



# THE BEAR FACTS

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BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

APRIL 2019



## BCS sweeps TCSIT in back-to-back years

By Natalie Barry

Brentwood Christian high school and middle school TCSIT teams dominated the competition as they both took home first-place trophies at the annual Texas Christian Schools Interscholastic Tournament in Abilene on April 11-13. High school had a total of 574 points, which beat second-place Fort Worth Christian by 120

points. Middle school scored 262 points, which was 46 points higher than the next school.

Seventy-three BCS students competed in the tournament and brought home a total of 25 gold medals. This was the second year in a row and third time in history that both middle school and high school were grand champions.

Students enjoyed the opportunity to support their peers by helping them prepare for compe-

titions and attending the oral events.

"I love seeing my friends shine, and seeing the product of other students' hard work," junior Adrie Gruis said.

The teams departed for Abilene on Thursday morning, April 11, in two buses. Newspaper and debate events began on Thursday, while the majority of events were held on Friday. Those who advanced to finals also competed

on Saturday, and the award ceremony began that afternoon.

Brentwood took home gold in all four newspaper events. Genevieve Graessle, Megha Sama, and Cade Young received first, fourth, and fifth place in editorial writing. Young, Graessle, and Sama placed first, fourth, and

see **TCSIT**, page 8

## McCowns depart after 51 years

By Emma Ayers

For some it has been the Godly wisdom shared in chapel talks or sermons. For others it has been one-on-one consultation regarding personal challenges. For still others, the impact was made through acts of kindness and loyal friendship.

If you have been associated with Brentwood Christian School or Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ for any length of time, you will know of the extreme influence and love brought to the community by Roger and Marybeth McCown. However, on Sunday, March 3, Roger McCown announced that soon, he and Marybeth will be retiring and moving to Tyler, where they will be near their two sons and their grandchildren.

The two were honored in an all-community chapel on March 20. Several teachers who had a long history with the McCowns, such as Carrie Hunter, Cynthia Davis, and Paul Morrow, spoke words of blessing and shared anecdotes about the time they had spent with the couple. It became clear that the McCowns had been mentors to many, and their impact stayed with the people they had touched throughout their lives.

The McCowns have been a part of the Brentwood community for 51 years. The church supported them as missionaries in Guatemala, and they lived there as ambassadors for Christ for 12 years. Roger was the pulpit minister for BOCC for over three decades, and for the past several years he has been the senior minister for the congregation.

Roger and Marybeth have long been friends and leaders at Brentwood Christian School too, offering guidance and a helping hand to whoever may need it. Many a BCS student can remember a time when they were helped by McCown, even unintentionally.

Freshman Makana Sloan recalls when her fifth-grade teacher instructed her to take notes during a sermon for a prize.

"I took notes during church one day, and I really expected it to be boring," Sloan said, "but it wasn't. (McCown) has a way of always getting his message across in a kind but exciting way." Through sermons in elementary chapel or just a friendly smile, Roger McCown has influenced lives through everything he has done at the school.

Though Roger's sermons and caring nature have been described as relatable and impactful on their own, his generosity toward

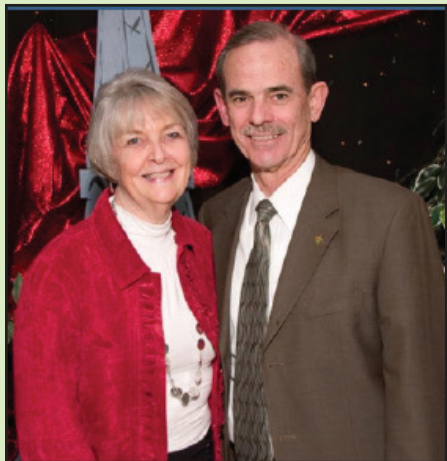
see **McCOWNS**, page 5

photo: Richard Tyler

**Servants of Christ** Marybeth and Roger McCown, whose work with the Brentwood church spans five decades, have also made a huge impact on the school.



photo: Megan Drennon

**Math whizzes** Michele Broadway coaches eighth-grader Nathan Esche and seventh-grader Renne Cooper before the Algebra I event at TCSIT in Abilene on April 12.

## Bears win 5A academic meet

By Michael Milicia

Brentwood Christian won the TAPPS 5A Academic Championship on April 1-3 in Waco, scoring 109 points and beating second-place McKinney Christian Academy by 13.5 points. Their efforts for first were led by sophomore Minho Yoon, who repeated last year's performance by winning three events: calculator, number sense, and advanced math. He also placed sixth in science, making him the individual points winner.

"We didn't know what kind of competition to expect when we arrived, but we knew we had a strong team," sponsor Michele Broadway said.

BCS had 33 students competing, and they placed in 11 events, including first in four events.

"Our students are very well-rounded academically, and we had strong students in many

subjects. That really showed at this meet," Broadway said.

Sophomore Kanli Tran won the mathematics event, placed third in number sense, and was fourth in calculator. Tran was third overall for individual points.

Junior Daniel Kim placed second in calculator and sixth in advanced math, while sophomore Zoë Hamiyeh placed third in literary criticism, seventh in spelling, and seventh in social studies.

Sophomore Joey Seo placed third in mathematics, and Emma Nguyen tied for fifth in Social Studies. Sophomore Lupin Cai earned sixth in number sense, and freshman Luke Ging was eighth in current events. The year-book took fifth place.

"For our first 5A TAPPS competition, I

see **TAPPS** page 4

*You Can Believe: Genevieve Graessle*

# We can all be both feminist and Christian

We all know about the classic, perfect idea of an American household – husband, wife, 2.5 kids, maybe a dog. Obviously, the wife stays at home and the husband pays the bills.

This expectation is something that feminists have been trying to rewrite in the 20th and 21st centuries.

It is not at all a wrong family situation, but women are tired of it being the norm that is expected of them. God created us all unique, special, and perfectly in His image. Even in media we are constantly being portrayed as helpless until a man comes along to rescue us from our dreadful lives.

Cinderella’s world was a dreary life of cook-

ing and cleaning for her stepsisters. Then she met the rich, handsome, masculine prince! He whisked her away to his castle, and she instantly had a perfect life because of the man who had rescued her. It’s a classic Romeo and Juliet fairy tale.

However, Moana – a much more current, accurate representation of the female appearance and experience – fights for her island and defies the typical gender stereotypes in movies and media. She becomes the chief of the island, and a love interest is never even mentioned in the film.

I am not making this comparison to declare that women can never fall in love or marry a man; I know that God has given us marriage as a gift. It is considered holy, and I, myself, am hoping to marry a man someday! But this does not mean I am helpless without a man.

In Genesis 1:27, God creates humans. He does it in a really, really special way, though – in His image. Not only does He create man in His likeness, He also creates woman *in His likeness!* However, He has not made us the same. Equal, yes, but not the same. We make decisions differently, process emotions differently; even our brains are wired differently. So how are we supposed to treat men and women equally if they are not made the same?

I think a lot of people expect that feminists always want to overpower men, or to completely run them out of business so they can take their place. This is not true! While I’m sure there are some who think this way, it is certainly not the message that most feminists want to send. Women just want to be considered for the same types of jobs as men – CEOs, entrepreneurs, sports coaches – and we want to be respected in the same way as men when we get those jobs.

The same goes for the reverse of the situation; it should not be a joke or something to laugh at when a man is a nurse or a yoga teacher or a housekeeper. It is just a social norm that women fill these positions, because they have in the past. Just as it is a social norm for the men to be in charge.

Feminism has been a long time coming. Women have been fighting for equal consideration in their societies and cultures for hundreds, possibly thousands, of years. Some Christians even consider Mary Magdalene “the first feminist.” She followed Jesus in his ministry and did not listen to judgment of her passion for spreading the Word. Jesus accepted her as she spread the gospel, and she was even the first person to witness Him resurrected.

However, even though Mary might have been leading this movement then, it is pretty clear that most of the leaders of today’s feminist movement do not proclaim Jesus’ name,

too. But that is exactly the reason why we should! Women should not shun those who are working hard for equality because of a difference of faith, but rather join in the movement and spread God’s word inside of it.

I know that this does not explain all the aspects of feminism, and I am sure that some of you are still confused as to why I choose to be one. I have included some questions that I frequently get asked in hopes to clear up some confusion.

## Do all feminists hate men?

NO! I get this question all the time! Feminists are often perceived as hating men, because of how frequently they champion for the rights of women. However, we are asking for women to be on the same level, regarded with the same importance as men – in the workplace, on our screens, in the classrooms, in our government – and people sometimes see this as a bash against the opposite sex. In fact, feminists see men as equals too, and they also deserve complete equal opportunity.

## Can men be feminists too?

Absolutely! In fact, it is extremely encouraged. Were you to be one, you would be joining a big group of amazing and inspiring men in history. John Legend, the current Dalai Lama, Bono, Dwayne Johnson, Barack Obama – all feminists. Many feminists even consider Jesus to be one! He included women in His ministry before the Christian church even began. Men can absolutely be feminists, encouraging women and working with them toward a common goal.

## Why are feminists often so aggressive?

I am speaking from a point of observation here, because I try to use non-aggressive methods of feminism. However, I think many feminists are aggressive toward opponents because women have had a history of not being listened to. Recently, many have realized that there is no more room for that! Women and their stories need to be heard.

People sometimes only look at the aggressive feminists who are in the news and use it as a representation of the problems with the feminist movement. Yes, these women might not be promoting feminism well, but there are so many feminists out there doing good works that are ignored because of the overshadowing of this aggression. Pay attention to those doing good!

This situation is pretty similar to the attitude toward the church in today’s culture. Some people stay away from church because of “bad Christians” they know, or maybe they feel like



Actress Rooney Mara as Mary Magdalene

Jesus is being misrepresented. However, we know there are people doing good works in the church.

## Does this mean I can’t watch/like any media that makes non-feminist statements?

I think it does not. We can be a part of this world and its culture while knowing what of it is wrong. I think we can do the same thing with feminism in media. One of my favorite movies is *White Christmas*. Although the two leads of this movie are females, the movie concludes with them both falling in love with a man. Almost every single one of their conversations consists of discussions about their love interest. Now, I still love this movie and my family watches it every December, but I know that my self-worth stems from God’s love for me, not my relationship with a guy.

## What would your perfect feminist utopia look like?

My perfect feminist utopia is a place where all girls and women and boys and men know their worth in Christ. Not only are they given equal opportunities, but women are encouraged in leadership positions.

In school, it looks like a place where young girls are celebrated as much as young boys, male and female sports are regarded with the same significance, and bullying is not a thing anymore. In the workplace, women are not looked at as “aggressive” or “pushy” for being successful in a field full of men. People are rewarded for the hard work they do and encouraged to go for their dream jobs. At home, it looks like a safe space where all kids are opened up to conversation – questioning the culture and the way they take part in it.

## 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).



# Senior shares journal from Ireland trip

By Jaclyn Wishard

**Day 1:** First day in Ireland down! After a nine-hour flight to London, a layover, and another one-hour flight, we finally touched down in Dublin. Our tour director, Seòras (pronounced Shore-sha) led us to the bus driven by Declan, then we headed into the city. We saw the Book of Kells and the Long Room at Trinity College, which resembles the library scenes in *Harry Potter*. We ended the night relatively early and tucked in at the lovely Clayton Hotel.

**Day 2:** Man, oh man! What an awesome day in Dublin. We started off with a bus tour and then a stop at St. Patrick’s Cathedral. Our bestie, Declan, offered to drive us to our first stop of free time: the Irish Museum of Modern Art. He later dropped us off in the center of the city, ready to take on the town.

After a failed attempt at getting a table at the Temple Bar, Dublin’s most famous, we dropped in at another pub. We had our first spill, of many, that day when one of us tipped over an entire pitcher of ice water. Then we walked to a lovely little alley to have a nice tea at Queen of Tarts. Our food was yummy and we yet again spilled water all over, and Madison Bailey had to put her pants under the hand dryer in the bathroom. We crossed over the beautiful, brown River Liffey to meet our group at the Spire, a really tall, pointy pole. After dinner we did an ice cream crawl, and then tucked in again at the lovely Clayton Hotel.

**Day 3:** We woke up and loaded the bus to head off on our cross-country (literally) excursion. Halfway to Galway we took a pit stop at a gas station where Connor, Nathan, and Micah proceeded to clear out their Dr Pepper supply. Then we all had a nice hour or so nap and woke up at a cathedral in Galway. We had a free hour before eating, all of us in a little seafood shop. In that hour we were rained and hailed on before the sun came out for a brief moment. After lunch Madison, Jane, Ms. Rowlett, and I made a long trek to the beach. You had to crawl down some rocks to get there, and on our way down Ms. Rowlett completely wiped out. She actually slipped backwards (like in cartoons when they slip on a banana peel), hit the rock with her elbow, bounced off, and landed again. We laughed so hard we cried, but I at first thought she had hit her spine and paralyzed herself, which was scary because we did not know the emergency phone number there. After that mis-

see IRELAND, page 8

# Dinner helps school, thrills Astros fans

By Genevieve Graessle

Houston Astros president and former BCS parent Reid Ryan was the main attraction at this year’s Partnership Dinner, taking place at the Renaissance Hotel on March 30. It was a night full of bidding, celebrations, and baseball talk.

Between the bidding on silent and live auction items, Ryan recalled humorous stories from the Astros’ historic title run in 2017 and spoke of his fondness for Brentwood Christian, the former school of his three children.

The live-auction item that sold for the most was a 40-caliber pistol that went for \$3,500. Other items receiving high bids included box seats to a Houston Astros game and the ever-popular BCS parking. This year, the owners of last year’s parking spots, the Gruis family and the Ragsdill family, battled it out until reaching a bid of \$3,300. Live auction host Brian Jackson then announced that another spot would be available if the Ragsdills would match the price.

After both families had won their own spots, BCS dad Brent Allen asked if the church would allow one more reserved space if he could match the price as well. In the end, the parking spots earned a total of \$9,900 for Brentwood.

This year’s Paddles Up initiative helped pay for renovations in both of the school libraries. The elementary library will become a fully enclosed location with interactive technology, while the secondary library will have shelves

running the walls and multiple collaborative technology tables. It will also be a common area for students that is open for longer hours.

The evening featured a speech from Ryan followed by an interview done by Brentwood’s head baseball coach, Jeffrey Doege. The night also featured a three-course meal that included salad, grilled chicken, and an option of red velvet cake or chocolate cake.

Ryan was a BCS parent for many years before joining the Astros in 2013. His children, Jackson, Victoria, and Ella, were all missed after their move to Houston.

Events coordinator Sarah Wilson said she was pleased with the way the BCS community came together to support a common goal.

“The continued success of this event is a testament to our community’s belief and commitment to an award-winning Christian education,” Wilson said.



photo: Brandy Gautheir

**Good evening!** Junior Cade Young and sophomore Caroline Griffith assisted with checking visitors in at the Partnership Dinner in the Renaissance Hotel on March 30.

# Band, choir students compete in TAPPS

By Michael Milicia

Choir students performed in the TAPPS state vocal competition on Saturday, April 13, in Waco at Midway Middle School. The competition consisted of the large ensemble concert and sight-reading contest, and Brentwood Christian came away with high scores.

Two weeks earlier, BCS high school band and choir students competed at the TAPPS 5A vocal and band solo and small ensemble state championships on March 29 at Regents. The next phase of the state competition, involving full band, will be in Temple at the Cultural Activities Center on April 23.

At the competition judges evaluated an ensemble or solo and scored the piece from “one” to “five,” with “one” being the best. Currently Houston Lutheran is in first among bands, while Brentwood is third. Band director Travis Pollard says that “we can only catch them if we

do well and they don’t.”

In the small ensemble, sophomore Minho Yoon and freshman Jaeden McGaughy both earned “ones” in their events and were named all-state in their tuba and piano entries, respectively. Nine other small ensembles got ones.

“I believe my results are a good reflection of my work,” Yoon said. “This is the level I expected for myself, and I’m very glad for showing myself what I’m capable of. It’s not perfect, but that means I still have a lot of room for improvement.”

Pollard said credit for the band’s success goes to a lot of students.

“You’re never as ready as you want to be, but with the time we were given, we were as ready as we could be,” he said.

In the vocal championships, junior Gavin George led the team with “ones” in his piano solo and his solo event. Seniors Emma Dowell and Whit Allee also got “ones” in their solos.

Dowell and George were named all-state for their solo vocal entries. The women’s ensemble also earned a “one.”

“I am happy with the results. Some of our students worked and prepared very hard for this event, and it was great to see their hard work pay off,” high school choir teacher Emily Borbon said.

Borbon added that some students will know to prepare better next time.

“Going forward, they will have a better idea of the time and effort that goes into crafting a performance,” she said.

Earlier in the spring semester, four BCS students earned spots on the ATSSB Region and Area Band: sophomore Julia Glenn (flute), junior Emma Nguyen (flute), sophomore Zoe Pedroza (clarinet), and Yoon (tuba). Yoon also became the fourth student in BCS history to earn a spot in the all-state band.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: Adam Murphree

Seniors featured in the Bear Facts were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS Class of 2019.

# Easygoing golfer leads, serves, brings laughter

By Hannah Womack

When Adam Murphree joined the Class of 2019 at the beginning of his junior year, his classmates had no idea just how tremendous an impact he would make on the community of BCS. Adam’s friends say they can’t deny how his presence has enriched their class, and they describe him as a really outgoing, personable guy with a lightning-sharp wit and a personality that can immediately “light up a room” as soon as he walks in.

“I’m always laughing around him,” senior Curtis Mack says. “He’s a really fun guy who’s always smiling, laughing, and joking around. I like how easy he is to talk to and what a great guy and good friend he is.”

Before coming to BCS his junior year, Adam attended Bay Area Christian in Houston. There, he tried to be the funny guy by cracking jokes and trying to get his classmates to laugh, but the humor wasn’t so well received, as people there seemed so serious. Since he came to Brentwood, he says he has really enjoyed how much more lively it is, and how lighthearted his friends are.

His classmates also describe Adam as a great listener.

“He has the ability to listen to anyone and really care what they are saying,” Daniel Lane says. “And that is something I really love about him.”

Others have also commented on how willingly Adam fills positions of leadership and leads by example. He has done this by helping StuCo make decisions as senior class rep; he is also a member of NHS and Claw Crew’s grand master of hype.

Those who know Adam best know that besides his friends, family, and faith, Adam is dedicated to the sport of golf. He began playing casually at age five, but he started taking golf more seriously in sixth grade. In high school, he has been an all-state golfer at both at BCS and Bay Area.

Unfortunately, Adam had to miss his senior season due to an injury he suffered last November while practicing his swing. His shoulder popped out of its socket on his backswing, and then on the downswing it jolted back into place, tearing through his labrum. Not only did this knock him out of the golf season, but it also prevented him from one final season of baseball. Having stopped playing after middle

school, Adam had wanted to play the sport one final time.

Although Adam is certainly frustrated, BCS golf coach John Vandygriff pointed out one aspect of the injury that will be a blessing to Adam.

“I think his injury reinforced the importance of mental toughness,” Vandygriff says, adding that Adam is a hard worker who is extremely committed to his sport.



In fact, Adam plans to play golf at Mississippi College, a Division II Baptist university, where he also wants to serve as a leader on campus.

“The people I talk to at Mississippi College said if you want to be a leader in some way, that’s the college to go to,” Adam says.

He has considered being a tour guide for campus tours, and he also wants to have a high role on the golf team. His sophomore year, he plans to join Civitan Men’s Club, a Christian organization that focuses on serving the community while strengthening the bonds of brotherhood.

Adam plans to study biology and eventually become an orthodontist. Although pursuing such a career may demand much of his time, he says he thinks the payoff would be well worth the sacrifice.

“My main goal is to move around and be social with other people, helping them at the same time,” he says. “I don’t want to be stuck in a cube.”

Although Adam is not one to boast about his faith, it is still of utmost importance to him.

“I’m not very outspoken about it, but I definitely value my relationship with God,” he says.

Two summers ago, Adam took two trips that symbolize two of the most important things in his life – Christian service and golf. He went to Boston for a mission trip and then to Charlotte, NC, since his family had won tickets to see golf’s PGA Championship there.

Charlotte is actually where Adam was born, before he moved to Franklin, Tenn., where he lived for about 10 years before the move to Texas. Adam has great memories from his time in Tennessee. Although he says he misses Franklin to some extent, he reckons that it isn’t much different from Austin, and says that if he had to choose one place to live other than Franklin, it would be Austin. Franklin happens to be located

next to Nashville, which he finds to be similar to Austin in many

ways, as they are both music cities.

When the Murphrees first came to Austin and were looking for a school, the first thing that caught their eyes was the name “Brentwood.”

“There was a city just north of Franklin named Brentwood, and so when we saw the name we were like, ‘Oh hey, Brentwood!’”

Adam says that after looking into other schools, what really sealed the deal was discovering that Brentwood Christian had the best education for the best price.

During his time at BCS Adam has discovered that he really appreciates the emphasis BCS puts on support, and how students always show up to support each other, whether it be for sports games, plays, or concerts.

“At my previous school, people didn’t even go to football games,” he says. “Here there’s more emphasis on supporting your classmates in whatever they’re doing.”

For someone like Adam, who is constantly lifting others up and lightening the mood, Brentwood Christian was sure to be a perfect fit.

## TAPPS

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would say we placed really well,” Kim said.

Some students took the more theatrical route, and performed their own skits or oral events. Sophomore Julia Glenn placed second in her original oratory event, “Sleep: Who Really Needs It?” Junior Megha Sama placed fifth with “A Merit Based System.” Junior Adrie Gruis placed fifth in her solo acting event, “Mrs. Mannerly.”

“With the amount of time we had for the competition, I started to get stressed out, but coach Larson kept pushing me,” Glenn said.

District opponent St. Michael’s finished with 20 points, while Hyde Park had 12 and Regents did not compete.

Also on April 1-2, BCS art students competed at TAPPS and finished sixth in state. Junior DoEun Kim won the team the majority of their points, winning the on-site drawing event and seek and sketch, black/white. She was also fourth in the color seek and sketch, and placed sixth in 2D mixed media. Sama placed second in art history.

“I’m so proud of us being in a more difficult division. Everyone did a really awesome job, and DoEun did incredible,” art teacher Mere Rowlett said.

BCS finished ahead of its district opponents in the art competition as well.



# Busy, cheerful Hagen a perfect fit in BCS office

By Emma Ayers

In the so-called “Austin Water Crisis” of October 2018, many parents, students, and faculty members expressed concerns about whether or not water would be made available at Brentwood. Luckily, the school has one indispensable staff member who stepped up and saved the day. Penny Hagen was able to supply plenty of water to go around, but she does so much more for BCS than just order a bunch of water. Hagen has been working at Brentwood Christian School since she was hired in 2007, and she says she knew immediately that coming to BCS was the right decision. Hagen grew up attending Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ and is a long-time friend of former BCS president Marquita Moss and her family. When she saw a job listed in the church bulletin, she put in an application and has been working hard at BCS ever since.

Hagen’s official job title is senior executive assistant to the president, but everything she does for BCS cannot begin to be summarized in so few words. Hagen is the one who arranges transportation for school trips and events, sets up meetings and makes sure things run smoothly in the office of president Jay Burcham, makes sure food and refreshments are available for parents after elementary chapels and at other get-togethers, maintains the school calendar, assists event coordinator Sarah Wilson with planning, keeps a tally of supplies ordered in the office, and much more. Each one of these things is vital to the functioning of the school and its staff, and Hagen makes sure all of it is handled correctly. “Penny Hagen is a true example of someone who has made Brentwood Christian School her personal mission and our students her personal family,” says Burcham, who is a close friend of Hagen. “She is loved by all who work with her and appreciated by all she strives to lead and serve.”

Hagen was born in Austin in 1957 and worshipped at Brentwood Oaks before it was called Brentwood Oaks. She attended the church at its previous location near Brentwood

Elementary, where she went to school, and her family stayed with the church through its move in 1981. So, if you want to find out what Austin was like back in the day, pull up a chair sometime and talk with Hagen – that is, if you can catch her when she’s not too busy. Hagen says that when Austin was still a “little town,” her youth group enjoyed crossing the street from the church to the park on Sunday afternoons and playing games or swimming. “All I wanted to do for many years was go outside and spend time with my friends,” she says, “especially as I neared high school and we could drive.” Hagen attended Lanier High School and graduated in 1975. She played volleyball her freshman year, but she stopped playing sports and started spending more time with her friends and family after that.

One of Hagen’s fondest memories is the weekly dollar night at the drive-in theater on Burnet Road that she and her friends would go to in high school. For only a dollar, you could watch two movies with however many people you could “possibly fit into a car.” “Whoever had a car would pick us all up, maybe 12 or 13 of us in a car, and we would all head over,” Hagen says. “That was probably a bit before the seat belt law.” Hagen is the youngest of three sisters, but she says that the age gap was so large that her nephews and cousins acted more like siblings to her when they were children. Hagen has a large family and says that spending time with them was always a big part of her childhood. Her mother was one of seven children, and she has 14 cousins, so there was “always someone to spend time with.”

Every Friday night, Hagen’s mother or one of her aunts and uncles would host a hamburger night at their house. As the adults ate and watched movies, the cousins would all play games in the front yard, like hide-and-seek or the ever-popular “hide from cars.” Hagen has been able to keep such close ties with her family through Brentwood. Board chairman Brian Jackson is her nephew, but he is only seven years younger than her, and she thinks of him more like a brother. Hagen also put her daughter, Allison, through Brentwood for elementary school.

“My aunt will support you and love you unconditionally, no matter the decisions you make,” freshman Keller Jackson says. “Even in her toughest times I always see a smile on her face.” Hagen worked in doctor’s offices, insurance companies, and other businesses as an assistant or receptionist for many years before she came to Brentwood. She says that she doesn’t think anywhere she has worked before can compare to the time she has spent at BCS, and she has been especially grateful for the close-knit, family feel. When Hagen’s husband, Bruce, passed away in 2017, the Brentwood community was right there with her family. Burcham even spoke at the funeral.

“In 2017, my school family was nothing short of amazing in all that they did for me,” Hagen says. Hagen has also made a reputation for herself among the new teachers at Brentwood as being a go-to for information and advice. “Anytime I need to know anything about the bigger picture of Brentwood, I always go to her,” first-year Spanish teacher Paige Reagan says. “She’s a rockstar.” After 12 years working at BCS, and a lifetime of involvement with Brentwood, Hagen has made herself a crucial, indispensable part of the school and church. From setting up meeting times to ordering food, it is difficult to miss the impact that Hagen has on how things are run at Brentwood, and she does it all with a loving smile.



**Right at home** Penny Hagen, who serves as senior executive assistant to the president, carries out many tasks each day at BCS, where she has worked since 2007.

## McCowns say goodbye to Brentwood after decades of service

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Brentwood is only half the picture. Marybeth McCown has proved invaluable to the Brentwood community. She was an elementary school teacher at BCS for five years as well as a substitute Spanish teacher and librarian. “Mrs. Marybeth accepted me with open

arms when I first came in fifth grade,” sophomore Carlie Walters said. “From baking cookies to teaching lessons in Sunday school, (she) knows how to make a person feel loved.” Even when she wasn’t at Brentwood, Marybeth spread her love and Christ-like demeanor. Brentwood teacher Russell Larson recalls when his two daughters, Ashley and Megan, went to

Westview Middle School and had Marybeth as their librarian. “She taught them the love of reading,” Larson said. “She was always so open and inviting, and made sure she knew all the kids’ names.” Roger McCown says he does not know what is coming next for him and his wife, but he is confident that they will know their path in Tyler

when the time is right. “I will miss little children recognizing me in the mall and being brave enough to say, ‘Hi, Mr. McCown,’” he said. “I will miss friendships with faculty and administrators – good people, all.”





photo: Diane Troutman

**Golf stars** Kori Howell, Madison Moseley, Laura Wilson, Kirsten Morgan, and Connor Troutman all competed at regionals.

# Girls' golf team qualifies for state

By Bear Facts staff

The varsity girls finished in fourth place at the regional tournament at Eagle's Bluff golf course south of Tyler on April 15. This qualifies them to compete in the state tournament on April 29-30 in Glen Rose.

Senior Kori Howell and junior Kirsten Morgan both finished in the top 10 individually.

The boys did not qualify for regionals as a team, but senior Connor Troutman represented BCS individually, shooting an 85 on a difficult layout and falling just short of the top 10.

"I think we're prepared for state," Howell said. "I hope all of my girls can play hard, because it's going to be difficult."

Both varsities played in the district golf tour-

nament on Monday, April 8, at Teravista golf course in Round Rock. The girls placed second overall, led by Morgan's best-ever 89 and Howell's 96. All four girls finished in the top 10 individually.

There was drama for sophomore Laura Wilson, who finished 18 holes in a tie for 10th place, meaning she had to endure a three-hole "sudden death" playoff.

Troutman led the boys with an 85, followed by senior Micah Best, who shot a personal-best 87. Troutman finished ninth to qualify for regionals, but the season ended early for the boys as a team.

Head coach John Vandygriff said this was the first year in a long time that the boys did not advance past district, but he sees a silver lining.

"The good news is that the future looks bright for the boys team if the freshmen and sophomores will continue to work on their games," he said.

Brentwood's first tournament after spring break was in Blanco on March 20, where the boys came in second and the girls finished third. Sophomore Wes Tindel finished in fourth individually with an 84.

In another tournament at Teravista on March 26, Troutman led the boys with an 81, while Morgan shot a 94 to lead the girls.

Since their first tournament in College Station on Feb. 26, both teams improved steadily with every tournament. The boys knocked 44 points off their score in that time, while the girls' team improved by 77 strokes.

# Record-breaking speed takes track to second in district

By Jackson Baird

Both varsity track teams finished second in their district track meet on Thursday, April 11, at St. Michael's. Competing against their new 5A opponents, the boys' and girls' teams both finished behind St. Michael's but far ahead of Regents and Hyde Park.

A total of 14 boys and seven girls finished in the top two of their events, which qualified them to compete in the regional meet in Ft. Worth on Thursday, April 26.

While the girls were outnumbered by St. Michael's, head coach Katie Smith pointed out that they outperformed their opponent in many areas, falling short only due to lack of numbers.

"I am extremely proud of how our girls came together and competed," Smith said.

Boys' head coach Correy Washington said he is proud of the work the boys have put in throughout the season.

"I know what I ask of them is tough at times, but they all take pride into the program and continue to work hard," he said. "They deserve to be successful."

Sophomore Noah Shelby won the 100 meters with his best-ever 11.78, and junior Bru Hague placed third at 11.94.

"When I heard I was first I was filled with excitement and relief knowing that I did well enough to qualify for regionals," Shelby said.

Freshman Chris Mayo won the 200 with a school-record 22.96.

"It felt good being a freshman and winning against upperclassmen," Mayo said.

Junior Gavin George ran the 400 in 54.16, earning him fourth place. Sophomore Minh Yoon was sixth in the 800, running it in 2:10. Sophomore Isaac Stanglin's 5:25 in the 1600 earned him sixth place, while senior Riley Walker earned fourth with an 11:44 in the 3200.

Brentwood swept the awards in the 110-meter hurdles, with sophomore Aaron Lilya winning, junior Kevin Lu finishing second, and junior Isaiah Davis third. The Bears also took all three medals in the 300 hurdles, led again by Lilya and Lu.

The 4x100 relay team of Hague, Shelby, senior Chase Blackman, and junior Sam Orick finished second with a time of 45.19. In the 4x200, junior Phillip Mach, Mayo, Blackman, and Orick were third at 1:35.64. The 4x400 team (George, junior Michael Milicia, Mayo, and Mach) placed second in 3:47.

In the field events, senior Zach Mack placed third in shot put (38-5) and second in discus (109-8). Senior Curtis Mack won discus and broke the school record with a throw of 131-02. Junior Jonah Connor placed second in high jump at 5-08, while freshman Rylan Acheson was fourth (5-04). Freshman Brandon Tindel placed second in the triple jump (39-1), followed by Davis in third place (38-7).

For the girls, senior Kayla Mayo finished first in the 100 with a time of 13.14, and senior Mackenzie Gatlin was fourth (13.54). Senior Jaclyn Wishard finished first in the 100 hurdles (18.48) and was second in the 300 hurdles.

Sophomore Julia Glenn was fourth in the 400 (66.34), and sophomore Alyssa McLain was fourth in the 800.

The girls' 4x100 relay team won with a time of 52.12. The team consisted of freshman Alicia Gardner, Gatlin, Glenn, and Mayo. The 4x200 team of Gardner, Wishard, Gatlin, and junior Alyssa Mancias finished second with a time of 1:57.76. Sophomores Grace Drew, McLain, and Glenn, along with senior Jane Hughes finished third in the 4x400 relay.

In the field events, Mayo won shot put with a throw of 33-10. Wishard took first in discus with a throw of 84-03, while Gardner was sec-

ond (73-2). Wishard also won the high jump at 5-00, while Hughes placed second in the pole vault (8-06).

In the long jump Glenn and Mancias finished first and second, jumping 15-03 and 14-06, respectively. The two nearly pulled the same trick in the triple jump, with Glenn leaping 32-11.5 and Mancias finishing third, at 30-6.

On March 21, the teams competed in the Lexington Relays near Elgin. BCS faced tough competition against 4A and 5A public schools and only managed to place in six events. Wishard was the only athlete to place on the girls' side, finishing second in the high jump at 4-8.

The boys' 4x400 relay team earned the Bears the most points with their fourth-place finish (3:46.50). There were several other athletes who placed for the boys: Yoon was third in the 800; Mayo finished sixth in the 200; Milicia was sixth in the 400; and Lu placed fifth in the 110 hurdles.

In the Yorktown relays on March 7, the boys' and girls' teams set eight school records, including three by Kayla Mayo. She threw the shot put 35-5, breaking her old record; she also long jumped 17-1, and broke her old record in the 100 meters by running it in 12.33.

"The competition was good for us," girls' coach Katie Smith said. "It showed us how we stack up against public schools."

For the boys, Orick set a school record in the 100

meters at 11.34. George won the 400 with a school-record time of 53.31. Chris Mayo set a school record in the 200, running it in 23.0. The 4x200 relay team consisting of Orick, Mach, Davis, and Mayo set a school record with a time of 1:35.67. Tindel set a school record in the triple jump by leaping 39-3.

The varsity boys won the meet with 151 points, defeating smaller public schools. According to athletic director Stan Caffey, the victory was the first win for the boys in recent memory. The varsity girls finished the meet in fourth place, scoring 80 points.



photo: Lisa Lee

**Young hurdler** Seventh-grader Bryson Best leaps over a hurdle at a middle school track meet in San Antonio. Photos for high school meets were not available.

# Softball falls to 5A foes

By Natalie Hargrove

The Lady Bears are currently 1-6 in district during their first season competing in TAPPS 5A.

Head coach Paul Sladek said the girls have improved individually and as a team, and they have competed extremely hard. However the team has struggled with everything from base-running errors and lack of timely hitting, to players missing practice, to serious injuries.

Sophomore pitcher Molly Stewart said the team feels more like family than teammates.

"I know that everyone on this team has each other's backs and we support each other," she said.

Sophomore Caroline Griffith leads the team with 10 hits, followed by senior Lauryn Williams with 9, and Stewart with 8. Williams leads with 3 doubles and 9 RBIs. Griffith and Williams lead the team in runs with 13 and 11, respectively. Griffith also leads with a .526 batting average, followed by Stewart (.471), Williams (.450), and senior Nyna Vazquez (.400).

Following are the most recent results:

**3/19: Boerne Geneva 18-11 W**

Playing in only their second home game, the Lady Bears took a 2-0 lead in the bottom of the first and scored seven more in the second, five of those on bases loaded walks. In the sixth, the Lady Bears had another seven-run inning to pull away. Six girls had two hits, and Williams led the Bears with three runs and four RBIs.

**3/21: @ Providence Catholic 13-3 L**

For their first district game, the team traveled to San Antonio to face a new opponent. They fell behind 4-0 in the bottom of the second but fought back in the fourth to make it 4-3. Providence scored nine more runs to finish the game early. Senior Kori Howell had a two-run double, and senior Samantha Fowler had two hits. Stewart had a rough outing in the circle, but she had three hits on offense.

**3/26: Hyde Park 20-3 W**

Brentwood scored three runs in the first and then 12 more in the second, making it 15-0. The Hyde Park pitcher walked 23 batters, and after three innings the Bears led 20-0. Brentwood base runners actually stepped off the bases early, taking outs to end the game



photo: Sadie Mancias

**Strike!** Sophomore catcher Natalie Hargrove was solid behind the plate before suffering a season-ending knee injury in the game against Hyde Park on April 12.

quicker. Junior Alyssa Mancias and Howell led with two hits each, and in the circle Stewart did not walk a single batter.

**3/29: Holy Cross 12-0 L**

The team Brentwood coaches say is the best in their district out-hit the Lady Bears 17-2 in a game that was close until the fourth inning. Howell and sophomore Natalie Hargrove had Brentwood's only two hits in the game.

**4/2: @ TMI Episcopal 7-0 L**

The Lady Bears out-hit their opponent 7-4 but could not push across any runs. After the game, Sladek challenged the girls to play with more motivation and effort. TMI benefited from walks and stolen bases and eventually pulled away with a win. Williams led with two hits.

**4/4: @ San Antonio Christian 7-5 L**

Brentwood took the lead with two runs in the first, and led 3-0 before SACS scored five runs in the third. It was 7-3 before the Lady Bears scored two in the seventh. The Bears out-hit their opponent 12-7 and were led by Williams, who hit three triples.

**4/9: Providence Catholic 6-1 L**

In a close game, BCS was not able to get any offense going, as Williams had two of Brentwood's three hits. Stewart had solid outing, only allowing one earned run, while the defense around her struggled.

**4/12: @ Hyde Park 9-5 (Suspended)**

After falling behind 4-2, Brentwood scored seven runs in the third inning, led by Griffith's three-run triple. But the game was suspended in the bottom of the inning when Hargrove, playing catcher, injured her knee in a play at the plate and was taken to the hospital by EMS.

# Baseball struggles in district

By Jackson Baird

The Brentwood Christian varsity baseball team is 11-10 and 1-5 in district. Their win was a 7-3 victory over Hyde Park at home last Friday.

Head coach Jeffrey Doege said he admires the way the team has responded to adversity throughout the season, but he said the boys will need to learn how to compete against more experienced teams. In their first year playing 5A, the Bears typically start three freshmen, three sophomores, and three juniors.

"Since we are very young, it makes it extremely tough competing against older and more experienced players," Doege said.

Doege also said that the team is still trying to find their true identity after losing several key players, including senior catcher Jack Oberwortmann to injury midway through the season.

After a season of many ups and downs with a young team, junior Travis Whitaker is already looking forward to his senior season.

"Even though we had a young team I feel like the season went great and I am looking forward to next season," he said.

Whitaker leads the team in batting with a .509 average, 27 hits, and 7 doubles. Junior Isaac Copeland leads with 23 RBIs, followed by Whitaker with 18. Copeland and sophomore Zack Billante have each scored 21 runs; Whitaker and Oberwortmann have two home runs apiece.

On the mound the Bears are led by Keesey, who has an ERA of 3.53, 52 strikeouts, and four wins. Freshman Seth Taylor has an ERA of 2.10.

Following are the most recent game results:

**3/7: Grapeland 6-0 W**

In the first game of a tournament, Keesey pitched four shutout innings, striking out seven. Offensively the Bears scored six runs in the first off of two hits from Whitaker and a two RBI double from freshman Sam Benton. BCS was walked nine times by the Grapeland pitchers.

**3/8: Mumford 6-4 W**

In their second game of the tournament BCS battled in a hard-fought game with Mumford. The game was tied 2-2 after the first inning, before Brentwood opened up a 6-3 lead in the second. Copeland pitched for the Bears, going three innings and allowing only one earned run before Billante pitched the next two innings. BCS totaled four hits, including a three-RBI double in the second inning.

**3/8: Waco Wind 2-1 L**

In the last game of the tournament, Taylor took the mound for the Bears, allowing five hits, while striking out four. On offense Brentwood managed only one hit on an RBI single from Whitaker.

**3/19: @ New Braunfels 7-2 L**

Brentwood got behind early, trailing 2-0 after two innings. The Wildcats continued adding to their lead while the Bears only managed to get one run in the fourth and one in the fifth. Keesey was on the mound for BCS and pitched five innings, striking out six. New Braunfels ended up out-hitting Brentwood 10-2, the Bears' two hits coming off of doubles by Oberwortmann and Whitaker.

"Last game against New Braunfels was just one of those games where nothing goes right," Copeland said. "This game our pitching was better and we made less defensive mistakes."

**3/25: @ Sacred Heart 5-3 L**

In their last non-district game, BCS traveled out to Hallettsville to face the Indians. The Bears took an early 1-0 lead in the first before the Indians leveled the score in the second inning. In the bottom of the fourth Sacred Heart took a 3-1 lead and added two more runs in the next two innings giving them the 5-1 lead. Brentwood scored two runs in the seventh but could not produce any more, despite out-hitting the Indians 4-3.

"In every game so far we have been right there and have been able to compete with the opposition," Copeland said.

**4/1: St. Michael's 17-3 L**

The Bears got behind 7-0 in their district opener, before adding three runs in the third. The Crusaders erupted for 10 runs over the next two innings and recorded 16 hits off of five Brentwood pitchers.

**4/2: @ Hyde Park 5-2 L**

After a rough first inning in which he gave up three runs, Keesey settled down and only allowed two more runs the rest of the way, while striking out 10 batters. In the fourth inning the Bears scored one run but could not cut into the Panthers' lead any more. BCS out-hit Hyde Park seven to six, with three hits coming off the bat of freshman Ryan Crow.

**4/5: @ Regents 5-0 L**

Both teams had only four hits, but Regents also benefited from walks and errors to push across two runs in the fifth and two more in the sixth. Taylor struck out seven Knights batters.

**4/9: @ St. Michael's 16-11 L**

A week after their earlier meeting, the Bears showed great improvement on offense. Seven Brentwood batters collected hits, including two apiece by Whitaker and Keesey, and they held a 7-5 lead after three innings. But defensive struggles continued, and the Crusaders quickly pulled away.

**4/12: Hyde Park 7-3 W**

After falling behind 2-0, the Bears put up six runs in the third, led by junior Luke Jackson's bases-loaded double that scored three runs. Keesey kept the Panthers' bats quiet, and Taylor got the final four outs.



# Kolagani to spell in D.C. bee

When the national finals of the Scripps National Spelling Bee begins on May 27 in National Harbor, Maryland, BCS students and their families will want to pay special attention to speller #440. That’s the number assigned to fifth-grader Michael Kolagani, who won Brentwood’s spelling bee in January and has qualified to be one of 567 spellers in the nation’s ultimate spelling bee.

After winning the school bee, Kolagani took an online test in February to qualify for regional bee in Austin. Out of 50 spellers, he finished 17th. However, a new program that started last year called RSVBee allows school winners an alternate route to qualify for the national bee.

Kolagani’s family applied and he received the invitation on March 29. The family of four will be staying at the Gaylord Resort

and Hotel for the duration of the event, which lasts from May 26 to June 1 just outside of Washington, D.C.

Kolagani said he is honored to have this opportunity, and while he is eager to represent his school, his motivation runs even deeper than that.

“I’m doing it for God more than anything,” he said, and added that he will be studying very hard every day.

In 2017, the year before the RSVBee program started, the national bee had a total of 291 spellers, all of whom qualified by winning a regional bee. But bee officials wanted to allow more students to experience the excitement of Bee Week, bringing the total number of spellers to more than 500 in each of the next two years.

# TCSIT teams take two titles

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sixth in headline writing. Graessle earned first and Hannah Womack took fourth in feature writing. Natalie Barry was first and Womack sixth in news writing.

Brentwood’s yearbook and newspaper won gold and silver medals, respectively.

Minho Yoon and Daniel Kim took first and fourth in comprehensive math. Yoon, Lupin Cai, and Kanli Tran earned first, second, and third in number sense. Tran was champion in both chemistry and Algebra II, and placed fourth in Spanish comprehension. Kim placed fourth in social studies, second in calculator applications, and tied for third for the Lincoln-Douglas debate along with sophomore Noble Wilson. Emily Walker won a silver medal in debate. Yoon and May Tran placed first and third in calculator applications.

BCS won team math, which consisted of Doeun Kim, Yoon, Daniel Kim, and Kevin Lu. Cai and Zoe Hamiyeh earned third and fifth in chemistry. Parker Combs and Will Hughes placed third and fifth in biology. Whit Allee placed first in physics, fourth in comprehensive science, and fifth in dramatic duet acting.

Nathan Esche, Renne Cooper, and Kennedy Drennon finished second, third, and sixth in Algebra I. In geometry, Combs, Hughes, and Esche took first, fourth, and sixth place.

Hamiyeh placed third and James Oberwortmann placed fourth in spelling. Adrie Gruis received gold medals in both humorous interpretation and girls’ Bible reading. Graessle received a silver medal in poetry interp and sixth place in ready writing. Nathan Morgan placed third and Joey Seo fifth in Algebra II. Morgan earned third place in Bible knowledge.

Barry won the gold and Mason Hejl finished fourth in dramatic interpretation. Andrew Russell, Emily Walker, and Riley Banner were second, third, and sixth place in extemp. Julia Glenn placed second and Sama fifth in original oratory. Allee and Lorenzo Rivera took fifth in dramatic duet acting, while Rivera and Peter Otieno were sixth in humorous duet acting.

Allee was third and Sam Dixon sixth in boys’ Spanish Bible reading. Glenn was second and Corrie Hager third in girls’ English Bible reading. Zoe Roetter was fourth and Anam Mohammed was fifth in girls’ Spanish Bible reading. Roetter took fifth in Spanish comprehension.

In middle school, Sofia Geevarghese took first place and Landon Hejl was fifth in Bible knowledge. Elijah Catron was second and Aden Mann third in social studies. The group acting team earned sixth place, and Bible improv took fourth.

Cooper, Esche, and Zino Etakibuebu received gold, silver, and bronze medals. Emily Mulcahy and Aden Mann placed second and third in extemp. Zoe Cooper and Geevarghese took second and third place in science. Cooper, Esche, and Etakibuebu placed first, second, and sixth in calculator applications.

Cooper, Etakibuebu, and Andrew Kent finished first, second, and fourth in comp math 7. Esche placed first in comp math 8. Juliet Booker was fourth in music memory, while Morgan took third in prose interp. Alishah Mohammed placed fourth in ready writing.

Morgan, Abbie Burcham, and Tynneson Allen earned first, third, and fourth in poetry interpretation. Ben Gatlin and Landon Hejl were second and fifth place in boys’ Bible reading. Hunter Biegert and Micah Riley received honorable mention in duet acting.

# Ireland journal

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hap, we adventured around the beach before being hailed on again, even harder this time. We spent the night in a seemingly haunted hotel, where I was woken up in the night to the sound of someone trying to get in our room.

**Day 4:** Today was the best day. Our first stop was at the breathtaking Cliffs of Moher, where *Princess Bride* and *Harry Potter* scenes were filmed. We spent over an hour walking along the cliffs and taking in the views. We then visited a medieval village and explored a refurbished castle. They had a “murder hole” – an opening above the front entrance where people would dump rocks and boiling water to stop intruders.

Our hotel was an interesting experience to say the least. They had a ceiling that I could touch with my head. After dinner we all took a trip to Ireland’s version of Dominos and concluded that pizza is better in America.

**Day 5:** Today was the Ring of Kerry tour. Very exciting. Wish it was longer. The day started off with horse-drawn carriages coming to pick us up for a delightful wooded adventure. They clopped through the streets of Killarney till they reached the path leading into the forest. Then it hailed. Again. But the views were still enchanting and there was a quiet foggy lake that opened up where you could see snow-capped mountains. Soon we boarded the bus for our day’s excursion, and the first stop was a bog village museum.

Then we headed out through the Ring of Kerry. We stopped at this super old fort, and the wind was blowing so hard that we had to bend our knees just to stay steady.

Further down the road we stopped at a beautiful overlook of something that looked like Narnia, then ate lunch, and it hailed again. After lunch, we continued to drive and stopped at another lookout where ... wait for it ... it hailed. But this time the hail and wind combo were so intense it broke my umbrella that I thought was a good idea to

bring out. Now, the biggest prank of the trip: Seòras told us that coming up on the road was a tunnel that had a little bit of electricity in it. He told us to put one hand on the window and stretch our other hand to touch the person across the aisle from us. As we were about to pass through the tunnel he said we would feel a little pain but it won’t be too bad. We passed through and none of us felt anything, but he came over the intercom and asked, “Do you feel the pain? Do you feel the window pane?” and we realized we had all been played.

**Day 6:** We stopped on Cobh and saw one of the most awesome cathedrals ever. Next we went to the Titanic museum. Fun fact: Queenstown was the last stop for the Titanic before it sank. We broke for lunch and shopping, then headed to the Blarney Castle to kiss that stone. Then we had an early night in and drank lemonade out of fancy glasses.

**Day 7:** We saw a circle of stones that was super old. Older than Stonehenge. While we were there, Seòras’ wife surprised us. It was so fun. After that we took another nice nap on the way to the Irish National Stud Farm, where they breed horses for horse racing. After that we drove to Dublin for another free day. It ended with a delicious final meal in Ireland and a sad farewell to Declan.

**Day 8:** We woke up at 4 a.m. The boys were late to the bus. Then we went to the airport and flew to London. Had a nice breakfast there and started our 10-and-a-half-hour flight to America. It was so tiring, but there was a cute baby.



photo: Mere Rowlett  
**Making memories** BCS seniors pose at Cahergall Stone Fort during their trip to Ireland that featured high winds and hail.