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THE BEAR FACTS

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BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

MARCH 2020

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Seniors land in France

By Cade Young

By the time students are reading this newspaper on Friday morning, the senior class will have traveled over 5,000 miles, and will have been in Paris, France, for several hours. Spring break for these seniors will be filled with iconic art pieces, the homes of French royalty, historic landmarks, the Eiffel Tower, and plenty of French food.

The Class of 2020 has been eagerly awaiting the annual senior spring break trip, which consists this year of visiting a multitude of cities and exploring the countryside around France.

"I'm really looking forward to seeing all of the major sites in France with both friends and family," said Lorenzo Rivera, who is making the trip with both of his parents. "I've never been out of the country before, so this is a big

deal for me."

This year's group consists of 28 students, who boarded a plane in Austin and departed Thursday morning, March 5, at 10:40 a.m. and, after a two-hour layover in Atlanta, landed in Paris early this morning. Accompanying them on the trip will be six sponsors and 14 parents, bringing the group total to 48. Class sponsor Kaleen Graessle will be the group coordinator for the trip, accompanied by fellow class sponsors Brandon Greene and Summer Best.

The first day in Paris will be a long one for the seniors, as they land and will immediately hit the ground running. Students should have landed in Paris around 6 a.m. local time and will have a full day of walking and sightsee-

see **SENIORS**, page 8



photo: ft.com

Bon voyage! The seniors will stop for a quick photo at the Chateau de Chambord while on their way to the Loire Valley. They are staying in five different French cities.

Undefeated baseball team looking strong

By Aurora Tyson

After beating their first two opponents by a total score of 34-1, the BCS baseball team was ready for some competition. This past weekend, Brentwood took first place in the BCS Tournament, winning three games and hitting two home runs. The Bears are now 7-0.

With no seniors last year, the Bears' current starters are all returners that allow for solid continuity in the team's chemistry and skills.

"I think we're further along than we were last year," head coach Jeffrey Doege said. "We're just working on fixing the details compared to where we finished."

Doege has been preparing his team for the season with practices full of infield and outfield fungo, batting practice, conditioning and weightlifting, and lots of situational fielding. Assistant coaches are Greg Gentry and Colton Mikulencak.

see **BOYS**, page 6



photo: Brandy Gauthier

Teamwork makes the dream work Junior Aurora Tyson helped third-graders Olivia Montemayor and Evelyn Pinson construct a mini hot air balloon on Feb. 26.

Students enjoy day devoted to doing science

By Aden Mann and Keira McCormick

Students prepare to load and fire the bean bag launcher in the chilly weather on Feb. 26. Upper elementary students are busy making mini hot air balloons with their high school partners, other students are waiting expectantly to test the projects they built, and the third annual Science and Engineering Fair is in full swing.

For students in grades 6-10, last Wednesday was the day to test their work on one of three available projects, which included an egg drop device, a balsa wood glider, and hand crank bubble maker. In the days leading up to the science fair, students had the opportunity to work on their projects in the science wing outside of school hours, under the direction of their science teachers.

Students found that the projects this year required both creativity and ingenuity. Each project was required to be built to the specifications listed by the science board, which

see **SCIENCE**, page 3

You Can Believe: Genevieve Graessle

A little bit of kindness really does go a long way

The past few months of my life have been uniquely challenging. However, there is one thing that always makes my day better or makes my load feel a little lighter. I am always given a sense of hope and peace when other people go out of their way to be kind.

A friend listens to my annoying stories, even when she doesn't have the time for it. A teacher lets me take the test the next day because I missed the review. A classmate stops me in the hallway between classes to ask how I'm *really* doing. My senior year of high school – and my first year without my dad – has probably been the hardest thing I've ever experienced. While it is such an exciting time and there are so many good days, there are also so many bad days. Kindness from the people around me never fails to make the cloudy days a little brighter.

Coincidentally, Mister Rogers has come up in my life multiple times recently. There have been two big movies that have come out about his life in the last two years; Mrs. Birdwell had the senior English classes write an essay on a Mister Rogers quote; I have even been listening to a podcast called "Finding Fred" that digs deeper into Mister Rogers' simple messages to uncover very adult lessons.

I don't think I would have thought anything of it, but the message that Fred Rogers tries to communicate on his show is something that I have been trying to live out in my life, and something that has been so beneficial to me this year. An article from the Presbyterian Historical Society says, "He taught generations of children the quintessentially Christian but profoundly universal message of 'Love yourself, love others.'" Through his loving approachability and instinctive kindness that he shared on his show, he was able to spread God's love to American children for over 30 years.

Although what Fred Rogers did seems so simple, he was changing the game for childhood entertainment. He knew that the world was not a kind place, but he also knew that his program didn't have to be like the rest of the world. He welcomed all people and all subjects with love and a warmth that you couldn't find anywhere else. He not only taught children about potty training or the alphabet, but how to understand such an unkind world.

There's a phrase that I frequently see on Pinterest, "Throw kindness around like confetti." While the attempted message is good, if we only throw kindness around like confetti then it would be messy, it probably wouldn't land where we are aiming, and we will eventually run out of kindness. Mister Rogers tells us, and shows us, that kindness is unlimited.

Throughout the course of the year, I have been the leader of a group that started last year

called "Church," or Church lunch. Every Friday, a small group of us meet and just check up on each other and try to dive a little deeper into our relationship with God. Since August, we have been working through Bob Goff's book *Everybody, Always*, reading one chapter each week.

I knew I would love reading this book because of how many people recommended it to me, but I was not prepared for how much this book would change my perspective of other people. Goff tells beautiful and sentimental and hard stories about how he is trying to "become love" in a world that absolutely does not want him to. Essentially, he is constantly asking the question, "What would Jesus do?"

While some of what he writes may seem impossibly challenging for a people who instinctively judge others and complain about people that aren't like us, his message is pretty simple. If we want to be like Jesus we have to love everybody, always. He even specifically says that we should love the creepy people in our lives!

Reading this book has taught me that loving people the way Jesus did and being kind to *everyone* around me takes being uncomfortable. Kindness should not solely be reserved for the nice or the cool people in our lives. Christians are not meant to be comfortable all the time, and I have been slowly learning that God loves it when we push ourselves outside our comfort zones.

I think a lot of the time people feel like there has to be some ulterior motive to random acts of kindness. We think, "But

if they do this nice thing for me, then they'll expect me to do this nice thing for them later." A sort of quid pro quo way of life. I think I could say that as humans, we could almost all be described as selfish people by nature, and we have all been guilty of this thinking at some point.

Something I've learned from Mister Rogers and Bob Goff this year is that kindness needs no explanation. I have always thought of myself as somebody who really loves other people, but there is a big difference when you actually make that your life's focus. I once heard a Christian speaker say that we should not want our life to make sense to other people. After we

die, people will look at our life and wonder just what was different about us.

Even though kindness can sometimes seem really easy, it can often change the turnout of a person's day. Kindness is one of the easiest ways to show Christ's love, and it doesn't have to be done in hopes of some compensation. With only one more quarter at Brentwood, I am going to do my best to make kindness my goal for every day. I will probably have some other goals along the way, but I am hoping that I make this an important one. Like Mister Rogers says, "There are three ways to ultimate success: The first way is to be kind. The second way is to be kind. The third way is to be kind."

March News Crossword

Answers on page 4

ACROSS

1 Where Adrie Gruis attended a week-long surgery clinic
8 Select sport that Mr. Larson coaches
10 Teacher who was questioned by the Secret Service at the White House
12 New golf coach
13 Beaches that traveling seniors are visiting in France
14 Location of the Partnership Dinner
15 Date of the Science and Engineering Fair

DOWN

2 Senior girl who is president of the choir
3 Tournament baseball team is playing in this weekend
4 Leading scorer for the Lady Bears' basketball team
5 Leading scorer for the boys' soccer team
6 Senior girl on the track team
7 D.C. cemetery where four students will participate in a special wreath-laying ceremony
9 Junior who won Brentwood's first medal in wrestling
11 Name of dog being auctioned at Partnership Dinner

Partnership Dinner two weeks away

By Nick Weston

Major General Pat Hamilton will be the featured speaker at Brentwood Christian’s 29th annual Partnership Dinner in The Renaissance Austin Hotel on March 20. There will also be the traditional silent and live auctions.

Hamilton, the father of a BCS senior, is a trustee and elder at Round Rock Presbyterian Church. He currently serves as the Commanding General of the 36th Infantry Division, and will be speaking about how building young people of character is vital to our nation’s future.

This year’s live auction will feature another dog, Scout the Toy Poodle, who has been housed with the Kirchoff family. The last auctioned dog, Chiko, brought in \$2,700 two years ago. Brentwood Yeti cups, custom made baseball gloves, parking spaces, and a hunting trip will also be available in the live auction.

“Teacher time,” where students are given the chance to hang out with teachers, is up for silent auction at the event. Led by Frances Fluit, the silent auction will once again be done through online means, accessible through any mobile device.

In addition to the creative crafts done by elementary students, there are many auction items donated by the secondary students’ families.

“I’m really excited about the response we had from the secondary students,” event coordinator Sarah Wilson said. “It was rather generous of them. I love having student involvement.”

Jazz band and Encore will both be performing at the event. The emcee for the night is BCS board member and dad Brian Jackson.

There will also be the return of the “Paddles Up” initiative, a lightning round auction with a specific purpose. This year’s goal is to raise money for a new 15-passenger miniature bus,

which will be used to transport Brentwood teams across the state. Since redistricting will force BCS to travel a lot more, there is a need for better transportation.

The funds raised outside of “Paddles Up” go directly to supporting the school’s operating costs.

“This allows BCS to maintain tuition that is half that of our competing schools while still maintaining its status as one of the top-performing academic schools in Central Texas,” school president Jay Burcham reminded the BCS community in an email last week.



photo: submitted
Generally friendly Maj. Gen. Pat Hamilton, here with his wife Beverly, will speak at this year’s Partnership Dinner.

Science day features gliders, balloons, bubbles

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consists of all the high and middle school science teachers: Michelle Mallett, Carol Neil, Madison Pamplin, Dr. Diann Sloan, and Kathy Wilson, along with academic advisor Leah Smith. These teachers spent long hours in the weeks leading up to the event taking care of every aspect of preparation in order to make it a fun day of celebrating science.

The projects were tested in different locations, including the CSA lobby and the promenade for the egg drop, the FLC for the balsa wood glider, and the hallway of the science

wing for the hand crank bubble maker, due to high winds outside.

While those students were busy testing their projects, the upper elementary students were off having their own fun. They were assisted by juniors and seniors to build balloons out of tissue paper. Most balloons ended up lifting about six inches off the floor before sinking back down.

“Although not all the balloons lifted up off the ground, it was still a lot of fun to get to work and try different things out with my little buddies,” senior Cade Young said.

Judges for these events came from a variety

of places to oversee the testing of the projects. Some came from the University of Texas, while others came from a local engineering firm. Another was Pamplin’s father, Dr. Kim Pamplin, who is a professor of chemistry at ACU.

Many activities were planned for the day, with complex rotations worked out so that each student could follow his or her own individualized schedule. These included science-based Kahoot! trivia games, Post-it Pics, a bean bag launching challenge, a series of Tangram puzzles, and an “escape room,” which leveraged one’s ability to use math, science, and modern technology to solve the escape route.

“The escape room was very well thought out, I just wish the room was cleaner in order to find the clues more easily,” freshman Kennedy Drennon said.

Even Brentwood’s youngest students got in on the science action. Those from K4 through second grade participated in a number of different science-based activities. For example, the second graders conducted experiments using eggs and clay in order to create eggs that would spin for the longest time, as well as constructing egg towers using only plastic eggs and clay.

The youngest students also got to attend ACU’s Chemistry Circus in the theater, along with all students through eighth grade. Put on by ACU students, this show featured a variety of chemistry-based experiments that created exciting visual effects.

The day ended with an assembly for all secondary students in the auditorium. After singing along to a few science-themed songs, students watched a slideshow of the day’s activities.



photo: Brandy Gauthier
Step one: hypothesis Juniors Baley Cordes and Judah Baron discuss the best strategy for their balloon project with third-graders Violet Browne and Aiden Clapp.

THE BEAR FACTS

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The Bear Facts is available online at
www.brentwoodchristian.org.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: **Adrie Gruis**
Seniors featured in the Bear Facts were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS Class of 2020.

Not just an act: Cheerful servant cares, stays positive

By **Natalie Barry**

As the sun rises and sets on the Brentwood campus you will most likely see a gray Mazda parked in a spot marked for her grandma as she runs back and forth from activities like Encore, Lady Bellas, and study sessions with a smile on her face and a bubbly attitude no matter what time it is.

Adrienne Susan Gruis was born May 18, 2002, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, before her family moved down to Texas in 2013 seeking a larger community with more opportunities, which they soon found at Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ. Having attended school at Brentwood since the sixth grade, Adrie is known around campus for her positive attitude, dazzling smile, and servant heart.

Behind her is a loving family, which consists of her parents Brandi and Brian Gruis, her nana Sue, her brother Evan who is a freshman at Brentwood, and her dog Louis.

“Growing up with Adrie as a sister might be the best thing ever,” Evan says. “She shows such great faith and is nice to everyone, and I always strive to be like her in that way.”

Throughout her years at Brentwood, Adrie has made a huge impact through her leadership roles – perhaps most prominently in theater. When the musical director needs a leading lady, she knows where to turn. Adrie has been actively involved in theater all four years, playing the lead of *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Our Town*.

Beyond the stage, she has led the Class of 2020 as an officer since sophomore year and been a member of the Lady Bellas since freshman year, now serving as a social officer. Adrie has also been involved in Encore throughout high school, is a member of the National Honor Society, and serves as president of choir. This year she was voted International Thespian Society president and crowned Homecoming Queen. She has been honored with countless fine arts awards, including the Outstanding Actress award, Choir Leadership award, and Thespian of the Year award.

When asked how she juggles it all, she says that her four years in high school have taught her how to work and produce in every situation.

“I am addicted to being busy, creating, working hard, and having a beautiful product to be proud of in the end,” Adrie says. “Being busy can be hard, but I wouldn’t change it for anything in the world.”

But despite all of the talents and abilities Adrie possesses, humility surrounds every

one of her actions, whether she is performing on stage or learning in a classroom. Many of her friends credit this to her bold faith and her ability to always stand up for what’s right, even if she stands alone.

“Her every word, every action, every decision involves a careful reflection about how she can reflect Christ’s love to others,”

classmate Cade Young says. “Her consistency to stay true to faith is something I will always deeply admire.”

Adrie has been described by her classmates as intelligent, compassionate, and considerate. They have counted on her assistance with understanding concepts as well as her generosity in providing Quizlets to help prepare for tests.

“She has always been so reliable, ready to laugh, cry, sing, or dance with you depending on what you need,” classmate Addison Alberda says. “I know that I can always go to her with anything and she’ll give me a level-headed, Christ-like solution to my problems.”

Adrie’s impact goes farther than her classmates and peers, as she serves as a mentor to the low-erclassmen.

“I love getting advice from Adrie because she has such a kind

heart that loves others just like Jesus,” close family friend Tynneson Allen says.

Music has surrounded Adrie’s life for as long as she can remember, and her grandfather was her biggest inspiration, as he taught her music can touch every life differently while also uniting people from all different walks of life. Her favorite things to do after a long day include singing, playing the guitar and piano, and studying old composers.

Adrie’s love for serving has led her to be involved with many organizations, including Health Talents International, through which she attended a surgery clinic in Guatemala several weeks ago, where she was able to receive hands on experience with patients. She spent the week taking the patients’ vitals, performing outpatient tasks, observing surgeries, and speaking with specialists about their experiences.

She has also led in Camp Agape and in youth service projects at church. Calling Brentwood her home away from home, she enjoys attending her Summit group on Wednesday nights and the deep relationships she has formed along the way. Trusted mentor and Brentwood Oaks youth minister James Henley states that while Adrie is an amazing singer, student, and leader, it is her humility that shines through it all.

“It is crazy how wonderful she is, and I am so thankful to have been her youth minister the last seven years,” Henley says. “I hope that all the younger kids in our youth group will see her example and do what they can to follow Jesus in the same way Adrie does.”

Adrie plans to attend Texas A&M and study biomedical science on a pre-med track with the plan to become a doctor and participate in global missions. Music will still play a huge part in her life as she plans to continue to hone her skills and teach on the side. Over everything, she hopes her life will be a testimony of God’s grace.

So whether she is bringing stories to life on stage, actively studying to perfect subjects, or sharing her wisdom and faith with those around her, you’ll always know she will be there with a bright smile and loving attitude shaping her actions after Christ and choosing to glorify his name.



Crossword answers

ACROSS

1 Guatemala

8 Volleyball

10 Larson

12 Randy Tillotson

13 Normandy

14 Renaissance Hotel

15 February 26

DOWN

2 Adrie Gruis

3 San Marcos Academy

4 Kelli Tindel

5 Jonah Connor

6 Alyssa Mancias

7 Arlington

9 Ethan Rutt

11 Scout

Lively Larson loves students, loudly leads to Lord

By Riley Banner

In 1982, Russell Larson made a decision that would change his life forever: the decision to ask his future wife Tammy out on a date. See, Larson didn't know what God was planning at the time. In fact, he didn't even know God, but soon enough Larson would be set on a path where he himself would be teaching others about the good news of salvation, and boy, would he teach it loudly.

Larson's voice first echoed through the middle school hallway in 2016. After joining the Brentwood Oaks church in May of the same year, he heard about a job opening to teach at Brentwood Christian. Once he had an interview with secondary principal Carol Johnson and teacher Mel Witcher, he was welcomed into the school. In his first year, he coached varsity volleyball and taught eighth graders in U.S. History and Bible, and although he no longer coaches volleyball for the school (he coaches select), Larson has managed to build up quite the assortment of classes, adding freshman Speech, high school Debate, and Competitive Speech and Debate to his roster.

In his short time on campus, Larson's energetic personality and dedication to teaching has made him a beloved figure among students and teachers alike.

"In a world in which so many people wear a 'mask,' Mr. Larson does not. He is real, and he is genuine," teacher Carrie Hunter says.

Junior Charlie Walters also appreciates more than just his classroom lessons.

"Mr. Larson has always encouraged me to speak up about my opinions and my beliefs," she says.

Before coming to Brentwood, Larson gained 33 years of experience in teaching and coaching at a variety of schools. He started his teaching career by coaching and substituting for AISD in 1985, and beginning in 1986, when he received his master's in education at Southwest Texas (now Texas State), Larson moved on to a slew of different schools. First, he taught fourth grade in Del Valle. Then he worked as the central office K5 and K12 math coordinator for the district in Pflugerville, which involved writing curriculum, assessments, and model lessons; working with teachers, principals, and superintendents; and adopting textbooks.

After working at Pflugerville, Larson coached volleyball, track, and tennis at Manor while he served as the dean of academics for the ninth-grade academy. At Elgin, the last school he worked for before coming to Brentwood, Larson worked as the instructional administrator and coached volleyball and track.

With a resume like that, you might be wondering why he isn't the principal of a school



photo: Natalie Barry

Never a dull moment History teacher, speech and debate coach, and jungle gym climber Russell Larson keeps classes entertaining with his energy and enthusiasm.

somewhere.

"I love the classroom," Larson says. "I did (administrative work) for 14 years; I don't want to do it again. I love teaching."

Secondary principal Carol Johnson is well aware of the strengths Larson brings to the school.

"He's funny, he likes kids, and he has a great sense of humor. He gets teaching and can relate to kids," she says. "I've tried to get him to do administrative work, but he says he'll quit if I make him do it."

When he came to Brentwood, Larson stepped up to help Hunter with the eighth-grade class's annual Valentine sales and D.C. trip, which certainly left an impression on her.

"I couldn't have done it without him," says Hunter, who since then has handed Larson the reins for those activities. "He is organized, detailed, and does everything to the best of his ability at all times. I truly admire him as an educator, a friend, and as my brother in Christ."

Funnily enough, Larson's initiative to help out with the D.C. trip almost landed him in trouble with the United States Secret Service. While the class was visiting the White House three years ago, one student, Nathan Morgan, found a wallet on the ground and handed it to

Larson so it could be returned. Larson then gave the wallet to the Secret Service agents stationed in front of the White House. People don't usually turn in lost wallets to the Secret Service, so the agents needed to ask Larson a few follow-up questions.

"They said, 'Russell Larson, you're coming with us,'" Hunter recalls. "Mr. Larson was so scared! I will never forget the look on his face. Once we knew that he wasn't in trouble, the eighth graders and I cracked up!"

Coming from a background of public school teaching, Larson says he loved seeing the "willingness to work" that eighth-graders displayed during the Valentine's Day sales and has continued to appreciate the smaller, more personal community that Brentwood offers. It has made it easier for him to get involved with his favorite part of teaching: getting to know his students.

When asked about their teacher, a group of eighth graders describe him as very energetic, fun, bold, entertaining, and "just a little bit ADHD." They said that his use of students as examples during lessons really helps to make the lessons stick.

Another aspect of Brentwood that Larson enjoys is the ability to make connections with his

fellow teachers.

"It's amazing. I'm close to all of them," he says. "We're close religious colleagues and can openly pray together. We support each other in work and personal life."

Larson enrolled in the University of Texas in 1979, where he earned his B.A. in history and political science. It was at UT where he met Tammy in a course on Texas History. Unlike the fairy tales, their meeting was not love at first sight. See, Larson had a nasty habit of arguing with the professor, which made Tammy think of him as arrogant. The first time they talked to each other, Larson started the conversation by mistaking her for another girl.

You might think that this case of mistaken identity would have ended their conversation, but no. Larson decided to ask Tammy out anyway. At the time, she said no, but after the two hung out at school baseball games, Larson actually managed to convince Tammy to go on a date with him. It was at this point that he started to see the effects of Christianity. Tammy came from a Christian home, and when Larson got to know her, he realized that Christianity was something he needed in his life.

Here's the thing: It would be an understatement to say that Larson didn't have the best childhood. His mom was abusive and his dad didn't intervene enough to stop her. Larson had two older sisters, and although he had been close to his middle sister, the three siblings were often mean to each other, practicing what they had learned from their mom.

But at one point Larson's life dramatically changed. During the Vietnam War, his dad was in the military and flew bombing missions over Vietnam. Because of this, Larson's family had been living on a military base in Tokyo, Japan, from 1967 to 1972, when Larson was in the first to fifth grades. Incidentally, Larson was able to land himself in the Japanese Baseball Hall of Fame for being the first foreign bat boy for a professional team during this time.

Back then, Larson was fluent in Japanese, but then his family moved from one of the world's largest cities to Whitney, Texas, which had a population of about 1,200 at the time. This transition made it tough to break into a friends group. Most of his classmates had known each other for years, and he was an outsider. He was eventually able to make friends, but none of them were close enough to make him miss his time at the school after he graduated in 1979. Larson's rough childhood sent him on a dark path after high school, a time when he "did not live the Christian lifestyle."

Now, if Larson's childhood was the darkness, Tammy and her family were the light. After

see **LARSON**, page 8

Rutt wins wrestling medal

By Natalie Hargrove

Junior Ethan Rutt brought home Brentwood Christian's first state medal in wrestling, finishing second in the TAPPS wrestling championships at McKinney Christian Academy on Feb. 15.

In Rutt's last three tournaments, he has 10 wins that were all by pin, competing in the 138-lb. weight class.

"After I won my semifinals match I was so happy, because I knew that I was coming home with a medal," Rutt said.

While he wished he could have won his final match, he knew it would be difficult facing a Texas national team member who is also nationally ranked.

"I am focused on next year and winning a first-place state medal," Rutt said.

Mainly coached by his dad, Rutt started wrestling in third grade at Vista Ridge Youth

Club, and once he got into high school he reached out to Vista Ridge High School and was taken in by their team. In October he joined a wrestling club through which he competes in tournaments on weekends.



photo: submitted

Father and son BCS junior Ethan Rutt, with his father and coach Jeff Rutt, won a silver medal at the TAPPS wrestling championships last month.

Guys break 4x200 record

By Zack Haswell

Brentwood Christian's track athletes opened the season last Friday, Feb. 28, competing against area public schools at the Rockdale Relays and earning first place in the boys' 4x200 relay, setting a school record.

Originally, the teams were to begin the season in San Antonio on Feb. 20, but the meet was cancelled due to bad weather. They were scheduled to compete at the Yorktown relays on Thursday, March 5, after the Bear Facts had already been printed.

Several athletes on the boys' team placed against competition that included Taylor, Elgin, Smithville, and Cameron. But it was the team of senior Michael Milicia, senior Coby Best, junior Noah Shelby, and sophomore Chris Mayo that stole the show by winning the 4x200 in a time of 1:33.00. Mayo's anchor leg brought a roar from the crowd, as he passed several opponents.

Shelby took fifth in the 100 (11.41), and Mayo was third in the 200 (22.96). Junior Gavin George finished sixth in the 400 (56.63), and junior Minho Yoon took fifth in the 800 (2:07) and sixth in the 1600 (5:01).

Sophomore Jack Leidlin was sixth in the 800 (2:09), while junior Aaron Lilya was fourth in

the 110 hurdles (17.34). Senior Jonah Connor took third in high jump (5-08).

The boys' 4x100 team finished sixth (44.76), as did the 4x400 team (3:44).

The girls competed in the JV division at Rockdale, finishing third overall. Junior Julia Glenn won the long jump (16-4) and the triple jump (32-9), and was third in the 300 hurdles (55.03).

Also placing were sophomore Sydney Cooper in the 1600 and 3200, senior Alyssa Mancias in the 100, junior Hailey Reich in the 800, and junior Ashlynn Wright in the discus.

The 4x100 and 4x200 teams each placed third.

A total of 32 boys and nine girls are on this year's teams. Boys' coach Correy Washington said he has high hopes for the season.

"I plan to compete at a high level and win the district championship," he said. "The team this year overall is the best I've coached because of the chemistry and the kids are all eager to work."

The girls' team faces the struggle of a smaller team but still has a strong focus on teamwork.

"We all train super hard, but it's worth it when we can all just run our hardest and have fun," Mancias said.

Boys playing well, having fun

continued from page 1

Doege said the experienced players are quick to help out the younger ones on developing their skills. Despite the intense practices and games, however, the Bears still make room to have fun.

"Any time the guys do something goofy or mess up on a play they know they can make, I turn my hat sideways," Doege said. "It's a funny inside joke between us, and they enjoy it."

With district games coming up after spring break, players say the team is in a good spot.

"I think the season is going well so far," senior pitcher/catcher Travis Whitaker said. "We are hitting the ball really well, but we still need a little work on defense."

Junior second baseman Aiden Panter is also enthusiastic about the boys' success, and he said he is looking forward to district play.

"I know that our team will continue to grow their skills and achieve more things," Panter said. "I hope that we'll be able to keep up the hard work and focus as we go further into the season."

The Bears are currently playing in the San Marcos Academy Tournament this weekend. They will also play at home against Idea Montopolis on March 10.

"We are capable of winning district," Doege said. "With the momentum we're gaining, our goal is getting in the top two (of district) to be part of the playoffs."

Junior Zack Billante leads the team with a .591 batting average, followed by senior Isaac Copeland at .563. Eight different batters are hitting over .300.

Billante leads with 13 hits; Whitaker leads with 13 RBIs, followed by Billante and sophomore Seth Taylor with 12 RBIs each.

Following are the team's recent game results:

2/14: Concordia 19-1 W

Whitaker started on the mound, while the Bears scored 10 in the third inning and had 11 total hits before the game was called in the fifth. Junior Riley Keesey and Taylor each had 3 RBIs.

2/21: San Marcos Bap. 15-0 W

Brentwood scored nine runs in the first and five in the second, led by senior Luke Jackson and sophomore Ryan Crowe with 3 RBIs each. Taylor pitched all three innings, allowing no hits.

2/25: @ Hallettsville Sacred Heart 12-1 W

Once the Bears got to the Indians' bullpen, they scored six runs in the sixth and six more

in the seventh. Whitaker pitched all seven innings, allowing only two hits and striking out seven.

2/27-29: BCS Tournament W W W

The Bears, hosting their very own tournament, started off with a 17-0 win against Granger. Billante had three hits, and Keesey and Whitaker each had 3 RBIs. In their second game, Brentwood beat Holland 13-7. Billante had a lead-off home run over the left-center-field fence in the first. Whitaker hit the second homer of the game, a towering three-run blast to left. In the championship game, BCS won 8-4 against San Marcos Academy to take the trophy. Copeland was 3-for-3 with 3 RBIs.

3/3: TSD 16-2 W

Whitaker launched two more home runs, finishing with four hits and six RBIs. He was also the winning pitcher, striking out six in four innings. Bear batters had 14 hits in the game.



photo: Sydney Cooper

Another hit Junior Zack Billante leads the team in hitting with a .591 average. He is second with 12 RBIs.

Money for Medicines

BCS students raised \$4,577 to donate to the Zambia Medical Mission in the annual fundraiser over the past two weeks.

Classes that raised the most money were Mrs. Hutson's K4, Mrs. Gunn's fourth grade, Mrs. Taylor's seventh-grade class, and Mr. Mayfield's freshman class.

"Money for Medicines has become part of the DNA of our school," supervisor Michele Broadway said proudly.

Young softball team finding early success

By Aurora Tyson

Although the rainy weather has been putting off games and practices, the Lady Bears softball team has worked hard in the time they have been playing together, picking up wins in three of their first four games.

Led by new head coach Rory Tyson and assistant coach Coby Tyson, the girls spend much of their time working to improve their athleticism and softball skills. When bad weather prevents them from practicing at their home field at Balcones, the team practices inside, trying to get some work in wherever they can.

“We can’t control how good our opponent is, so we just really focus on making ourselves better each day to be the best we can be,” said Coby Tyson, husband of Rory, who coached baseball at Bartlett for four years and softball at Gorman for four years.

With 16 total players, six of whom are completely new to the sport, Rory Tyson said it has been a challenge and an adventure to form the starting roster.

“With so many inexperienced players and so many things that can happen in a game, there’s a lot of learning that needs to be done,” she said.

Practices typically consist of conditioning or weightlifting, infield and outfield fungo, situational fielding, base running, and batting practice in the cages.

“We may not have the experience of other teams, so we work hard to make up for it,” Coby Tyson said.

Despite the new coach and new player additions, the girls are bonding well as teammates and learning how to work with one another in games.

“We’re clicking really well,” junior catcher Natalie Hargrove said. “We’re having fun and bonding while working hard and helping each other learn.”

The Lady Bears’ starting lineup is as follows: senior Alyssa Mancias leading off and playing center field; sophomore Ava Alvarado in the two-hole playing second base; junior Aurora Tyson batting third at shortstop; junior Caroline Griffith batting clean-up and playing first base; freshman Ashlynn Alvarado batting fifth and playing third base; junior Molly Stewart hitting sixth on the mound; Hargrove batting seventh and catching; freshman Carolyn Morgan hitting eighth in right field; and junior Alyssa McLain batting ninth in left field.

The atmosphere on the team is one of encouragement and love for each other.

“One of my favorite things is to see one of my teammates succeed,” Griffith said. “We see them do something good and the whole team goes crazy because we’re so happy for them

and proud of what they can accomplish.”

With only one senior, a couple of the team’s upperclassmen are emerging as leaders.

“Aurora is very versatile and can play several different positions,” Rory Tyson said. “She’s our shortstop, catcher, first-year pitcher, and outfielder, playing wherever we need her to. Molly Stewart also leads the team on the mound.”

Brentwood’s strength, according to Rory Tyson, is their effort, willingness to learn, and their good attitudes. In regards to the upcoming district season, the team’s main goal is to keep improving.

“We want to be competitive and have fun,” she said. “If we put runs on the board and mini-

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photo: Kelly Stewart

Play ball! Senior Alyssa Mancias puts on her game face as she steps up to home plate. Mancias is the only senior on the team, led by new head coach Rory Tyson.

Golf teams enter new era with Tillotson

By Natalie Hargrove

The Brentwood Christian golf teams started out their season on a wet, cold day at Grey Rock in the Regents golf tournament on Feb. 10, where all three participants – juniors Wes Tindel and Laura Wilson, and freshman Eston Duff – placed in the top 10.

The teams played another Regents tournament on Feb. 24 at Lost Creek, this time with a full roster. Duff placed in the top five for the boys and was the only one to place.

Earlier this week, the Bears played in the Hyde Park tournament at River Place on March 2. Duff, the only BCS golfer to place, finished fourth.

Since last season, the teams have lost four seniors: Micah Best, Connor Troutman, Kori Howell, and Madison Mosley. There are 10 new students playing and only two returning players: Wilson and Tindel.

BCS is also starting off the season with a new coach, Randy Tillotson, after coaches John Vandygriff and Brant Troutman decided to step away.

“This season will be a rebuilding year,” Tillotson said. “I am going to help the new players build a strong swing and a love for this sport.”

The teams practice at several different driving ranges, including Top Golf.

Wilson said she sees a lot of potential in the team.

“Even though we have a lot of new people, I am looking forward to a great season,” she said.

Soccer boys end season with close playoff loss at home

By Jackson Baird

The varsity boys’ soccer season ended at home on Feb. 6 with a 4-3 loss to Dallas Christian in the first round of playoffs.

The game was played on a cold afternoon during the school day, so the stands were packed with Bears fans of all ages. Heading into the game, Brentwood was already at a disadvantage with their leading goal scorer, senior Jonah Connor, on the bench serving his one-game suspension after receiving a red card in the previous game.

BCS trailed after giving up a goal in the first 10 minutes. Senior Jackson Baird leveled the

score with a penalty kick after the ref spotted a handball inside the 18-yard box. Senior Jose Real then grabbed the lead for the Bears with a breakaway goal.

But the Chargers regained the momentum with two quick goals before the half via their speedy forward who proved to be trouble for the Brentwood defense all day.

In the second half the Chargers scored again to stretch their lead to two goals, but with lots of time left BCS piled on the attacks. Baird scored again to draw the Bears within one goal but could not find the tying goal.

“It was tough losing such a close game, but I am proud of the season we had,” Baird said.

Brentwood finished with a 7-7 overall record, 3-3 in district. Connor led the team with 10 goals, followed by Baird with nine. Baird led with nine assists, followed by Real with six.

Despite the loss, head coach Jesse Jordan was still proud of the fight his team showed.

“The Dallas Christian game was not the result we wanted ... but I am proud of the team,” Jordan said. “I’m also proud of the way they kept battling to the very end of the game.”

Jordan also announced to the team that he will be coming back to coach the team again next year.

For the Lady Bears, their 1-5 district record does not do the season justice, as they exceeded

all expectations for such a young and inexperienced group. Despite facing opponents stacked with elite club players, the girls were competitive in every match.

The team really hit its stride during the tough district schedule, which culminated in a dramatic victory over the district champs.

“No opponent was more humbled by our development than eventual district champion St. Michael’s, who suffered the only league loss of their season at the hands of our Lady Bears,” head coach Nick Marquez said. “Everyone was stunned when they heard this result at the all-district meeting the next day, which is a testament to just how far our girls came in such a short time.”

Seniors taking tour of France

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ing ahead of them.

After a night in Paris, students will then take a bus over to Loire Valley, which is about 130 miles from Paris. One of the major highlights there will be the visit to Troglodyte, which is a medieval cave dwelling that has been carved into the side of a limestone cliff.

Students will spend two days in Loire Valley, exploring the ins and outs of French culture. Then they will drive over to St. Malo, where they will spend one night.

After that, the class will take the bus to the Normandy Region, where they will visit the Normandy Beaches and learn about the history of the D-Day Invasions in more depth. Here they will also be visiting the American cemetery at Omaha Beach, where the American soldiers who gave their lives in the D-Day

Larson

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Larson started dating Tammy in the spring of 1982, he began to study the Bible with Tammy's dad, and in two years' time on Oct. 19, 1984, Tammy's dad baptized him.

By July 1982, Larson knew that he would marry Tammy. In March of the next year, he proposed to her and she said yes. Five months later, the two got married on Aug. 27, 1983 – "at 2 p.m.," Larson recalls. He and Tammy went on to have their first daughter, Ashley, on June 5, 1987, and their second daughter, Meagan, on March 1, 1989. Both daughters are now married and working as high school math teachers, with Ashley living in Fort Worth and Meagan living in San Antonio. Ashley has a 19-month-old son named Jax.

"He (Jax) lights me up because he loves life," says Larson.

Meagan recently had a son too. It was uncertain that she would ever be able to have kids, but with the help of IVF, Cooper, her six-week-old, was born on Jan. 15.

"He is just a miracle from God," says Larson.

If you're wondering what Larson's grandkids look like, feel free to swing by his classroom, where you can see their photos taking up every square inch of his desk space. His classroom shouldn't be too hard to find; just follow the loud voice in the middle school hallway. While you're there, take the opportunity to get to know Larson for yourself and to experience the kind, loving, and energetic person that he is.

invasion are buried.

This year will involve the students staying in five different hotels and cities, which will allow for more sightseeing during the daytime, rather than spending several hours driving back and forth to far-away sights, and then returning to the hotel at night.

"I have never been on a senior trip where we stayed in so many different hotels, but traveling in a circuit will mean less travel time than on some trips," Graessle said. "Also, our hotels are all centrally located, which will reduce travel time."

In addition to the class sponsors, Brentwood Oaks minister James and his wife Ashley will be accompanying the seniors as official sponsors.

The group of 48 will eventually end their trip back where it all began, in Paris. The students will spend one last night there before flying out on the morning of March 13.

Some of the major highlights of the trip include going to the top of the Eiffel Tower, exploring Versailles, visiting Chartres Cathedral, getting to see multiple chateaus (luxurious castles belonging to French royalty), and a tour of Paris at night.

While most students will be heading overseas with little to no knowledge of French, Genevieve Graessle has been using the past several months to learn the language.

"I've been doing French Duolingo for a few months, and I just found a French for Dummies book in my house that I've been reading through," she said. "I am really excited to go headfirst into a new culture and try my best to speak their language!"

Softball

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mize our errors, we'll get better every game."

The Lady Bears are planning to continue practicing over spring break, and the team is scheduled to play a double-header against Idea Montopolis next Friday, March 13.

Following are the team's recent game results:

2/7: Northeast High School 19-5 W

Stewart pitched three innings and had four strikeouts. Tyson went three-for-three at the plate with two singles and one double. Sophomore Sophie Orlikoski led off the third inning with a triple to right field. Tyson came in to

pitch the fourth inning and had one strikeout.

2/27: Concordia 18-2 W

Stewart faced six batters and had four strikeouts. Tyson came in for the third inning and had two strikeouts. With a couple of misjudgements and errors, the Bears allowed two runs. Tyson had a double, and Ava Alvarado, Griffith, and Ashlynn Alvarado all had singles. A combination of aggressive baserunning and passed balls allowed BCS to advance 31 bases.

3/2: @ St. Dominic Savio 18-8 L

Tyson went 4-for-4 in the loss.

3/3: Manor JV 8-5 W

Tyson hit an in-the-park home run, and Hargrove had an RBI triple.

Treasures await in D.C.

By Evelyn Lee

Bags are (hopefully) packed, and excitement is brewing. Washington D.C. and its treasures await.

On March 8, 25 eighth graders, along with teachers Russell Larson and Cynthia Davis, and 10 parents, will take a journey to the United States' capital city to explore our nation's intriguing history.

Over the course of four days, the class will see famous monuments, museums, and historical sites such as the Lincoln Memorial, Capitol Hill, Mount Vernon, the Smithsonian museums, and Arlington National Cemetery.

At Arlington, the class will witness and participate in an important ceremony. Four students – Lucy Belcik, Elijah Catron, Sarah Esman, and Macie Griswold – will lay a wreath at

the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in a special ceremony. The students were selected by Larson after a class essay-writing contest. They were then notified of their selection on March 2.

"I'm excited to see the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. It's so amazing how our nation gives respect to the unknown men who fought for our country," Griswold said last week, before she was notified of her selection.

Larson said that over the last several years, sites have been added to and scratched from the trip. This year, the eighth graders will visit Lincoln Park to see the Emancipation Memorial. The memorial shows Lincoln with the Emancipation Proclamation and a liberated slave.

The students will also visit sites added the previous year such as the Museum of the Bible and the National Museum of African American History and Culture. But this year, due to repairs, the 9/11 Pentagon Memorial will be closed to student access.

Several eighth graders have expressed excitement about activities and opportunities. John Youngdale said he has been to D.C. before, but it was when he was very little.

"I just remember there were a lot of white buildings, but I'm excited to see it all again," he said.

Brentwood is once again pairing with the company School Tours of America, as Larson said last year's trip was such a success. He was especially pleased with last year's tour guide, David Elliot, who will guide the group again this year.

"He always gives the tour from a Christian perspective," Larson said. "He is extremely knowledgeable about D.C. and tells great stories."

This will be Larson's fifth trip to Washington, and his fourth with BCS eighth graders.

"I'm looking forward to seeing the eyes of the students experiencing D.C. for the first time," he said.



photo: washington.org

Greetings, Mr. President The Lincoln Memorial is one of the many historic sites the 25 BCS eighth graders will see this spring break on their trip to Washington, D.C.