



THE BEAR FACTS

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BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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Beautification project to begin

By Benjamin Helyer

Every day, many students cross the front lawn of the C building to get to other buildings for classes, lunch, or arriving and departing from school. This crossing has caused the grass to die, leaving a dirt ground in its place.

Soon, this problem will be no more, as a new stone path will soon be installed and connected to an eye-catching landscape feature. Construction will begin over spring break, and the project will be completed this semester.

In conjunction with this year's Partnership Dinner, this "Paddles Up" project was announced in an email from school president Jay Burcham on Feb. 23. To fund this project, the school announced a goal of \$25,000, which not only would cover the path but also a pergola with benches and a sign.

All of this money has already been raised through this year's dinner, with PTA contributing \$7,000 as seed money for the project.

"In addition to becoming a central meeting place on campus for parents and students, it will also improve the overall look and feel of the school," Burcham said.

He explained that the path will also improve campus safety, allowing students the opportunity to cross campus without having to use the street for a walkway.

To the front of the campus, another improvement was made last month: a new electronic video board. Donated by Ron and Ali Knight, two strong supporters of the school and its mission, the sign allows BCS to play color videos beneath the school sign by Lamar.

The sign allows slides and videos to be played on the board in weekly and daily cycles, and the board itself can be controlled remotely with preset schedules.

Two more additions have recently come to the school playgrounds, as Westside Church of Christ has donated two used playscapes to two BCS playgrounds. Younger students now have a "boat" structure, while students in grades 3-5 finally have their own playscape.

The structures were transported to campus on Feb. 8 and refurbished for safety by Centex Playscapes.

Lady Bears fall in state title game

By Blake Benton

With just seconds left on the clock and ahead by five points, the Lady Bears knew they were going to be playing for the state championship the next day. They defeated the TSD Rangers 38-34 in a stunning comeback victory on March 2 and would now have a shot at the school's first-ever state title.

Unfortunately for Brentwood, their efforts fell short against Lake Country Christian in the championship game as they lost 44-19 in the town of West.

In front of a strong BCS contingent of students, families, teachers, and other supporters, sophomore Addie McDaniel started things off by singing the national anthem.

For the first quarter, Brentwood struggled offensively as they put up only six points, but the game was not out of hand yet as the LCC Eagles only put up seven. After taking a brief lead to start the second quarter, the Lady Bears were unable to fix their scoring problem and remained stagnant, adding only six points in the quarter. As BCS headed into the locker room at the half, they were down 22-12.

The second half produced similar results

as the Lady Bears scored a mere seven points. Throughout the game they struggled with turnovers and missed layups and free throws.

After the memorable season ended with a few tears, it was time to honor the girls with state runner-up medals. Senior Grace McDaniel, junior Jaclyn Wishard, and sophomore Kelli Tindel were named to the all-tournament team.

For head coach Devan Loftis, it was his sixth trip to the state tournament, having previously made the Final Four in 2006, 2008, 2012, 2013, and 2014. His teams reached the championship game in the last three of his six trips.

see **LADY BEARS**, page 3



photo: Darnell Mack

Championship effort Senior Mallory Lesko applies defensive pressure while senior Emma Leidlein pursues at the state championship game on March 3 in West.

Seniors anticipate Alps, castles, waltzing

By Sky Barker

While other students are at home or with their families over spring break, 41 seniors will be leaving Sunday, March 11, to tour Austria, Germany, and Switzerland – a trip never before done by BCS seniors. They will arrive back on Tuesday, March 20.

While in Europe, the seniors have a busy schedule touring such features as the Neuschwanstein Castle, the Dachau concentration camp, an optional swiss Alps experience in Lucerne, as well as optional waltz dancing in Vienna. The seniors will be spending 10 days and nine nights on European soil.

"I'm looking forward to making some amazing memories with all of my friends," Dillon Smith said. "I would say it's the defining point of senior year, because when you come back, you realize how close you are to finishing high school, and it can re-motivate you to finish out

the year strong."

Accompanying the students will be nine BCS sponsors, including class sponsors Jimmie Harper and Dr. Diann Sloan, and 22 parents.

The students will spend the entirety of day



photo: travelandleisure.com

Storybook Neuschwanstein Castle in Germany awaits Brentwood seniors.

one in the air traveling to Vienna. There will be a total of 72 people attending the senior trip, making roughly 25 percent of the plane's population.

Upon arrival in Austria, they will immediately head to the hotel in order to unpack everything, and then will head straight for lunch in the city of Vienna and some free self-guided touring time. For dinner, they will enjoy traditional Wiener schnitzel.

"Hanging out during free time and being able to explore the cities is what I'm looking forward to most," Austin Biegert said.

Day three consists of more sightseeing of Vienna, as well as a three-hour guided tour of the history of Vienna, including a stop at Schonbrunn. After the tour, the group is given a few hours for lunch, more personal touring, as well as the option for Viennese waltz dancing.

see **STUDENTS**, page 8

Thus Spoke Ben Helyer

Seniors discuss potential value of 'life skills' class

Just like last time, the idea for this column started with a class discussion. In Government class, all the seniors suggested “bills” for changes to Brentwood. One of the bills proposed the addition of a “life skills class” – a class that would teach basic skills, such as cooking, car repair, self defense, and finances – to the course offerings at Brentwood. While classes such as Personal Finance and Economics already involve some practical knowledge, the argument was that a more comprehensive course would be helpful.

I disagreed with this idea, for reasons which are expounded upon below, but I thought it was still a proposal worthy of further discussion. For this reason, senior Lauren Weilemann, a member of the group who originally proposed the bill, will be countering my “con” position with her own “pro” position. Without further ado, let’s launch into the discussion points:

Pro: Enough students lack practical skills to make such a class worthwhile.

Lauren: In our age of technological obsession, people who are willing to leave their phones and learn hands-on practical skills are few and far between. My bet is if we polled high schoolers on whether they had basic knowledge in any of the areas mentioned above, more than half would say they did not. If we polled this same group, this time asking whether they feel they would be better off with the aforementioned general knowledge, an overwhelming amount would say yes. Thus, the majority of students would benefit greatly from a life skills class.

Ben: If students are spending too much time on their phones, then it is their responsibility to spend that time more productively and learn practical skills. Even if enough students lack the entire set of skills taught in the class, it should not be the school’s responsibility to make up for a lack of initiative on a student’s part. Just as it should not be the teacher’s responsibility to ensure students complete homework, the responsibility to learn these skills falls on the students and parents, not the school.

Con: Such skills are better taught at home or learned by oneself than at school.

Ben: The current classroom setting has a variety of issues: little attention paid to individual students, a one-size-fits-all approach to learning, and general disinterest in the material being taught. To expect that these problems will go away in class with practical aims is optimistic at best, and because of this, the fact still remains that skills are better taught in a one-on-one environment at home or by oneself through resources easily found online or in books.

Lauren: Students are constantly bombarded with homework and extracurricular commitments, and most parents work. Neither student nor parent is likely to be willing to take the time to teach or learn these skills, and learning by oneself is not always the easiest option for many people. Learning these skills in a classroom would allow students to not only learn from a single teacher, but also from their peers. They would have people to bounce ideas off of, and having friends to learn with could be motivation not to give up when there is a tricky task at hand.

Pro: General knowledge of practical skills will come in handy in a myriad of situations.

Lauren: Imagine you are walking through



photo: pelhantaekwondo.com

town at night, minding your own business. Suddenly, you have the strangest feeling someone is following you, and before you have a chance to dig up a sharp object or some pepper spray, someone twice your size is wrestling you to the ground. You would be in much better shape if only you’d bothered to learn just a smidge of self defense. Situations like this are more common than people might expect, and a general life skills class could make students well prepared to face them.

Ben: Horrendous situations certainly need to be considered, and the usefulness of life skills in these cases is undeniable. At the same time, the question isn’t about the usefulness of these skills, but whether a class in high school should be used to learn them. In this case, a life skills class may not even solve this issue. If students fail to pay attention in other classes, they might just do the same in a life skills class, and hence gain no benefit from the experience.

Con: Finding a qualified teacher for the class will be extremely difficult.

Ben: Expecting a teacher to have above average knowledge in each area of practicality is unrealistic, and if a teacher doesn’t have expertise in an area, why should students learn from them? In our age, there are resources from experts in each area online, so if a teacher isn’t at least minimally experienced in every area, the study of such skills would again be better done independently.

Lauren: The class would most likely have to be a collaboration between many teachers, much like the current SAT prep class is. Realistically, most students are not going to be willing to spend hours of their life reading the “Art of Woodworking” written by an expert. Because of this, why shouldn’t students avoid reading a mound of materials and instead take one course in high school that will teach them the same skills? It’s easy to see here that a life skills class is the best solution to this problem, and should therefore be implemented at Brentwood.

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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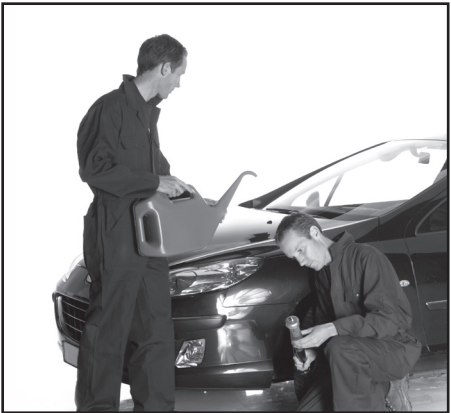


photo: 4recentcars.com



Hollywood star, dog steal show at Dinner

By Ethan Rutt

A big audience, focused on a God-following man talking about his struggles and moments where he saw God in his life, heard the message of T.C Stallings. Moments later the same audience was aggressively bidding on exclusive items donated to be auctioned for Brentwood Christian School.

Partnership Dinner was once again an entertaining, uplifting, and successful fundraiser for BCS at the Renaissance Hotel on March 3.

“The Partnership Dinner was fabulous, T.C. Stallings had an inspiring message, and we passed all of our goals,” events coordinator Sarah Wilson said.

The evening featured a celebrity speaker, many unique items up for bid in the silent and live auctions, and a three-course meal that included salad, grilled chicken, and an option of red velvet cake or a s’more themed cake.

The puppy at the auction this year was a male Maltipoo that is about three months old and was kept by the Kirchoff family leading up to the fundraiser. Two bidders battled back and

forth until one finally dropped out and the winner turned out to be bidding for Sam Kirchoff, who did not want his wife Heather to have to part with the little dog. In the end, the puppy raised \$3,500 for Brentwood.

Before the dinner, the silent auction began at 6 p.m., featuring lots of jewelry, gift cards for restaurants and clothing stores, and unique class items coordinated by creative parents. There were Culver’s party packs of custard for a year, a custom quilt, bat watching, and as always, “Teacher Time.”

After dinner and remarks by school president Jay Burcham, Stallings came out and began talking, beginning with stories from his days playing college football as a running back for Louisville. He went on to explain how he got into acting and told of multiple times that he saw God working directly in his life.

Stallings played professional football in the Arena, Europe, and Canadian leagues. He became an actor after his best football season, as he wanted to be in a career where he could

see DINNER, page 5



photo: Brandy Gauthier

Celebrity Holding the star of the auction, Heather Kirchoff speaks with a guest at the Partnership Dinner on March 3.

BCS reaches third state title game in six years

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“It’s disappointing to be so close again, but the big picture stuff was all attained,” Loftis said. “These kids know who they play for and why they play. They represent BCS, their fami-



photo: Darnell Mack

Ball pressure Senior Hannah Lewis stands strong against Lake Country in the championship game on March 3.

lies, and Christ with amazing class.”

Grace McDaniel expressed her feelings about the team’s accomplishments.

“I’m really proud of how we finished our season,” she said. “At the end of last season so many people thought that because we were losing some talented players, we would not be very good. I’m proud that we proved them wrong by going all the way to state.”

The Lady Bears’ semifinal win over TSD was their third win over the Rangers this season. Down 12-0 in the first quarter, BCS chipped away at the lead, heading into the locker room down by only five points. The Rangers maintained their lead throughout the third quarter, but Brentwood slowly caught up, hitting several key three-pointers by junior Nyna Vazquez and Tindel.

Brentwood took the lead in the fourth quarter and held the Rangers defensively until the end of the game.

“Being in the final was definitely one of my favorite memories of high school basketball,” Vazquez said. “Knowing that all my friends and classmates came to support me and my teammates is such a great feeling.”

On Feb. 24, the Lady Bears defeated the defending state champions, Lutheran North, who had knocked Brentwood out of the playoffs three years in a row, 32-30 in the regional championship game.

Brentwood maintained the lead for the major-

ity of the game as both teams’ defenses allowed few shots. The game came down to several key free throws in the fourth quarter that gave the Bears the lead they needed to win the game. Wishard led the Lady Bears in scoring with 13 points, and Grace McDaniel had a clutch steal with eight seconds left to seal the victory.

Winning the area championship on Feb. 20 was a much easier task, as Brentwood routed Bay Area Christian by a staggering 50 points in a 77-27 victory at home.

The outlook was not so bright for the Bears after falling to TSD in the district tournament, putting them in a tie for second place with TSD. This forced a rematch with TSD which came down to the final seconds. Brentwood trailed by one point with two seconds left on the clock when Vazquez headed to the free throw line for two shots. She calmly sank both, giving the Bears the win and placing them on the path that led to the state championship game.

The Lady Bears finished the season 32-12 overall.

“I am really proud of our team for fighting through a tough season and believing in each other at the end,” Loftis said.

The Lady Bears will graduate Emma Leidlein, Mallory Lesko, Hannah Lewis, and Grace McDaniel.

Next year the Lady Bears will be led by current juniors Vazquez, Wishard, Samantha Fowler, and Jane Hughes.

Engineering day set for April 12

By Austin Biegert

Gears will whirl, gliders will soar to the heavens, and eggs will (hopefully) not be broken at the first-ever Science and Engineering Day at BCS on April 12.

Students were packed into the both the chapel and theater on Feb. 16, where they were officially introduced to the brand new program. Science teachers Michelle Mallett and Dr. Diann Sloan said they hope students will get to experience this new event for years to come as the program grows and expands from its first year of implementation.

Dr. Sloan and Mallett spent a month last summer preparing for this one-day, school-wide event, as well as countless hours during this school year. They say their main goal is to expand the school’s focus on engineering and real-world applications of mechanical engineering and physics. This will be helped in part by the new engineering class which will also be introduced next school year.

“Between this and the class it’s one step in the big picture,” Mallett said. “We’re strong in math and science, and we want to hit it home with engineering.”

They hope to guide students to apply what they know in a tangible setting.

“It’s about problem solving and creating something incredible. It’s meant to be fun,” said Mallett, who helped organize the same program for 15 years while teaching in Oklahoma.

Students in grades 3-5 will have a mini-engineering fair with the help of juniors and seniors who will guide them as they build one of three available contraptions. These students may build an egg cart, a self-propelled boat, or a Rube Goldberg machine, which is essentially a creative and controlled chain reaction.

Students in grades 6-10 will have the choice of those three projects, in addition to a wind machine, styrofoam glider, and a flotation device.

“We’ve organized it as an engineering format just like in college. They will have to design everything to the given specifications,” Sloan said.

Juniors and seniors will be assigned to groups of younger students, with the added motivation of receiving a test grade for their work in guiding the students.

The older students may not build; they may only assist in the process and meet the teachers’ guidelines. The goal is to have an event where students of all ages can work together and all benefit in different ways.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: Merideth Mallett

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

Spirited actress stars in theater, art, serving others

By Kaitlyn Baird

If all the world's a stage, then senior Merideth Mallett is its shining star, with her outstanding acting abilities and a charisma that causes her to stand out in any crowd.

Throughout her years at Brentwood, Merideth has made her presence known onstage with her portrayals of loud characters and in the classrooms with her witty and sarcastic comments. While many of her classmates say they first thought Merideth was a bit bashful, they quickly realized she is usually the complete opposite.

"My first impression of Merideth was that she was quiet and reserved," senior Tara Whitaker says. "I couldn't have been more wrong."

Merideth first came to Brentwood all the way from Oklahoma in seventh grade, and she admits those first few months were difficult for her. She says she is not a super outgoing person and "very shy when it comes to meeting new people."

However, Merideth soon found her place at Brentwood by competing in TCSIT, which she says has positively impacted her life. She began acting in humorous duets, and she has participated in that event and other acting events every year since her arrival here. Because of her talent, she has won several awards for BCS during her years at TCSIT and TAPPS.

"TCSIT has been a way for me coming out of my shell. I made friends there and I started opening up to people," Merideth says. She later adds, "Anything to do with theater helped me develop social skills."

Merideth's usual duet partner and close friend Katie Griffith says their years competing together have strengthened their friendship.

"Practicing and performing our duets for so many years has been so fun and has helped us become closer friends," she says.

She goes on to describe a time when the two of them were dancing to band music backstage at Way Off Broadway because they were so excited to perform that night. The next few years, they continued to do that and made it a tradition to have a pre-performance dance party.

Theater teacher Michelle Alexander says all eyes go to Merideth when she's onstage.

"It's crazy to see how much she's grown as far as confidence goes," Alexander says.

Merideth's number of roles she has played on a Brentwood stage has certainly grown over the

years. She played an orphan and a queen in the middle school one acts. In high school, she took on roles such as the Cat in the Hat in *Seussical*, an evil stepsister in *Cinderella*, and Ursula in *The Little Mermaid*.

When Merideth is not under the spotlight, she is usually finding a way to cheer up her friends or brighten up a classroom with her jokes. Some describe her humor as bizarre, loud, dramatic, and sarcastic.

"Merideth's sense of humor varies depending on her mood; sometimes she's incredibly sarcastic, and other times she is full of wacky puns," senior Lauren Weilemann says.

Ask anyone at Brentwood about Merideth, and they're sure to tell you a funny story. Classmate David Tiner recounts the time when Merideth tried to change up his hairstyle. One day in junior year she told him he should get a mohawk, and when David said no, she spent the rest of the year trying to convince him to change his mind.

Acting and cracking jokes are not the only skills Merideth has acquired over the years.

"Well, I have so many talents. I'm left handed," she says with a smile. "Not many people can write with their left hand."

Merideth has used her left hand and her creative nature to create many works of art. She took Art every year from seventh to eleventh grade, and she began taking Graphic Design this year. She also leads the comic team for the newspaper.

Merideth plans to hone her artistic skills as a

television animator after graduating from Lipscomb University in Nashville. Not only does Lipscomb offer animation as a major, but it also provides many service opportunities, which is one of the main reasons Merideth wants to attend there. She says she is excited for college because of "the freedom to make my own choices and do my own things" and "the new friends I'll be making and the old friends I will be keeping in touch with."

Service is something Merideth says she has grown to love over the years, and she has had even more opportunities to serve others as NHS president. She joined the

NHS officers in her junior year as treasurer, and she was elected president as a senior.

"Merideth values service to others, and she leads NHS to excel in this area," teacher and NHS adviser Dr. Brooke Hollingsworth says.

Merideth's love for service led her to serve at two animal shelters and a children's home during high school. However, she can often be found helping others at Brentwood too.

"Merideth has made a huge impact on my life. She has supported me when I needed it and listened to me," Tara says. "She makes me laugh and puts up with me, even when I'm being ridiculous. She's not afraid to tell me what she really thinks, and I appreciate that."

Senior Donni Lee describes another time when Merideth let her kind spirit shine through by helping others. Donni says she was worried about performing in *The Little Mermaid*, but Merideth encouraged her and helped Donni practice her acting.

"Merideth gave me a lot of courage because she is amazing," Donni says.

Merideth says that Brentwood and its Christ-centered environment has helped shape her as a person in other ways than just TCSIT and NHS.

"I've gotten a family outside of my own family. They've impacted me in many ways. They've encouraged me," she says, "and they've given me lots of sleepless night."

Merideth's own family is very involved at Brentwood too. Her mom Michelle Mallett is a science teacher at Brentwood, her brother Harrison Mallett is in eighth grade at BCS, and her dad Jevon Mallett teaches fifth graders at Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ.

Her mom describes her as intelligent, fun-loving, selfless, and caring.

"She is a calming spirit when things get crazy," Mallett says. "When she leaves, part of the fun from the house will be gone."

The four of them have attended Brentwood Oaks since they moved to Austin, and Merideth says she is very involved in the youth group there.

Whatever future roles Merideth will take on in life, it's certain that her funny, creative, and giving heart will shine as bright as a spotlight in the lives of others.



Veteran preacher, missionary known for hospitality

By Alex Pittner

On typical Saturdays and Sundays, while most people are at home relaxing, one man still tirelessly works at the church through the weekend.

“For 40 years I never took a day off. I was here every day. That was a mistake,” he chuckles.

Now, Roger McCown takes Mondays off but still relentlessly strives to help people in the Lord’s ministry. He is one of the ministers at Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ and formerly the church’s preacher.

McCown was born into a minister’s family and raised in the church. Even as a child, Mr. McCown loved going to church and learning about his faith.

“I never had a bad experience with the church. A lot of people talk about how they didn’t like being forced to go to church as a kid, but I never had that problem,” McCown says. “The reason my parents made me go to church as a kid is probably the same reason I love the church now.”

In 1960 McCown’s parents accepted the call to mission in Turkey, where they lived for a year. Every two or three years, the family would move again to continue to preach the gospel wherever they could. This experience opened the eyes of McCown to the international opportunities of the gospel, which was very influential on his decision to become an international minister himself.

“I always respect that he is wanting to do what is best for the spread of the kingdom. He has a mission heart,” says teacher Mel Witcher, who is also an elder at Brentwood Oaks.

After getting his master’s degree in New Testament and bachelor’s degree in religion from Harding in 1967, McCown joined a seven-family mission team traveling to Guatemala. The group consisted of three doctors, nine nurses or public health specialists, and four evangelists. The trip was sponsored and supported by Brentwood Church of Christ.

Guatemala was, and is, a third world country, commonly known as a developing nation, and back then it had a constitutional dictator and a strong military rule. The missionary group lived five hours away from the capital city in a mountain range McCown dubbed “the Guatemalan Rocky Mountains” with the Quiche Indian peoples. For the first year, McCown lived in an adobe house with a dirt floor and made many trips to a well due to having no running water.

“It’s rustic, but after the first couple of months you don’t even think about it,” he says.

McCown says the Quiche peoples have an



photo: Jenna Timmerman

At home Although he no longer comes to the office 365 days a year, Brentwood Oaks minister Roger McCown is always looking for ways to help others. He remains a regular speaker in elementary chapel.

animistic philosophical approach to the world and have a great respect for nature. However, the Quiche had been exposed to Christianity before due to a Catholic presence nearby. This caused an interesting relationship between conflicting beliefs. For instance, they would take their children to the church to be baptized, believing that this ritual removes the animal spirit from them, making them fully human.

The missionaries spread Christ to the people through an approach to ministry called medical evangelization, which preaches the good news of the gospel while providing medicine and health care for those who need it. Several churches were established because they showed the light and love of Christ to those around them.

“God will put opportunities to bless others in front of you. What you do with those opportunities will determine what kind of Christian you are,” McCown says.

From 1960-1996 there was a tragic guerilla war going on in Guatemala between the government and several rebel groups that caused damage and fear to spread throughout the country. Many innocents were killed without reason by soldiers on both sides. Thankfully,

the missionaries were safe because they had some of the only health care available. Soldiers from both sides and civilians were all treated.

When McCown is asked why he risked his life to go on this mission he states, quite simply, “The people needed help. That’s all the justification needed.”

Behind Mr. McCown is his wife, MaryBeth, and two grown sons, Roger and Paco. The McCown family is known for their amazing hospitality.

“His home is always open. That sort of is the emblem of his life – he is always open to people,” Witcher says.

They have hosted Summit Group meetings for high school students and opened their door to various other groups of church members on Wednesday nights over the course of decades.

“The love that Mr. and Mrs. McCown have shown me through their hospitality has helped me realize how big of an impact I could have on a person’s life by simply being hospitable,” senior Katie Griffith says.

McCown was the preaching minister at Brentwood for 35 years and stepped down five years ago because he felt the church would benefit from a younger voice. He is still very in-

involved at Brentwood both in the church and school. McCown said he believes that the best thing about Brentwood Christian School is the students, and he continues to preach often in elementary chapel.

“He does a beautiful job of getting to a point with even the littlest of students at Brentwood,” teacher Kaleen Graessle says.

Now McCown primarily does what he loves best: working with people. In this member care, McCown reaches to those who feel troubled and helps talk through issues with them.

“People in hard times need someone to listen to them and put everything in perspective. What most people need is a friend. We can all be a friend,” McCown says.

McCown strongly encourages others to be an example for Christ wherever they are, especially in their careers. He feels that people should choose professions where they do things they are good at and can help other people.

“When it comes to spreading Christ in the workplace, it doesn’t mean hitting people on the head with the Bible; it just means being a light in a darker place,” McCown says.

Brentwood is the only church that McCown has been involved in since his graduation from Harding, and he loves it.

“I’ve had opportunities and calls from other churches, but I think to myself, “Why would I go there when I go here?”

Dinner

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spread God’s message.

Some movies that he has acted in are *God’s Compass*, *War Room*, and *A Question in Faith*. On top of this, he also is an author. Stallings said he believes writing is just another platform through which he can communicate God’s love for people.

After the entertainment, auctioneers Jason Rzepniewski and Bob Sheehan came out to run the live auction. In addition to the dog, items included vacation packages, hunting trips, and parking spaces.

The purpose of Partnership Dinner is to keep Brentwood tuition at a minimum. Burcham said that this fundraiser is not for flashy new items, but to pay electric bills and textbook fees, to keep buses running, and maintain affordability.

Baseball team opens season with easy wins

By Riley Keesey

Baseball season has started up with two easy wins for the varsity Bears. They took a 13-3 road win over Marble Falls Faith on Friday, March 2, and then beat John Paul II 11-1 in their home opener on Tuesday.

After a rainy February cancelled several practices and one game, the boys were eager for their first game, as it also marked the debut of their new jerseys. Senior Diego Escobedo started on the mound for the Bears and pitched three shutout innings. He was followed by freshman Riley Keesey and sophomore Travis Whitaker.

On March 6, Brentwood expected a tougher game, but with Escobedo pitching again and home runs flying, the Bears run-ruled their opponent again.

Junior Jack Oberwortmann, senior Dillon Smith, and sophomore Travis Whitaker all hit home runs for the Bears. Whitaker's blast was a walk-off, as it put BCS ahead by 10, thus ending the game.

Players and coaches alike have been excited to come out on the field again and play ball after the offseason. They are looking to continue the success of last year, when Brentwood finished third in district and made the playoffs.

"I think we're going to be a solid team because we will have more players than last year," Escobedo said. "We are losing two (graduating) seniors and gaining one junior, two seniors, and lots of freshmen, and all the returning players will be bigger and better."

With all-district pitcher Garrison Ryberg having graduated, the team has been looking for new players to step up and lead. Returning seniors Escobedo and Smith, who were also all-district last year, have been selected by the coaches for the job as the senior captains for the year. They will lead the team in not only a physical way, but spiritually as well.

The team this year is too big for every player to go to the away games, so Bando implemented a travel team that consists of the starters and a few extra players. The squad will change from week to week based on performance during practice.

"I would like to take everyone, but the team is too big this year to take everyone," head coach Mike Bando said. "Also, this will motivate players to work harder in practice so they can play in games."

Boys hoops wraps best season in 20 years

By Blake Benton

After winning district with a perfect 11-0 record (30-17 overall) and then sweeping the district tournament, the Brentwood Bears made the regional round of playoffs, falling to Logos Prep 67-55 in Brenham on Feb. 24.

"Logos Prep came out of the gates physical and fast, and we could never recover," head coach Brandon Greene said.

On a night when only four BCS players scored, the Bears couldn't match the physicality of their opponent from Sugar Land and fell 67-55 in the regional game. Sophomore Daniel Hickl led the Bears with 18 points, and senior Aedan Acheson pitched in 16 points. Junior Nathan Ging had 13 before fouling out in the fourth quarter.

"Losing never feels good, especially when it comes to a team that we felt we could beat," senior Connor White said about the season-ending defeat against the Lions. "Some nights you just aren't at your best, and that night we just couldn't get it going."

The Bears beat the Lutheran North Lions 85-78 in a nail-biting overtime victory in the first round of the TAPPS 4A playoffs. BCS held a lead for most of the first quarter. Bear fans erupted in cheer as Acheson slammed down a dunk on a fast-break steal late in the second quarter.

Troutman, the usual three-point machine, could not find his rhythm from beyond the three-point line at the start of the game as the Bears lost the lead in the second quarter and went into halftime down 35-26. Troutman started connecting from long distance as the Bears came out hot in the third quarter hot, scoring 23 points and cutting the deficit to just one point.

Ging stayed hot all game, stunning the crowd in the third quarter as he crossed up two defenders and finished with a Euro step through the defense that was answered with booming cheers from the jam-packed Bears side of the gym. The nerve-racking game headed into overtime as the Lions tied the game 67-67 in the final seconds of the fourth quarter.

Overtime began with a quick steal and a dunk by Acheson, and the Bears never trailed in the extra period, sealing their place as area champions. The Bears had not made it this far in playoffs since the 1998 loss in the state finals.

"Winning the area championship in overtime to make it to regionals was a game I will never forget, and it was definitely the most fun I've ever had playing basketball," Troutman said.

Greene, in his first year coaching the Bears, took over a team that was only returning two starters, having lost all-district and all-state talent.

"Most teams that lose that kind of talent aren't looking to win district championships or realistically compete for a state title, but I thought this team had a chip on its shoulder and more than anything wanted to work to achieve their goals."

Acheson ended the season with a feeling of thankfulness.

"I am very proud to say that I was on what was arguably the best boys basketball team in Brentwood history. Coach Greene is an incredible coach, and all of my teammates are like brothers to me," he said.

The Bears will graduate four seniors this year: Acheson, White, Andrew Schmitz, and Alec Shelby.

Next year, the Bears will be led by five current juniors: Ging, Troutman, Micah Best,

Chase Blackman, and Zack Mack. The Bears will also welcome a large number of freshmen coming out for the team.



Slam! Senior Aedan Acheson throws down a dunk in the Bears' playoff victory over Lutheran North on Feb. 20.

Golf teams strong in talent, numbers

By Wes Tindel

Brentwood Christian's golf teams started working earlier than they ever have before, having already played in three tournaments.

In the first tournament, held at Roy Kizer in Austin on Feb. 12, Brentwood's boys and girls could not compete as teams since they were missing several players who were still involved with basketball. Junior Adam Murphree placed second in the tournament with an 80.

Two weeks later, at Jimmy Clay in Austin, Brentwood coaches Brant Troutman and John Vandygriff said they were very impressed with how everyone performed. This tournament was the first of the season for eight basketball players, who did not have much time to practice.

Murphree took first place among individuals, shooting a 79.

A week later, at the Wildflower tournament in Temple on March 5, both teams placed second. Senior David Tiner placed second with an individual score of 83, and Murphree came in fifth. For the girls, senior Avery Miller finished fifth.

Vandygriff said the wind was the players' "worst enemy," and he was happy they came home with two trophies and several medals. He also said he was pleased with the players' conduct.

Last year, Murphree took third place in state playing for Bay Area Christian in League City. He moved to Austin because of his family's work.

With the addition of Murphree and several

other students with golf experience, Vandygriff said he is excited about the season.

"Both the boys' and the girls' teams have the best combination of talent and depth that we have ever had," he said.

Vandygriff said the goal for the team is for everyone to keep working on different aspects of their games and keep improving every week.

"Golf is a journey, and everyone on the team is at their own unique and individualized level," Vandygriff said.

The teams will practice or play two or three times per week throughout the season, which concludes in late April. They travel to Leadbetter Golf Center to practice.

The golf teams consist of nine boys and seven girls.

Softball team strives for improvement

By Molly Stewart

The Lady Bears softball team has a 2-5 record after opening the season with a mix of easy wins and tough losses.

Coach Paul Sladek said that the girls have been working on putting things that they practice into action during a game.

“We’ve got more work to do, and our best softball is in front of us,” Sladek said. “We have to find our confidence and use our great energy in order to be really successful this year, which I believe we can be if our leadership keeps our expectations up.”

After-school practice started on Jan. 17 with high hopes.

“This season should be much better than last year as our team chemistry has grown greatly this year,” junior Kori Howell said last month.

Last year’s season finished without BCS winning a single district game. This year’s team knows that improvement will take effort.

“My expectations are that we work harder and communicate more on the field,” said Kira Juranek, who is the team’s lone senior.

The team is optimistic after picking up assistant coach Phil Koehler, ex-head coach of

the softball team at St. Edward’s University. He won six conference titles in his nine years at the school.

Four of the five girls who made last year’s all-district team return: junior Samantha Fowler, sophomore Alyssa Mancias, junior Nyna Vazquez, and junior Lauryn Williams. The fifth, Hillarie Carpenter, plays softball in college.

Freshman Caroline Griffith is leading the team with a .571 batting average. She is followed by Williams (.538), Mancias (.500), and junior Kori Howell (.400). Griffith leads with 12 runs scored, and Williams leads with 9 RBIs.

Following are the team’s results so far:

2/12: @ Lanier 24-10 W

BCS defeated the Lady Vikings in a high scoring game. The Bears got things started with four runs in the first. Griffith led the team with three hits, and Howell had four runs scored.

2/15: @ Savio 20-4 L

Savio gained an early lead on the Bears, scoring eight runs in the first inning. Brentwood came back with four runs in the third, but they could not keep Savio from scoring.

2/16: Lanier 24-9 W

Lanier brought the big bats in the first inning,

scoring seven runs on four hits and three walks. Brentwood responded in their half of the inning, however, scoring 13 runs on 14 walks. Griffith and Mancias led the team with two hits apiece, and sophomore Annie Schmidt scored four runs.

3/1: @ Hyde Park Tournament L L L

Freshman pitcher Molly Stewart had a good groove going against Veritas with two strikeouts in the first inning of the first tournament game. But after she took a line drive to her hand, she began to falter. Brentwood had some big hits, but they fell to the Defenders 8-5.

In the second game, Central Texas Christian beat the Bears 8-4, as each team had six hits, but CTCS played better defensively and was able to pull away. Williams led the team with two hits, and Griffith had three stolen bases.

In the final game, Hyde Park beat Brentwood 13-9. Hyde Park out-hit the Bears 10-3, and BCS could not quite keep up.

“Thursday was a hard and long day,” Stewart said after pitching three games. “I feel that we tried our best and worked as hard as we could.”

3/5: CTCS 12-1 L

CTCS never looked back after scoring five runs in the first. Griffith had two hits.

High school track season underway

By Michael Milicia

The Brentwood Christian varsity track teams ran well in their first meet, the Savio Early Bird Relays, on Feb. 17. They also had a meet scheduled for Thursday, March 8, in Lago Vista.

Girls’ coach Katie Smith said she is eager to see how the girls perform this season.

“We did not really lose many girls from last season, but we have quite a different mix, so I don’t really know how we will compare to last year,” she said. “I am hoping our new athletes will find events they are good at and can contribute to our team success in district.”

Boys’ coach Correy Washington said the team has faced some adversity already, losing junior Chase Blackman due to his knee injury in the football season. He still thinks the team has the potential to do very well, though.

“I feel like everyone is important to me and our program. Everyone plays a role,” Washington said.

For the opening meet, coaches elected to have

see **TRACK**, page 8

Strong soccer seasons end in playoffs for boys, girls

By Jackson Baird

The varsity soccer season came to a close last month as the boys’ and girls’ teams each finished second in district and made the playoffs.

After an easy playoff win on Feb. 12, the season ended for the girls on Feb. 17 with a 7-3 loss to Houston St. Thomas in Giddings.

The boys’ soccer season ended on Feb. 13 in Dallas with a 2-1 loss to Flower Mound in the second round of playoffs.

The Bears finished the regular season with a 10-2 record in district and a 12-3 overall re-

cord. Finishing second, they earned a bye in the first round of playoffs.

Playing in the area championship against Flower Mound, the Bears trailed 1-0 at half-time. Early in the second half, sophomore Zach Myers leveled the game at one goal apiece with a shot off a cross from sophomore Frank Guerrero. But neither team managed to score again, sending the game to extra time.

A couple minutes into overtime Flower Mound was awarded a penalty kick following a Brentwood foul, leading to the winning goal.

Head coach Jesse Jordan expressed his appreciation for all the hard work the team put in throughout the season and the way they performed on and off the field. But he also stressed how important it is for the team to keep fighting for the ultimate goal of a state title.

“Excellence is a continuing journey, not a destination,” Jordan said to the team. “In life, you are in a continuous cycle of learning and growing. Success and struggles are merely part of the constant journey that in time will unveil your true self and the greatness within you.”

Myers led the Bears with 27 goals this season, and he also had 9 assists. Other team leaders included junior Riley Walker (10 goals/12 assists), senior Preston Glenn (10 goals/10 assists), and sophomore Jackson Baird (7 goals/5 assists). Goalkeeper Patrick Hanrahan,

a senior, had 59 saves and eight shutouts.

“Our loss in the playoff game really showed us what we need to improve on going into next season,” Myers said.

The Bears will go into next season without four senior starters: Glenn, Hanrahan, David Reich, and Luke Tilley.

The girls’ playoff loss was an offensive battle. The Lady Bears scored first on a goal from sophomore Kelli Tindel before St. Thomas responded with two goals of their own. Tindel then tied the game up with another goal. St. Thomas scored three more goals before half making it a 6-2 game at the break.

In the second half, Tindel completed her hat trick by scoring her third goal, but Brentwood conceded one more goal.

The girls hosted their playoff opener, winning 7-1 against Spring Frassati. Brentwood got off to a quick start and went into the half with a 4-0 lead. In the second half they scored 3 more goals, only conceding a goal late in the game. The Bears had two goals apiece from senior Bekah Connor, junior Madison Moseley, and Tindel; senior Avery Miller also scored.

Head coach Cash Miller was proud his team, pointing out that they had more wins than any previous Lady Bears team, and they beat last year’s state champions, Veritas.

“This incarnation of the Lady Bears soccer



photo: Cash Miller

Hot pursuit Freshman Julia Glenn and junior Madison Moseley play against St. Thomas in the playoffs on Feb. 17.

team has a lot to be proud of, and I’m glad they let me come along for the ride,” Miller said.

Tindel led the team with 26 goals, followed by Moseley with 13. Connor had 11 goals and 17 assists, and Miller had 7 goals and 5 assists.

“This season was so memorable. These special ladies truly make up what a team is about,” Moseley said.

Next season the Lady Bears will be without their five seniors: Katie Griffith, MaeAnne Herring, Alex Sass, Miller, and Connor.



photo: Theresa Glenn

Battling Senior Preston Glenn makes a move on Flower Mound in the playoffs.

BCS hosts, excels at PSIA

By Bear Facts staff

Hosting the PSIA district meet this year for the first time since 2014, Brentwood came in second place at the academic competition for students in grades 1-8, held on Feb. 24.

BCS had 64 students competing, which was only about half the number of participants most of the seven schools entered. But they made the most of their numbers, as more than half placed in the top six, and 18 will advance to state in 26 events.

The state meet will be on April 28 at TCU in Ft. Worth.

Fourth-grader Michael Kolagani qualified for state in all four of his events, including three first-place rankings, and sixth-grader Renne Cooper qualified in all three of his math events.

Cooper had many good reasons to participate.

“One, it helps you in school, and it got me a whole year ahead in math,” he said. “You also get rewards like homework passes and

special lunch.”

Sixth-grader Juliet Booker had the district meet’s only perfect score, acing her music memory test.

Coordinating Brentwood’s efforts in PSIA were Kay Taylor, DeShondra Booker, Sharon-da Cooper, and Debbie Strickland. Taylor said she was extremely proud of the way the school community came together to host the event and show kindness to the visiting families.

“Parents really contributed to the hospitality of making everyone feel so at home here,” Taylor said.

She also stressed the importance of the PSIA experience for participants, saying that it “enhances skills like memorization, listening, processing, self-discipline, time management, and commitment.”

DeShondra Booker agreed that the benefits of participation are tremendous.

“Even students who struggle in various subjects have seen that the PSIA program has improved their classroom comprehension,” she said. “Not to mention, they have fun!”



photo: Jeffrey Hui

Showcase Chinese foreign exchange students attending Austin-area Christian schools celebrated Chinese New Year on Feb. 17 in the CSA theater. Host families, parents from China, and students involved with Premier Education Partners (PREP) all enjoyed an evening of singing, dancing, playing instruments, and other acts. BCS was honored for hosting the event two years in a row. *reported by Natalie Barry*

Students set to tour Europe, Washington D.C.

continued from page 1

After waking up, everyone will begin day four on a three-hour bus drive to Salzburg. Once arrived, they will be headed to a guided walking tour, and will get to see Mozart’s birthplace. After the tour, more free time for lunch as well as exploring will be given, and then the group will be headed to Munich, where they will eat dinner.

The fifth day will also consist of a bus tour of Munich, ending with a small guided walking tour in Marienplatz. Once everyone has eaten lunch, they will immediately head to Dachau where a tour director will discuss everything they should expect to see at the concentration camp. When they arrive, they will have time to explore the various memorials and barracks, as well as an English-speaking film in the museum. The group will head back to Munich for another walking tour ending at Marienplatz.

“The thing I’m most excited about in Munich is visiting the concentration camp, Dachau. I’m excited for our seniors to experience that history,” Harper said.

On day six, the group will depart for the Neuschwanstein Castle. While at the castle, the group will go on a 40-minute tour of the castle and then have 45 minutes of free time for photographs. Afterward, they will head back to the hotel in the Tyrol region for dinner.

Saturday, day seven, the group will travel to Liechtenstein in the morning and will arrive

for lunch. Then they will get on the bus again and head to Lucerne, eating dinner at the hotel that night.

Day eight consists of exploring Lucerne, seeing the Lion Monument and the Chapel Bridge. In the afternoon, interested students will enjoy a Swiss Alps experience, where they will overlook Lucerne from a peak, then take a boat across Lake Lucerne. They will then ride a railway to the top of either Mount Pilatus or Mount Rigi, where they will enjoy the view of villages and fields and trek along the mountain with their group. The evening option includes a Swiss Folklore event, where the group will enjoy a Swiss meal while listening to Swiss music, as well as the chance to enjoy the Swiss national dish, fondue.



photo: si.edu

History awaits Eighth graders will visit the National Museum of African American History and Culture next week.

The ninth day is the last day of various touring and activities. The group will travel to Freiburg for time to explore and then get something to eat for lunch. Afterward, they will transfer to Heidelberg Castle for a guided walking tour, and the tour will end into Old Town. Finally, the group will head back to the hotel and eat dinner.

Day ten begins much like day one did -- in a plane. The crew from Brentwood will make their way to the Frankfurt airport for their flight home.

“When I see them looking around at some place with beautiful architecture and seeing them in a state of awe, that’s what makes me smile,” said Harper, who will be enjoying his third senior trip with BCS.

Meanwhile, a group including 22 BCS eighth graders and seven parents will continue the school’s long-standing tradition of visiting the nation’s capital.

Departing on Sunday, March 11, the students will be led by sponsors Carrie Hunter and Russell Larson.

“We are uber excited,” Larson said. “We have to leave at 3 instead of 4 a.m. (because of Daylight Saving), but the kids are still pumped.”

Destinations include old favorites like Arlington National Cemetery, the National Holocaust Museum, and the Smithsonian, but also new spots like the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

The group returns to Austin on March 14.

Track

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the boys and girls compete at the JV level. The boys placed third with 122 points, four behind second, and the girls were in fifth with 52 points, two away from fourth.

The boys placed first in the 4x100 relay (47.54) with sophomores Phillip Mach, Sam Orick, and Bru Hague, and junior Blake Benton. They also placed first in the 4x200 (1:41.92) with freshman Cade Young, Mach, Orick and Benton. The last relay Brentwood entered was the 4x400, and they placed second (3:49.85) with sophomores Gavin George, Michael Milicia, Mach, and Noah Islas.

Islas, new to BCS this year, placed second in the 400 (56.28) and third in the 800 (2:21.09).

In field events, junior Gavin Damra took first place in the shot put (37-11.25), and sophomore Cooper Allen placed second (34-05.75). In the discus, Damra won with a throw of 105-08, and junior Curtis Mack came in second (100-01).

For the girls, junior Kayla Mayo won the 100 (13.38) and the 200 (28.45). Freshman Taylor Dudley placed third in both the 200 (30.99) and the 400 (1:10.23). Freshman Grace Drew finished second in the mile (7:17.25).

In field events, freshman Ashlynn Wright won discus with a throw of 71-05.