at Brentwood's 2-yard line. BCS ended the game with 273 rushing yards and 142 passing yards.

Back on the sidelines for the playoffs was head coach Stan Caffey, who underwent triple bypass surgery on Oct. 30 but missed only two games. The *Austin American-Statesman* ran a story about Caffey on the front page of their sports section on Wednesday, Nov. 22.

Brentwood finished the regular season on Nov. 10 with a 37-8 win over St. Gerard, in which they led 30-8 at halftime.

Senior Hunter Burcham credited the offensive line for much of the team's success, praising their hard work getting stronger and improving their game.

"With a strong offensive line, we dominated the game at the line, which allowed our team to dominate the run game and passing game," he said.

Burcham said it wasn't about luck when Brentwood "took every team we played by surprise" this year. He credited the team's work ethic in off-season workouts as well as key players stepping up in key positions. He also gave credit to a newcomer, senior Ben Ogbodiegwu.

The transfer from Stony Point said he is thankful to the coaching staff for giving him a chance. "I played my heart out every Friday night," Ogbodiegwu said, adding that he did not care about his stats, but only for the team. "Everyone on that team is a brother to me now."

Nine different players made the all-district team, including six on the first team. Senior Hunter Burcham made the first team at running back, finishing the season with 1032 rushing yard on 170 carries. Junior offensive lineman Zack Mack also made first team.

On the first team for the defense were sophomore lineman Isaac Copeland and junior linebacker Curtis Mack. Mack led the Bears with 141 tackles, and Copeland was second with 101. Senior Ben Ogbodiegwu earned first team as defensive back, and sophomore Jonah Conner was first-team punter.

The second team included Benton and sophomores Phillip Mach and Sam Orick.

Caffey said next year's team will return nine starters on offense, including the entire line, and eight on defense. He added that the team should be ready for tougher competition, since they have been moved up to TAPPS 5A. Opponents will include Hyde Park and Regents.



photo: Darnell Mack

**Power** Senior Hunter Burcham looks for a hole during Brentwood Christian's 28-27 playoff victory over TSD on Nov. 17.

# Lady Bellas earn high marks at competition

By Jackson Baird

The Lady Bellas drill team traveled to Waco on Nov. 29 to compete in a TAPPS dance event, where they earned high marks and gained valuable experience for the young squad.

They competed in the Division 1 small squad against 16 other schools in which each school performed two songs. The Bellas performed a jazz dance to the song "Lights" by Ellie Goulding at 9:30 a.m. and a pom dance at 1 p.m.

"This experience was exhilarating!" sophomore Taylor Warner exclaimed. "Our sweet middle schoolers were in the front row cheering us on and we performed our dance perfectly. It was so exciting to see that we were able to achieve what we had worked so hard for all year long."

Warner and fellow sophomore Addison Alberda made first-team all state. They were two of only eleven girls from the 16 schools to achieve such an honor.



photo: submitted

**In sync** The Lady Bellas drill team poses at the site of their dance competition in Waco on Nov. 29. Sophomores Addison Alberda and Taylor Warner made first-team all state.

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The Bellas have begun preparations for their Spring Show in April. They also have a Bitty Bellas Clinic in January.



# Varsity boys endure rough schedule, maintain optimism

**By Isaac Olewin**

After playing 17 games in less than a month, the varsity boys are 4-13. The Bears play tonight against Austin Royals, and their first district game is Jan. 5, at home against Concordia.

The team started the season with only eight players in varsity and JV together, as several key players were still playing football.

The Bears opened their season at home with a 58-55 win against Glenn, a new public school in Leander. After that was the annual BCS Invitational, where the team had the opportunity to play in front of bleachers packed with screaming elementary students. The first game was a 74-66 win against St. Dominic Savio.

The next game was a 42-41 loss to Katy Faith West, and then in the final game, the Bears were blown out by Tyler All Saints 67-39. But new head coach Brandon Greene could tell the team has good chemistry.

“We’ve got a bunch of kids that like each other. It’s easy to share the ball and play when we like each other,” he said after the Savio game.”

Since then, the Bears have lost several games against what senior Connor White called a “brutal” non-district schedule. After a close loss to San Marcos Homeschool on Nov. 21 and another loss at Crockett High on Nov. 27, the Bears headed to Tyler for the All Saints Tournament. There they faced some difficult matchups, including a blowout loss to Arlington Grace Prep.

The Bears were paced by senior Aedan Acheson, who was named to the all-tournament team, and junior Nathan Ging, who led the team with 11 points per game. It was the first time the Bears had their full roster available.

Brentwood’s eight-game losing streak ended when they played Hyde Park on Dec. 5. Hosting the Panthers for the first time in many years, the Bears held the lead from beginning to end. White led the Bears with his first-ever 20-point outing, including a barrage of three-pointers. Hickl scored 14, and all 11 players available played significant minutes.

The following weekend, BCS hit the road again for the Savio Tournament. According to Greene, the team appeared to take a step backward as it competed in this tournament, sometimes lacking strong effort. The Bears went 1-5 on the weekend. One highlight was a 25-point effort by Ging against Savio.

“The wins and losses are not telling the true story,” White said. “I think we are going to be a really tough team to beat as we start to peak during district. We are starting to gel as a team, and I can’t wait to see how good we can be.”

Acheson agreed that early season competition has forced the Bears to improve.

“As we continue to get better, I can see us going pretty far into playoffs,” he said.



**Ball control** Freshman John Murphy heads downcourt during November’s Brentwood Invitational. The Bears have faced many challenges but are ready for district.

# Lady Bears play four tournaments, feature balanced scoring

**By Wes Tindel**

The Lady Bears have come through four tournaments in the pre-district portion of their schedule with plenty of lessons learned and a 15-8 record. Their next game will be tonight against Savio, and their district schedule begins Jan. 5, at home against Concordia.

Head coach Devan Loftis said the team has gained a lot of experience.

“There are a lot of new players getting to play more with so many games,” Loftis said.

On the other hand, having so many games means there has been a struggle finding enough time to practice and work on team weaknesses.

“We need to build consistency on both ends of the court,” Loftis said.

Senior Grace McDaniel said it has been fun playing in so many tournaments.

“Hopefully all that playing time will help us dominate this season in district,” she said.

Following are the team’s most recent results:

**11/16-18: BCS Invitational W W L W L**

BCS opened with a 35-23 victory over Savio and then defeated Regents 46-28. During the game against Midland Christian, BCS hit three consecutive 3-pointers to take the lead in the fourth quarter. However, Midland won 36-34 with clutch foul shooting. Senior Hannah Lewis led the way with 12 points.

For the final game BCS beat St. Stephens 64-8. The BCS starters got some deserved rest, and two freshmen stole the show: Alyssa McLain hit seven 3-pointers and finished with 25, and Abi Walker had 8 points and 6 steals. BCS placed second in the tournament, and Lewis earned all-tournament.

**11/20-21: @Ft. Worth Tourn. L L W W**

BCS started off the Lake Country Eagle Classic with a 50-42 loss to Grapevine Faith. After leading 22-20 at half, the Lady Bears let one slip away. Lewis had 16 points and Walker had 7.

After a 69-35 loss to Bishop Dunne, BCS beat All-Saints 35-25. Trailing by 10 at half-time, Brentwood came out with smothering defense led by Walker and McDaniel. They turned the momentum and outscored the Saints 18-2 in the third quarter. Junior Jaclyn Wishard led the girls with 10 points, and Walker had 9.

BCS then beat Burton Adventist 48-3 after jumping out to a 20-4 first-quarter lead and took first place in the bronze bracket. McDaniel led with 10 points, and Walker was named all-tournament.

**11/30-12/2: @Tyler Tourn. W W L L**

BCS started out the All-Saints Tournament with a 49-15 win over Frisco Legacy and a 28-18 win over John Cooper. In the third game, Brentwood lost 46-33 to All-Saints. The girls led 15-13 at halftime, but pressure defense took its toll as turnovers allowed easy points for the Trojans. Junior Nyna Vazquez had 11 points. In the final game, BCS was defeated by Winona 44-33. The Lady Bears had won this tournament the past four years. Vazquez was named to the all-tournament team.

**12/5: Reagan 63-9 W**

Hot shooting (12 of 21) from behind the arc helped lead the Lady Bears to a blowout win. Senior Emma Leidlein had career highs with six 3-pointers and 18 points. McDaniel had 6 assists.

**12/7-9: @Cypress Tourn. W L W**

The girls opened the tournament with a thrilling one-point victory over North Forest, a 4A public school. After leading 11-9 at the end of the first quarter, the Lady Bears trailed the rest of the game until the final minute, when Vazquez’s third 3-pointer of the quarter gave Brentwood the lead. After North Forest scored, McDaniel made a tough put-back basket, and the team made a great defensive stand to clinch the win. Walker led the way with a career-high 13 points.

Although BCS lost the next game 58-32 to Village School, the eventual tournament champs, Loftis said it was one of his team’s best efforts of the year. The team finished with a 36-23 win over Lutheran South, led by Wishard’s 12 points.



**Rebounding** Senior Hannah Lewis looks to grab a rebound in a win over Savio at the BCS Invitational on Nov. 16.



# It’s a dog ... no, it’s ... Chorizo the pot-bellied pig!

By Sky Barker and Conner Shaver

You might have seen him waddling about the Brentwood neighborhood with his master, near his home on Carshalton, but there is a lot you may not know about Chorizo, the neighborhood pig.

Chorizo is a Vietnamese pot-bellied pig. Originally the size of a potato, after 10 years he now weighs 124 pounds and is 19 inches tall, and will most likely live for another 11 years.

Keeping up with a pig’s needs is fairly simple, as he eats one cup of dry pig food and goes outside to use the bathroom, similar to a dog. Training is a different story, according to Chorizo’s owner David Bernert. He’ll understand what you want him to do; the problem is getting him to do the trick.

“You will never convince a pig you are better than him. They’ll respect and love their master, but he does not believe that you’re automatically better,” Bernert says.

Pigs won’t do something unless they are convinced they should do so, he says. So treats were effective in training Chorizo, but the pig aims to outsmart Bernert as he tries to figure out ways to cheat. For example, he will only sit halfway, to the point that it’s hard to notice if he is sitting all the way down, just for an easy treat.

Bernert said pigs have less medical needs than a typical dog or cat, only needing to go to the vet once a year for shots. They do occasionally need their hooves trimmed, but that’s usually taken care of by Bernert walking him on the sidewalk.

Chorizo was actually a gift from a previous female friend.

“There might be a message in there some-

where,” Bernert said without elaborating.

One of Bernert’s favorite things about Chorizo is how he makes people react. Usually when people walk by, they’ll just smile, which Bernert finds very satisfying.

Chorizo might look like a bigger pig, but Bernert states that he is truly a mini-pig. While he weighs 124 pounds, a farm pig can weigh anywhere from 600 pounds to 1,000 pounds.

“It’s funny to me when people meet him and say, ‘Oh wow, he’s so big,’ and I think to myself, ‘Aw, you’ve never seen a real pig,’” Bernert said.

On top of the many tricks Chorizo is able to perform, one of his ‘hidden’ talents is hiding everything he can from Bernert when he gets frustrated. If Bernert ever leaves for the day, and if Chorizo is in the mood, then he will open all the cabinets in the house and hide the cooking pans and sheets. Bernert has now put child locks on all the cabinets.

“Half the time, he’ll hide everything under his bed, but the other half, I have no idea where he hid it,” Bernert explained. “If he sees you open something, he will know how to open it.”

Chorizo is well behaved and typically does not damage furniture or anything of that sort. Bernert said Chorizo’s tusks might put grooves into the wall when he has to scratch his cheeks, but he does not go out of his way to damage anything.

“It’s worth it. I do love him more than I have ever loved a dog,” Bernert said. “I can’t tell you why, but I think part of it is because of the challenge.”

So the next time you see a pot-bellied pig moseying through the neighborhood, don’t forget to smile and say “Hi” to Chorizo.



photo: Sky Barker

**Oink, oink!** Chorizo is the name of the Vietnamese pot-bellied pig that those who drive through the neighborhood behind BCS have seen cruising the streets for a decade. Some might be surprised to know just how clever Chorizo can be.

## ‘Trifles’ brings murder, women’s rights to one-act stage

By Austin Biegert

With unencumbered anticipation and weeks of practices with their excited director behind them, the BCS theater department will take to the stage yet again for their annual one act competition.

This year’s play, titled *Trifles*, by Susan Glaspell, is a short dramatic period piece centering on a murder in a small town in the early 1900s. Written in 1916, it has been hailed as a classic work in on the subject of women’s rights. Basing the story on a court case that she reported on in her youth, *Trifles* earned the Pulitzer Prize-winning author wide critical acclaim early in her career. The play’s central climax focuses on a woman who is under suspicion of murdering her husband; but did she do it and, if so, why?

The set will lack the ornate and intricate sets of past productions, which is an intentional change on the part of theater director Michelle Alexander, to increase the focus on the dialogue and the intricacies of the story itself.

“Lots of things aren’t being said. A lot of the acting is in-between the lines, which will be difficult,” Alexander said. “There are a lot of themes about the treatment of women in this time, which, even though women are treated much better now than they were back then, is still relevant today.”

The cast of *Trifles* is very small in comparison to past productions, with only five characters at the forefront of the story. In their close-knit community, the town police, the suspected murderer, and her family and friends pull the audience into their harrowing story. These characters are all played by seasoned actors

who were hand-picked by Alexander.

“They were the best actors; they stood out,” Alexander said. “They told the story that I gave them best and took direction really well, which is very important since we have such a short time to put the play together.”

Having been practicing since late November, the actors themselves have expressed pride in the new and layered messages that they will be presenting on the stage this winter.

“I love the motif of women’s suffrage,” senior Lauren Weilemann said, “and I hope that the audience will pick up on all of the brilliant, subtle nuances woven into the play.”

Some of the younger cast members have shown joy at simply having the opportunity to be a part of this play, and growing their acting skills as a team.

“I’m going to focus on enjoying acting in-

stead of thinking too much about the subject matter,” sophomore Isaac Copeland said. “But it makes people think, and that’s always a good thing.”

Other lead actors include sophomores Adrie Gruis, Lorenzo Rivera, and Luke Jackson in the roles of the women and police officers of this play.

Though the timeframe is very short, students have been practicing most school days for at least an hour. They will have two weeks after returning from Christmas break in order to prepare for their overnight trip to Abilene Christian University, where the TCSIT one act competition unfolds on Jan. 12-13.

In addition, they will also have a one-night only performance at BCS within about a week of their competition, with an exact time and date still undetermined.