



# THE BEAR FACTS

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BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

MARCH 2021



## Beautiful Hawaii awaits group of 16 seniors

By Emily Walker

While many are doing spring cleaning and pressing snooze, seniors will be exploring palaces and snorkeling tropical waters. This year, seniors will be exploring Hawaii during spring break – the first senior class to travel some-

where other than Europe in 30 years.

The group will depart early in the morning on Thursday, March 11, with a brief layover in Houston, and is set to arrive on the island of Oahu at 3:30 p.m. The tour company Joshua Expeditions will lead the students to their hotel, where they will have a devotion and rest before the next busy seven days. The BCS group consists of 16 students and 12 adults, including both parents and staff.

Each senior paid around \$3,000, which is about the same price the trip to Italy was projected to be. Originally, 30 students signed up to visit Italy, but the pandemic eventually ruled that trip out. However, those still plan-

ning to travel are excited for the adventure.

"Italy would have been fun, but a senior trip to Hawaii is different than any other class in Brentwood history," Alyssa McLain said.

Upon arrival to the sandy beaches, the seniors will hike onto the top of the Diamond Head Crater volcano in Honolulu, then satisfy their hunger in Waikiki at local food attractions. Day three will start off with the Brentwood group browsing Waikiki gift shops before departing on a 90-minute drive to the Polynesian Cultural Resort. Once there, they will partake in a multitude of island-theme activities. Seniors will row canoes, weave lauhala leaves, and eat dinner at a luau before returning to their hotel.

The fourth day will feature a tour at the Iolani palace, which is home of the Hawaiian monarchy, before touring the Hawaii State Capitol. After the tours, students and sponsors will hop on a bus to visit the Dole Plantation and pineapple maze. The seniors will end day number four by watching the sunset as a class.

The fifth day will start with a tour of Pearl Harbor and the USS Arizona Memorial to learn about Japan's involvement in World War II. Afterward, the group will pay their respects to fallen soldiers at the US Memorial Cemetery. Following lunch, students and staff will reflect in Oahu at Makapu'u Lighthouse and head back to the hotel to rest.

Day six will be packed with adventures including taking a rainforest hike, visiting a waterfall, and admiring some of the filming locations from the movie *Jurassic Park*. The final full day in Hawaii will consist of snorkeling at the beach before making final gift shop purchases in Waikiki, and having a period of free time for the remainder of the day.

Finally, the students are set to return on March 18 at 7:50 p.m.

Brentwood Christian staff accompanying the seniors include secondary principal Carol Johnson and her husband Albert, guidance counselor Leah Smith and husband Caleb, and executive assistant Penny Hagen.

The group is looking forward to bonding and exploring with each other on the island.

"I'm excited we can still enjoy a senior trip despite the pandemic," Theron Garcia said. "I'm most excited to go snorkeling on the beach and to get closer with classmates I don't know as well."



photo: Avery Tyson

**Aloha!** Seniors will visit Iolani Palace, Dole Plantation, Pearl Harbor, Diamond Head Crater, Waikiki beaches, and much more during their trip to Hawaii on March 11-18.

## Big snow, record lows stun Texas, BCS

By Sarah Esman

When students left school on Thursday, Feb. 11, with ice already clinging to tree branches, they had no way of knowing they would not be back on campus for 11 days.

During the night of Sunday, Feb. 14, and into Monday, Austin got to see about six inches of snow and the coldest weather since the late 1980s. This followed the sleet and freezing rain that cancelled school at BCS on Friday, Feb. 12. The mixture of snow and ice

did not begin to thaw until Feb. 19, cancelling school on Wednesday through Friday.

Monday and Tuesday were the annual teacher in-service days, meaning students already had a holiday scheduled.

Even though a total of four days of school were cancelled because of the winter weather, school president Jay Burcham said that Brentwood Christian would not have to make up the time missed. Because BCS has had productive in-person classes, the school has been allowed by the Texas Education Agency to not make up

the lost time.

The lowest temperature Austin reported during this winter storm was 6 degrees Fahrenheit, which was reported on Tuesday, Feb. 16. This was the coldest low temperature in Austin since Dec. 23, 1989.

The city of Austin also stayed below freezing for 144 consecutive hours, which is exactly 6 days. This beat the record of 140 consecutive hours below freezing in 1989.

see **RECORD-SETTING**, page 3

## Harper plugs in BCS community on livestream

By Hailey Stromberg

Football, soccer, and baseball fields; basketball and volleyball courts ... Jimmie Harper and his livestreaming team are there ready to broadcast so you can watch from the comfort of your home.

Ever since the beginning of the school year, when school leaders were looking for a way to keep the Brentwood community together in the pandemic, Brentwood has livestreamed everything from chapel to the musical to assemblies, in addition to more than 50 games. Harper and his broadcasting team have been behind every one of them.

After the school hired Harper for this important job, his first assignment was a volleyball game against Round Rock Christian on Sep. 18.

"I manned the camera, the laptop, and the mic all by myself. It was rough!" he recalls. "I didn't know anything about volleyball at the time and was completely overwhelmed with having to do it alone. After that I embarked upon a diligent campaign to find student volunteers to help."

Now he has students to run the camera, help with the virtual scoreboard, and even do commentary for the sports they know the best. A total of about 30 different students and faculty have helped him so far.

"Volunteers are key," he said.

The livestream team tries to be at every home game, streaming for viewers at home. Harper estimated that a typical game has

see **HARPER**, page 4

From the Editor: Aurora Tyson

# Can money buy true fulfillment and lasting joy?

Make a list of things that you really wish you could afford. I'm sure a few expensive things quickly come to mind. Now think again and answer this question: Would these things bring you true happiness, or would you soon be wishing for something else once the newness of those items wears off?

In an increasingly materialistic society, we often struggle to realize how blessed we truly are and how much we take for granted. One way or another, most everyone has thought about how much better their life could be if only they were rich. On Jan. 20 of this year, Americans bought more than 100 million

tickets in hopes of winning the lottery and becoming rich. These numbers prove how many people wish they had more money to save and to spend. Children grow up dreaming of being rich and being able to purchase anything that their hearts desire. We think that money solves problems. We believe that expensive homes, cars, clothes, jewelry, bags, electronics, and more will make us happy. When we finally buy *that thing* that we've always wanted – when we finally have enough money to purchase it – then and only then will we be truly satisfied and truly happy.

But will we actually?

The real question here is, can money buy you happiness? In a sense, yes, money can buy something that causes someone to be happy. However, this happiness will undoubtedly fade away after some time. To comprehend this concept more easily, let's use an example. Imagine you finally have enough money to buy your dream car. Naturally, you are going to be pretty ecstatic to be sitting in that vehicle, driving the car you have always dreamed of having. But let's fast forward three to four years into the future. The car isn't as 'cool' as it once was, and you're no longer satisfied with what was once your dream car. It has a few scratches and dents, the paint is chipping in some places, the interior is worn, the leather is cracked, and the car has gotten some natural wear-and-tear over the years. It isn't nearly as valuable financially, and it has lost its emotional value as well. You aren't happy with the car anymore.

Think about your own life; think of a purchase you made that caused happiness for a short while and then lessened in value and ceased to make you happy anymore. Was that purchase worth it? Maybe. But in the end, did



the money you spent on that item buy you true happiness?

The material items of our world are not eternal, as they change over time and their value always fades. This is supported by Isaiah 40:8, which reads, "The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of the Lord remains forever." Instead of placing our happiness in money, in riches, and in things of this world, we should focus on fulfilling our joy through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In Him and only Him will we find true contentment.

Eventually, we will all pass and leave this earth. For Christians, this is not bad news, but cause for celebration, as we will go to live in Heaven and worship God eternally. However, when we do leave this world, we will also leave behind our houses, our cars, our clothes, our phones, our toys, and all of our other belongings. Those items will have no significance whatsoever once we are in the presence of our Heavenly Father, face to face with our Creator and our Redeemer. So why should we

be so concerned about riches and money while we live on earth? This is only a temporary stay, and a temporary home, because our real home is in Heaven with our Lord.

While avarice, the love of money, is not a godly trait and should be avoided, financial stability is not a bad thing. Hebrews 13:5 reads, "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'" Contentedness and satisfaction can be achieved no matter how rich or poor you are, because the truth is that wealth does not matter. Many of the wealthiest and richest people are actually very unhappy, and they often turn to drugs and alcohol, struggle with divorce and family issues, and are unable to find joy, regardless of the cars in their garage, the clothes in their closet, and the money

*If you want to feel rich, just count all the blessings you have that money cannot buy.*

in their wallets.

French philosopher Blaise Pascal said, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ." We often try to fulfill our wants and needs with the wrong things, imagining we can spend our way to happiness. However, as Pascal writes, the God-shaped hole in our hearts can only be filled with God's love and mercy. True happiness, true contentment, and true joy come when we turn to our Lord and are overcome by His everlasting peace and grace.

1 Timothy 6:17 says, "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment." Wealth, riches, and material items have little importance in comparison to your relationship with Christ. Despite what the world says, and despite what you might think, money will not buy you happiness or fulfill your heart's desires. Only God has the power to give us true happiness. So count your blessings instead of counting your dollar bills, and spend on your relationship with God instead of spending on materialistic items.

## THE BEAR FACTS

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



**Super Senior!** Seniors Zoe Hamiyeh, Celeste Metayer, and Lauren White enjoyed time together at Westside Church of Christ for Super Senior blessings on Feb. 2.



# Seniors feel loss, find new blessings in pandemic

By Kaitlyn Weilemann

While the world has been busy dealing with Covid-19, the seniors of the BCS Class of 2021 have had an unusual senior year with more oddities to come. Ahead of them, they anticipate an unprecedented college experience following a worldwide pandemic, and all of them have been affected in their own different ways.

High school math teacher Kaleen Graessle said she wishes this year’s seniors could have participated in TCSIT, traditional NHS activities, and leading secondary chapel. Still, in the midst of all the difficulties, Graessle said she has seen God in these students in the way they “have managed to rejoice always and give thanks in all circumstances.”

In years past, senior classes have been able to grow closer to each other at packed football games and crazy indoor pep rallies, as well as during chapels and other times where they could interact with their classmates freely. This year, things have to look a little different, so the majority of Brentwood’s traditional events such as Jog-a-fun, Super Senior, Buff Puff, the senior retreat, and even everyday lunches and athletics continue to take place with added restrictions to keep them safe.

Arguably the biggest change for everyone at BCS this year has been the introduction of

class cohorts, which have to be maintained for students’ safety whenever possible on campus. Opportunities to safely interact with students in other cohorts like outdoor all-community chapel and outdoor pep rallies have helped to soften the blow of being separated from a large portion of their peers.

However, some seniors have taken a liking to the smaller sized classes that result from a cohort-based schedule, feeling as though their learning is more personalized.

“I see my teachers now more as friends, rather than authority,” senior Theron Garcia said.

Like many other students at Brentwood, some seniors are taking classes asynchronously by watching video recordings of live classes that take place during the period they have another class scheduled. But for seniors, this has brought problems unique to their higher difficulty classes. One example is Anatomy, a science class that requires plenty of notes to understand each subject, and taking these notes every night after school on top of other assignments takes up time.

“Anatomy is also a very hands-on and visual subject, and to not be in class with the ability to see everything has been a challenge,” senior Grant Martinez said. “I will say Mrs. Mallett has done a great job making it as easy as possible for us to learn what we need to.”

This year, the college application dates were pushed back, and SAT and ACT scores were not required in order to accommodate pandemic related disruptions. Some college applications included questions regarding how the pandemic affected students and their families.

Students had to cut down on college visits, which worried some that they wouldn’t be able to judge each school without a proper visit. However, others said it helped to narrow their decision on which school to attend next fall.

Despite this setback, some students judged how each school chose to handle the pandemic and used this as an indicator as to which schools they would feel the safest and the most at home attending.

“The safer the college was, the more attractive it was to me,” senior Emily Walker commented.

For some seniors, the curveball that is the Covid-19 pandemic has blessed them with a new perspective, making them stronger, awarding them new friendships, or even inspiring them to pursue a certain career.

“I have always wanted to become an educator, and the pandemic has made that desire even stronger,” senior Molly Stewart said. “I want to be able to give kids the best education possible!”

## Annual dinner to be hosted at Reunion Ranch

By Lucy Belcik

Anyone who has few years of BCS experience behind them will be familiar with Brentwood Christian’s traditional Partnership Dinner, which has been a staple at the school since 1991. Normally a formal meal with entertainment provided by a guest speaker, the dinner is one of Brentwood’s largest fundraisers and has raised crucial funds that have all been fed back to the needs of students and teachers at the school.

Brentwood will host their annual Partnership Dinner fundraiser at Reunion Ranch in Georgetown on March 27. Even though the dinner, like many events this school year, will look a little different, BCS has still worked hard to include all of the elements most would expect from the fundraiser.

Artist Jared Emerson will serve as the special guest speaker for the dinner. A Christian, Emerson uses his art, both performed and created, to bring peace to those

see **DINNER**, page 8

# Record-setting weather cancels four days of school

continued from page 1

The coldest low temperature ever recorded at Austin’s Camp Mabry was -2 degrees Fahrenheit, which happened on Jan. 31, 1949. The coldest high temperature was 20 degrees, which was set on Jan. 10, 1962.

Many events that were supposed to happen during the week of snow and ice were adversely affected. For example, middle school basketball playoffs were cancelled, and the middle school one-act play was postponed.

The long duration of the extreme weather led to many power outages due to downed power lines, rolling blackouts, and the extremely high demand for electricity. People also lost water, and the entire city of Austin came under a boil water notice, each part of the city under the notice for a different amount of time. Pipes also burst during the winter storm, and plumbers are still rushing to fix the many issues around Austin.

Seventh-grader Luke Sheth was one of the people whose pipes burst. When he woke up one day, water was running from the sinks in his house. The water that escaped the pipes

managed to get under the flooring, so his house flooded and his floors will have to be replaced.

Freshman Emily Mulcahy was also one of the many people who had to endure the cold without a necessity.

“My family’s fireplace wasn’t up to code, so we had to use our gas stove to warm our living room and kitchen space,” Mulcahy said. “Once water started getting shut off, we went to my grandparents’ house.”

Even though there were hardships during this snowstorm, the Brentwood community was able to make the best of it. Many people went sledding on hills around the city, played board games, and read books.

The Walnut Creek trails behind Brentwood had a layer of snow, and the creek was frozen over in places. Some families were able to hike the trails and even walk on the creek’s surface, witnessing the icy water instead of just seeing the flowing creek.

When school resumed on Monday, Feb. 22, Brentwood Christian was under a boil water notice, which was lifted that afternoon after school. Many hardships involving lack of power, water, and transportation have affected

the Brentwood community, but families have been helping each other push through this time of trial.

As Burcham reminded the BCS community, “God is great, and His greatness has been seen.”



Uncommon beauty Brentwood Christian was blanketed in snow on Feb. 15.

photo: Amber Weed



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: *Carlie Walters*

Seniors featured in the Bear Facts were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS Class of 2021.

# Carlie thinks, leads, loves

By Natalie Hargrove

She’s welcoming, kind-hearted, and the one who usually brings her classmates donuts during grade-level chapel.

Carlie Jane Walters was born on Aug. 12, 2003, in Wichita Falls, and since then has lived in Abilene, St. Louis, Washington DC, and Austin. After attending five other elementary schools, Carlie enrolled at Brentwood Christian in fifth grade and has spent the last seven years making long-lasting friendships.

“Leaving my friends every year or two was really challenging,” Carlie says. “I always felt like the new kid, but once I came to Brentwood I was able to make friends without the fear of moving a hundred miles away. I was given the opportunity to really find a group of my own.”

Throughout her time at Brentwood, Carlie has been a part of numerous activities and leadership positions. These include two years as class vice president, two years as class president, competitive public speaking for two years, varsity soccer for three years, football manager for two years, and a few Brentwood theater productions.

Teammate Zoë Hamiyeh says Carlie has been a great leader on the soccer field and always has positive and encouraging words for her teammates.

“This year we had girls who had never played soccer before, but Carlie took them under her wing,” Zoë says. “She helped them get better and gave

them tips or advice when they asked.”

Carlie has been a huge part of her youth group at Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ and has spent multiple weeks of her summers at Camp Blue Haven in New Mexico, where she was baptized. She has also been a part of Summit Ministries, where she took summer classes discussing how to see life through a Christian worldview and how to approach difficult questions.

Senior teacher Mel Witcher says Carlie is focused on seeing all of her life through the eyes of faith, and he believes the experience of those worldview classes was very formative.

Other teachers and faculty describe Carlie as an upbeat leader, curious, consistent, and aware of others. Class sponsor Penny Hagen says Carlie has such a compassionate heart and she always has a way of pulling those on the outside into the group.

“Her leadership skills have brought the senior class more together, and I really sincerely feel that all of the seniors have grown and matured in their faith,” Hagen says. “Carlie has helped design that dedication and maturity.”

Friend Nathan Morgan says Carlie knows what questions to ask to make you really think about what you believe. When coupled with the fact that she knows how to get in front of a crowd, it makes her an excellent leader.

Asked what she wants to study in college, Carlie says she is undecided at the moment, but she has applied and is waiting on a response from the Air Force Academy.

Senior math teacher Kaileen Graessle says she thinks it is fitting that Carlie leads the Pledge of Allegiance every morning since her father is an Air Force officer and she would like to follow in his footsteps. If that does not work out, Carlie plans on attending either Pepperdine or Texas A&M, majoring in political science.

“I want to be a lawyer so I can advocate for people who can’t advocate for themselves,” Carlie says. “I hope to specifically go into foster cases to advocate for children and find the best home for them.”

Senior Bible teacher Jimmie Harper says that sounds like a perfect fit for Carlie.

“Her passion and kind nature will suit her well in that field,” he says.



# Harper livestreams games, more

continued from page 1

about 20 live or “concurrent” viewers, and around 120 viewers after the livestream. The homecoming football game, however, had more than 100 concurrent viewers from places “all over the U.S.”

Not only does Harper and his team stream sports games, but also chapel, school activities, the musical, pep rallies, and much more. This is not only so that the Online Bears can see the stream, but so even parents and grandparents can watch from home.

“It is very useful, especially for the Online Bears, since we can see what is happening and get to participate,” sophomore Ashley Mondru said.

Over the course of this year, Harper says the broadcast has evolved in many ways. The stream has improved due to upgraded equipment, and he has also learned more about each sport so that he can do a better job as a commentator.

While Harper said he enjoys announcing games – something he “never dreamed” he would be doing – what matters most to him is the students.

“I love getting to celebrate our students through the live stream,” he said. “My mission is to lead students to love God. If they’ll listen to me call out their touchdowns, spikes, goals, three-pointers, and home runs, they’re more likely to listen when I say that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.”

# A study in patience

## *O’Sullivan takes time, reaps rewards*

By Renne Cooper

For sixth-grader Bryce O’Sullivan, winning the school spelling bee in January was a satisfying way to cap off weeks of studying. But it was also the culmination of six years of work, as he has qualified for the school bee every year since first grade.

Each year, O’Sullivan begins studying hard as soon as the lists are released.

“The past two years have been more fun because I get to practice the words with my brother who is in second grade,” he said. “I also read many books, and if I come across an unfamiliar word, I look it up in the Merriam Webster Dictionary.”

This year’s BCS spelling bee was unlike any other after it first seemed as though it would be impossible to even have a bee due to the pandemic. Scripps, the spelling bee organizer, developed an online platform so classroom and school-wide bees could still be held. Brentwood’s bee was held from Tuesday, Jan. 19, to Saturday, Jan. 23, and the participants could take the online test at any time during these dates. The test consisted of 25 words: 20 from the distributed list and five other words.

O’Sullivan described some of the differences between the oral format of the bee and the new online format. He said that the usual format, in which all the contestants are on the stage in front of the entire school and must wait their turn to spell a word in each round, requires more stamina than the online format.

Being on stage in front of a large student body adds a level of pressure.

Being online, however, brought a different challenge. Typing is a skill that requires practice, and O’Sullivan said he never had to type under pressure before.

Having won his school bee, O’Sullivan moved on and competed in an Austin semifinal qualifier bee last week, also online. Results of that bee have not yet been posted. If he is among the top 30 spellers, he will move on to the next level, the Austin Spelling Bee.

O’Sullivan said his goal is to make it to the National Bee in Washington D.C., but he knows he has a hard task in front of him. In addition to the spelling of the words on the list for the next round, the participants must be familiar with the definitions as well.

“The next round is going to be very challenging,” O’Sullivan said. “I am studying all of the 1,400 words from the Words of Champions list.”

Given the work ethic he has developed over the last six years, any future success he discovers should not surprise anyone.





# Graessle lands job as NPR host for KACU radio station

**By Katie Pittner**

A BCS graduate returns to her dorm room at Abilene Christian University on a Friday afternoon around 4 p.m. and decides to listen to the radio. Tuning in to KACU 89.5, she hears a familiar voice coming through the speaker – one that she used to hear giving the morning announcements back in high school. Could it be?

Former editor-in-chief of the Bear Facts and Student Council vice president Genevieve Graessle has now been a student host of a National Public Radio (NPR) show for KACU since Feb. 1.



After graduating from Brentwood in 2020, Graessle had plans to attend college in New York City to study filmmaking, but because of the current pandemic, she ended up attending ACU. Graessle plans to graduate with a multimedia major and a double minor in film and professional writing.

Despite not being able to go to the college of her top choice, Graessle immediately began to immerse herself into her atmosphere, got involved with people in her major and community, and sought out opportunities.

“Genevieve is intentional about making the best of any situation,” said her mother, Brentwood teacher Kaleen Graessle. “When she first arrived, she began meeting people and seeking out leadership opportunities.”

Graessle, in her search for opportunities, started working for the Journalism and Mass Communication department, where she assisted the administrative coordinator and the professors. As her boss was showing her around, Graessle discovered a job opening in KACU, and she was asked to apply by the director of communications. Although Graessle had never anticipated being a part of NPR, she applied. After an interview she was hired, and was excited to begin broadcasting.

“I was absolutely ecstatic when I was hired! It has been a hard year, and I know that I’m

not alone in struggling to find the light with so many different and hard things happening in the world right now,” Graessle said.

After starting to work as a student host, Graessle was pleased to see how doing the morning announcements at Brentwood for two years prepared her for this opportunity. She continues to focus on speaking clearly with a “positive tone,” and pronouncing names correctly. But she has found an aspect of her new job that was unanticipated.

“I think the most unexpected thing is how precise everything is,” she said. “I have to start speaking at exactly the right second and then finish the same way. Our entire day of programming is mapped out to the second, so it is important that I keep things on schedule.”

Graessle is on the air on KACU 89.5 three days a week and speaks on average five to six times an hour. On Mondays and Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. she does the segment “Here and Now,” and on Fridays from 3 to 6 p.m. she hosts “All Things Considered.”

Some of the most common subjects Graessle talks about while broadcasting are local news, local weather, community events, and asking for donations for KACU. When Graessle isn’t on-air during her shift, she is usually preparing for her slot by gathering news, organizing information, writing, and timing.

Graessle also hopes that this job can help her achieve her aspirations of later becoming a film journalist, critic, or something else related to that field.

Graessle’s work as a student host has elicited positive responses from many people, especially in the Brentwood community, starting with her mother.

Mrs. Graessle was initially surprised that this opportunity was available, especially for a college freshman.

“When I have been able to listen to Genevieve it has been so fun,” she said. “It is wonderful to hear her on the air, knowing that she is having a very unique, formative experience.”

Graessle has also impressed many students, including senior Asher Gentry, who enjoyed hearing her on NPR.

“I am an avid listener of public radio, and I have friends that speak on NPR regularly; therefore, hearing a familiar voice and knowing about Genevieve is very exciting,” he said. “NPR requires a very specific person, one that shares information without bias and also one that is incredibly intelligent. I am very proud of Genevieve.”

As word of Graessle’s work spreads around campus, students and faculty alike are proud of the Brentwood graduate and are happy to hear her voice again through the radio.

# Day of Joy features pep rally, hot food, sports, bunnies

**By Carina Combs**

The BCS Day of Joy took place on Tuesday, Feb. 9, and was full of fun activities, sports watch parties, and dinner. Planned by StuCo, the Day of Joy offered an opportunity for students to enjoy some time with their friends and relax.

All students were encouraged to dress up in as much green as possible to show their school spirit, and there was no homework assigned to enable students to attend the after-school activities.

The festivities began with a pep rally at 2:50 p.m., and this was followed by a petting zoo, dinner, and watch parties for three basketball games and a baseball game. The day’s activities went all the way to 10:45 p.m.

Students were able to sit on the athletic field or bleachers to watch the games on a 44-foot-wide inflatable screen. This allowed them to spread out and be socially distanced while still enjoying the games. There were also some cornhole games set up on the field.

“I like being with my friends while watching games, and I enjoy being outside in nature as well, instead of a gym,” freshman Andrew Kent said.

A petting zoo was also set up from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., featuring a goat, an alpaca, two bunnies, one tortoise, two piglets, and a baby kangaroo.

For those who registered, a free dinner of pulled pork sandwiches, hot dogs, and cheeseburgers was served on the field. There were a total of 177 meals given to attendees, catered by the Brentwood cafeteria provider, Taher. Snacks and water were also available.

The last event of the day was the “Not a Dance Party” for high school students only. There were music, lights, sparklers, and In-N-Out burgers.

“It is evident that the BCS faculty and staff spent a lot of time into making the day enjoyable,” freshman Macie Griswold said. “It was a nice break from the hustle and bustle of the week, and I think all the students appreciate that!”

Despite the cold weather that was in the 50s throughout the evening, this joyful day gave students an opportunity to laugh, have fun, and take a break from homework.



**We’ve got spirit!** The seniors went all out to win the spirit stick for the first time in their class’s history at the Day of Joy pep rally on Feb. 9, wearing Class of 2021 glasses and using confetti poppers. The rally featured introductions of spring sports teams.

*photo: Brandi Gauthier*



# Undefeated softball team averaging 21 runs per game

By Aurora Tyson

After a 14-3 win against Eastside Memorial on Monday, the Lady Bears softball team is 6-0 overall and 1-0 in district. Brentwood plays again this Thursday, March 11, at Texas School for the Deaf at 4:30 p.m.

With their 17 players including six girls who have never played softball before, the more experienced players have had to step up and become leaders for the younger ones.



photo: Brandi Gauthier

**Defense** Senior Molly Stewart, senior Aurora Tyson, and junior Bailey Harris play defense against EACP last week.

“This team really seems to jell well,” head coach Rory Tyson said. “Even with the variability in skill, everyone is taking on their role and contributing to the success of the team.”

Despite the young team, Tyson is hopeful that the girls will make a statement in the district season and secure a spot in the playoffs through their hard work and determination.

“We want to keep improving throughout every game and practice so that we are ready when it really counts,” Tyson said.

The bipolar Texas weather has made it difficult for the team to have games and put their newly learned skills to use. Several games were postponed or cancelled last month. But the team returned from their extra days off ready and eager to get back on the field.

“We still have a lot of things we need to work on,” Tyson said, “but I’m much more confident in our abilities than I was last year.”

The Bears have been hard at work practicing every day after school for three and a half hours.

Coach Tyson says that the team puts a lot of effort into learning about the sport and becoming better softball players and better athletes.

“The girls are putting in extra work this year, and we always have several staying after practice to get in extra reps,” Tyson said. “It’s this dedication that will set us apart when it comes time for district play.”

“Coming into my first high school softball season I was nervous about making friends and bonding with all of my teammates,” freshman

Keira Black said. “But now that we have had some games I am loving the team, because everyone is super supportive and the energy is great.”

The girls are optimistic about the remainder of district play and their chances of making the playoffs.

“I’m really proud of our victories so far,” senior Molly Stewart said. “I see the skills developing, and I think we do have a shot at doing well in district.”

The Lady Bears will play their district game against Geneva on Friday, March 19, during spring break.

Following are the game results thus far:

**2/26: Concordia 25-10 W**

Brentwood scored 12 runs in the first inning. The varsity starters played three innings, and then the substitutes and JV players got to play for the remaining two innings. Senior Aurora Tyson led the team with five RBIs, while junior Christina Hoelscher was the winning pitcher with four strikeouts.

**2/26: East Austin College Prep 21-0 W**

In their second game that night, the Lady Bears dominated. Stewart pitched a perfect game with eight strikeouts. Tyson hit a home run over the right-center field fence in the third inning, scoring three runs. In the fourth inning, Hoelscher, Tyson, and Ashlynn Alvarado hit three consecutive triples.

**3/1: @ St. Dominic Savio 17-1 W**

With the bases loaded in the first inning, Stewart had three strikeouts in a row to get out

of the tough situation. In the four innings she pitched, Stewart had seven strikeouts. Black and senior Natalie Hargrove each had base-clearing triples in the third inning. In the fifth inning, substitutes came in and the JV players were able to hit around the lineup twice.

**3/4: East Austin College Prep 22-2 W**

The rematch was much like the first game, as BCS overpowered them both defensively and offensively again. Tyson led the team with four RBIs. All four of the Lady Bear pitchers did well, and freshman McKenna Counts was given the win, with five of the 13 strikeouts. All substitutes and JV players got to bat and play in the field.

**3/5: @ Hyde Park 27-12 W**

The Lady Bears earned their first district win against the Panthers. Both teams struggled defensively early on, and the score was 15-12 by the end of the fifth inning. Stewart pitched five innings, and then Counts came in to finish off the remaining two innings. Black, Tyson, and Ashlynn Alvarado had a double play off of a ball hit to center field that Black caught and threw into Tyson, who relayed it to Alvarado at first base. In the sixth inning, Brentwood scored 12 runs to finish strong. Black, Tyson, Ava Alvarado, and Counts each had four RBIs.

**3/8: Eastside Memorial 14-3 W**

Stewart pitched the first three innings, and Counts pitched the remaining four, making Counts the winning pitcher. Tyson led the team with three RBIs off of a double and an inside-the-park home run.

# Baseball team picking up wins, lessons as district nears

By Nathan Joseph

After splitting four games in the South Texas Slugfest tournament last weekend, the Brentwood Christian baseball team has a 6-4 record. They will play their first district game on March 23 against St. Michael’s.

Prior to this, the team has been playing various teams around Texas, public and private. Led by a talented group of upperclassmen, including seniors Zach Billante and Riley Keesey, the Bears hope to secure a district title and advance far into the state tournament. The Bears boast a talented rotation of pitchers, including Keesey as well as juniors Jack Spring, Seth Taylor, and Keller Jackson.

“We’ve flashed signs of great potential, but we have also fallen apart at times,” said Billante, who plays center field. “If we can shore up a few things defensively and find the lineup that works for us, we will win our district and make a deep playoff run. The goal is always state.”

Head coach Jeffrey Doege said the team still has a lot of growing to do.

“We have played very good teams and they have exposed some weaknesses that we are fixing everyday,” he said. “We have to take it one day and one game at a time. If we do this, we will be very successful.”

Junior Jake Amoroso leads the Bears with a .542 batting average, followed by Keesey at .483. Senior Baley Cordes leads the team with 11 RBIs, followed by junior Sam Benton with 10.

Billante has scored the most runs with 14, while Amoroso has scored 13. Junior Seth Taylor has two home runs, and Keesey has one.

Keesey leads all pitchers with 20 strikeouts in 15 innings pitched. Junior Jack Spring leads the Bears with a 0.70 ERA, followed by Taylor’s 1.00 ERA.

Following are the game results thus far:

**2/6: Bay Area Christian 4-1 L**

Pitching three innings, Keesey shut down the opposition, only allowing one hit in the span of 60 pitches. He also hit a double and was bat-

see **BASEBALL**, page 9

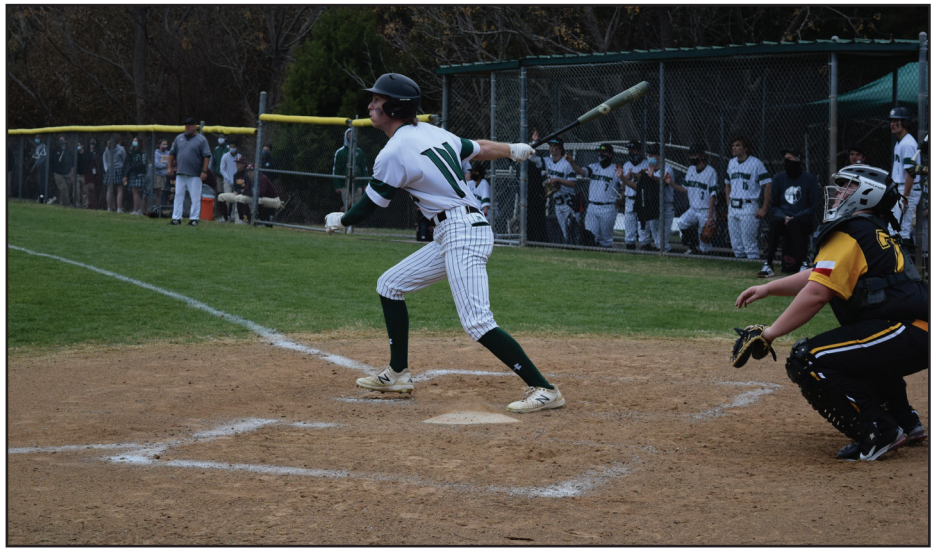


photo: Brandi Gauthier

**Crack!** Senior first baseman and pitcher Riley Keesey hits in Brentwood’s 8-0 win over Bruceville-Eddy at the BCS tournament on Feb. 25. The Bears advanced to the tournament championship, where they lost to Grapevine Faith 11-3.



# Boys end district on buzzer-beater, fall in playoffs

By Renne Cooper

The Bears lost 4-0 in their first-round playoff game against Fort Bend Christian on Feb. 22 after ending the regular season tied for fourth in district with a 5-5 record.

Playing in Sugar Land, Brentwood was locked in a scoreless tie at halftime. But four minutes into the second half, Fort Bend scored two. Both times, the ball was given to a speedy attacker who sprinted past the Bears’ defenders and finished the play. On one of these goals, players agreed that the attacker was clearly off-side, but the refs counted it, despite the complaints of Brentwood’s players and spectators.

Not long after, another goal was scored on the Bears in the same manner as the first two. The final goal was scored with about 10 minutes left in the game, securing Fort Bend’s advancement to the next round and smashing Brentwood’s hope of a long playoff run.

The team agreed they could have played better and put more effort into the important game.

“It was really disappointing when the final whistle blew. I felt like we could’ve won if we put more effort in, but it was a good game and I can’t wait for next season,” freshman Ike Ruiz said.

Head coach Cash Miller said he is proud of the team and the way the season turned out.

“We started slow because everything was new, but we finished strong,” he said. “We are a better team because of the slow start. We learned a lot about ourselves and one another.”

Miller offered some encouragement for the out-going seniors.

“They helped change the path of a program and laid the foundation for success in the future,” he said. “They did a fantastic job!”

Seniors Andrew Geevarghese and Mason Hejl reminisced about their four years of BCS high school soccer.

“Playing soccer was a great experience, and I would recommend it to anyone,” Geevarghese said. “I am glad we made the playoffs all four of those years, and I have made countless memories playing soccer at Brentwood.”

“I have loved the four amazing years the

Brentwood soccer team has given me, and I know I am leaving the program in good hands,” Hejl said.

On Friday, Feb. 5, the team traveled to Regents for their penultimate district game. The Bears started out fast with two goals in the first 20 minutes to Regents’ one. Junior Jack Leidlein scored the first with a shot from 25 yards out. Junior Nathan Joseph had the second with a free kick near the corner that soared over the defense and keeper and into the back of the net.

After these three goals were scored, the Knights asserted their dominance in the second half and pulled away with six more goals scored before the final whistle, winning 7-2.

Brentwood played the next day on their senior night against St. Anthony’s at home, trying to keep hold of their district rank. The scoring began with a corner kick for BCS that was sent into the box to Joseph, who scored after the opposing keeper fumbled the ball. The Bears were awarded a free kick from around 35 yards out, and Leidlein hit it with pace so that it knuckled, giving the goalkeeper no chance.

After halftime though, St. Anthony’s scored two. The game was tied with 10 minutes left, and Brentwood was struggling against a team they had beaten 4-0. But in the last 10 seconds



photo: Kevin McKinnerney

**Taking aim** Freshman Ike Ruiz takes a corner kick against St. Anthony’s on Feb. 6.

see **BOYS’ SOCCER**, page 9

# Girls’ soccer team shows grit, almost wins playoff game

By Katie Pittner

The Lady Bears’ soccer team ended their season with a 1-0 loss to Dallas Christian in the first round of the playoffs at Robinson ISD on Feb. 22.

Knowing that this could be their last game of the season, the Lady Bears played their hardest the entire game, and the teams were pretty evenly matched, so no goals were scored in the first half. In the second half, the Lady Bears gave up one goal but did a good job keeping the ball out of their end. Encouraged by the intensity of their fans, the team managed 13 shots on goal but wasn’t able to convert any, bringing an end to the season and concluding eight seniors’ last game.

Though the Lady Bears finished with only three wins, head coach Cash Miller was still pleased with the season.

“We struggled with injuries all year,” Miller said. “Despite all of that they worked hard and never gave up or lost sight of what was important – going out each game and giving 100% for your team. It was one of the most rewarding seasons I have ever coached.”

Although the Lady Bears did not advance in the playoffs, the seniors have been positive and

are mostly pleased with the season.

“I was very thankful to have a team that always worked hard for each other and always had fun,” senior goalie Caroline Griffith said. “It was great to be a part of a senior night because there were so many of us and we have all grown up together.”

Griffith made 149 saves this season, and Miller said it was impressive to watch her play. Senior Julia Glenn led the team with 16 goals and 70 shots on goal. Senior Haley Reich led with 13 assists and also made five goals.

In their final district game, the Lady Bears had an impressive 5-0 victory over St. Anthony’s at home on Feb. 6. Having beaten them 6-1 earlier in the season, the girls were confident even though they were playing without Glenn. Freshman Macie Griswold was able to return to action after sustaining an injury very early in the season. The team was excited to have their talented midfielder back, but because of senior Rebecca Schmitz’s ankle injury one night prior, the team would have to play with only 10 players. Still, the Lady Bears easily kept the ball out of their half. Reich scored the first goal on a penalty kick. She then scored again, which ended the first half at 2-0.

The second half went just as well for the

Lady Bears, even though they played the last 15 minutes with only nine players. Sophomore Ashlynn Alvarado scored three goals – a hat trick that happened to be her first three goals of the season. Freshman Abby Munoz had four assists.

The day before, Brentwood lost 2-0 at Regents. Because of injury and absence, the Lady Bears had to play the game with no subs, so Bear fans were prepared for a beat-down. However, the girls went into the game with the goal of everyone playing defense and not letting goals slip by them.

After the Lady Knights managed to score two goals in the first half, Brentwood’s defense refused to allow any more. But with about 20 minutes left in the game, Schmitz sprained her ankle, so they finished with 10 players.

“It was an impressive display on how to play defense the correct way,” Miller said.

In spite of the fact that he is losing so many seniors, Miller is optimistic about next year.

“Next season we will work hard and get stronger and better because we will have all summer,” he said. “We do lose a lot of girls to graduation, but we will fill those spots with other girls that will continue to carry on Lady Bears soccer.”



photo: Kevin McKinnerney

**Play on!** Sophomore Ashlynn Alvarado scored three goals in Brentwood’s 5-0 victory over St. Anthony’s on Feb. 6.



# Lady Bears surprise with playoff win

By Juliet Booker

The Lady Bears basketball team had a bit of a rough start in the beginning, but they ended the season by advancing to the second round of playoffs.

Brentwood Christian won their first-round playoff game 25-18 against Brook Hill on Feb. 27. It was a team effort for the girls, as the defense came up with big steals to lead them to victory.

With that, the Lady Bears advanced to play Southwest Christian in Ft. Worth. Going into the game, they knew their opponent featured multiple players who had accepted scholarship offers to play in college. The loss was a brutal one with a score of 63-26, but some saw it as a learning experience.

“Playing with D1 players was difficult, but it was a growing experience,” freshman Sarah Esman said. “You could tell who these players were because they were great at handling the ball and they were able to make their shots.”

Senior Alyssa McLain stepped up to the role of senior leader and improved both offensively and defensively.

“It was awesome to see Alyssa’s senior leadership in these past few games,” head coach

Ariana Marks said.

The high point of the season according to Marks was senior night, where the girls had a significant win against St. Anthony’s, earning them a spot in the playoffs for the first time in three seasons. The team has definitely met their goal of showing improvement.

“There was a stretch of the season that we were struggling to get a district win,” Marks said. “As a young team it is hard to be consistent with the lack of basketball experience. Watching lots of film, learning from mistakes, and being consistent with fundamental practice, the girls improved dramatically.”

The Lady Bears had a tough loss against Hyde Park on Feb. 9. Junior Alicia Gardner and freshman Aubrey Acheson each scored 10 points, but the Panthers won the game 66-38 due to sloppy passing on the Bears’ part.

Needing a win in order to advance to playoffs, the girls defeated St. Anthony’s on Feb. 22. They were down by six points at halftime and by four points after the third quarter, but they started the fourth quarter on a 12-0 run to pull away, winning 50-44. Acheson made several steals and layups, and McLain hit some big three-pointers to lead Brentwood with 17 points.



photo: Kevin McKinnerney

**Eyes up** Freshman Aubrey Acheson and BCS had their hands full against Hyde Park on Feb. 9, but they won their final district game to make the playoffs.

## Duff leads BCS golfers

By John Youngdale

Sophomore golfer Eston Duff took first place at the Regents Invitational on Feb. 24 and again at the St. Michael’s Invitational.

In the first tournament, played at Plum Creek in Kyle, Duff shot a 1-over-par 72 to top all boys. He followed that with a 3-over-par 75 at Wolf Dancer Resort in Bastrop, where the golfers played in 50-degree temperatures and showers.

The Brentwood Christian golf team consisting of three boys and two girls, all sophomores, started practicing in February. All of the athletes played last year, and head coach Randy Tillotson said everybody has improved their scores from last year’s tournaments.

“I foresee all of the members of the BCS golf team finishing out the year strong,” Tillotson said.

Duff will represent the BCS golf team in the district championship at Lakecliff Golf Course on April 19.

## Dinner features roomy venue

continued from page 3

who have suffered extreme trauma. At the event, Emerson will be painting two pieces of art live and sharing his testimony. The paintings will then be auctioned off during the live auction portion of the dinner.

Normally the Partnership Dinner would be hosted in a ballroom at Renaissance Austin Hotel, but this year the organizers have decided to host at a venue with more outdoor space in order to better accommodate Covid restrictions.

“We’re not sure how many people will feel comfortable coming out to the event this year, which is why we’ve decided to host at a smaller venue like Reunion Ranch,” said Sarah Wilson, director of fundraising and events.

Reunion Ranch, which is located about a 40-minute drive away from BCS, has the advantage of much more room around the venue where guests will be able to take part in other activities prior to the meal and main events, which will not begin until 7 p.m. Guests to the dinner can enjoy games such as cornhole or horseshoes, and the BCS Jazz Band will be on site to entertain.

Within the building where the dinner will be served, elements such as table spacing and

size must be taken into consideration as well.

“The tables will be a little larger, but most should still seat 10 people,” Wilson said.

Even things like the pitchers of tea normally kept at tables have had tweaks to meet Covid guidelines. Each guest will be served individually instead of having one pitcher that all at a table share.

“It is just smaller things like that we have had to adjust to,” Wilson said.

The main attraction of the Partnership Dinner is most notably the auctions, both silent and live, to raise money for Brentwood. Wilson said she is hopeful that with both auctions having an online component, people who may not be comfortable with coming out to a venue this year will still feel as though they can participate. People wishing to bid on an item from home will set their maximum bid, and someone in the room will be assigned to bid for the at-home participant.

As for those still looking to attend the dinner, Wilson believes that the dinner will be a night well worth attending.

“Though we may be more comfortable with the idea of attending a dinner at a venue such as the Renaissance ballroom, the dinner should still be a really enjoyable community event,” Wilson said.

## Boys end on high note

By Juliet Booker

The varsity boys fought through a challenging basketball season and ended on a high note, beating Boerne Geneva 59-52 on Feb. 22, after starting the year with a complete rebuild.

Juniors Cason Best and Seth Taylor scored 12 points and 10 points, respectively, as Brentwood continued to battle back after falling behind. The Bears were behind 23-19 at halftime, but hot shooting by the Eagles took their lead back to double digits, and the Bears trailed 37-26 midway through the third quarter.

But BCS made some big steals and three-pointers, and by the end of the third quarter they led 41-40. In the fourth quarter, the Bears’ defense and hustle were too much for Geneva, and they pulled away in the last minute.

It was the team’s first game in nearly two weeks after cold weather cancelled school and games. Their previous game was a 61-53 loss against Hyde Park on Feb. 9. Best had 18 points for Brentwood.

“They only need time and a little more experience,” first-year coach Donte Mathis said. “There’s a structure you have to commit to, to be able to experience winning consistently. We’re trying to get guys to buy into that with

everything they have.”

Mathis is already planning for next year’s season, saying that he is “continuing to implement a work ethic that demands a certain physical and mental approach daily.”

Mathis called Best the team’s most consistent player, as he led the Bears in rebounds and points per game.

“Cason’s aggressive play has been a constant for us all year,” Mathis said.

Best was one of several key juniors for the Bears, who only had one senior.

“This season was a year of important growth for the program, with there being a new coach with new policies and expectations,” Best said. “I think we grew together as a team and learned to play better together as the season progressed.”

Mathis said he is very proud of all of the players.

“Coming in and introducing a new methodology, trying to raise expectations from day one isn’t always easy for players to absorb,” he said. “It’s tough to get guys to leave their comfort zone, but I think all of our guys know if we continue to work the right way, the fruits of their labor are very close in reach.”



# Speedy varsity track teams gain early success

By John Youngdale

Brentwood Christian’s varsity track team was dominant at the Allen Academy Ram Relays in Bryan on March 6.

Ten days earlier, the teams competed at Lago



photo: Lisa Lee

**Cruising** Freshman Juliet Booker ran the leadoff leg on both the 4x100 and 4x400 relays on March 6. BCS won both races.

Vista High School, with the boys’ team taking second place. Several Bears athletes placed against runners from schools such as Lago Vista, Rockdale, and Jarrell, but it was senior Julia Glenn who broke her own sister Nicole Glenn’s school record in the triple jump with a leap of 34-0.

“I may have taken the triple jump school record from my sister, but it was well worth it!” Glenn said.

However, it was the boys who fared better as a team, led by junior Brandon Tindel, who took first place in the 200 meters (22.89). Senior Noah Shelby finished second in the 100 meters (11.05), while sophomore Brecken Lee came in third in the 800 (2:10), and second in the 1600 (5:15). Sophomore Rodrigo Real took fifth in the 400 (58.03).

The boys’ 4x200 team finished second (1:33.95), as did the 4x400 (3:46.06).

The much smaller, 12-person girls’ team took fourth place at the meet. Freshman Juliet Booker finished second in the 100 (13.67), third in the 200 (28.91), and fourth in the 400 (1:12.17). Freshman Lucy Belcik came in third in the 3200 (14:19).

Glenn also won the long jump (16-6), while senior Ashlynn Wright took second in the discus throw (74-3).

“We have a good mix of sprinters, distance runners, throwers, and jumpers,” girls’ coach Katie Smith said. “I am very excited to see how the season goes, and I have high expectations



photos: Lisa Lee

**Speed** Junior Parker Combs (left) gets off to a fast start in Brentwood’s winning 4x100 relay on Saturday in Bryan. Senior Noah Shelby (right) won the 100 meters in 11.02.

for how we can finish in district and state.”

At the Ram Relays, Shelby won the 100 meters in 11.02, and junior Chris Mayo won the 200 in 23.08. Lee won the 1600 (5:01), followed by Real (5:11); Lee was also second in the 800 (2:12).

Senior Aaron Lilya won the 110 hurdles (17.79), and Tindel won the triple jump (39-10.5). Junior Nathan Joseph finished second in the long jump (19-03).

Brentwood also won all three of the boys’ relays, including a 44.20 in the 4x100. They managed to win by three seconds even after dropping the baton in an exchange.

Glenn again won the long (15-06) and triple jump (32-03), and she took second in the 300 hurdles (51.94).

Booker won the 200 by more than a second (27.40), and the BCS girls took first place in the 4x100 and 4x400 relays.

## Baseball

continued from page 6

ted in by Spring to make the score 1-0. The Bears held this lead till the fourth inning when Keesey was taken out. The Bears lost their momentum and were scored on four times in the inning. Three separate pitchers for the Broncos threw very well; the Bears only had three hits during the entire seven-inning game.

**2/9: Schertz John Paul II 16-1 W**

Spring pitched for four innings, shutting out the Guardians and allowing zero hits while throwing six strikeouts. The Bears started off strongly on offense, scoring 13 total runs before the third inning. Keesey and Benton each had three hits; Keesey also hit a home run and had five RBIs.

**2/23: St. Stephen’s 17-3 W**

Keesey led off on the mound, striking out nine batters in the first three innings and not allowing a hit. The Bears led 9-0 after only the first inning. In the first four innings combined, Brentwood had nine hits, including three each from Keesey and senior Baley Cordes. Keesey

played a standout game, having seven RBIs. The game was run-ruled in favor of the Bears after four innings.

**2/25-27: BCS Tournament W W L**

The Bears began a high-scoring tournament with a 8-0 win against Bruceville-Eddy. Taylor started out on the mound, striking out 11 batters in four innings and not allowing a single hit. Benton and Spring each had two RBIs.

Brentwood continued on to a 10-0 victory over Thorndale later the same day. Jackson pitched all four innings, only allowing one hit. Unable to score in the first inning, the Bears rallied on to score all their runs in the next three, led by Billante, who had a triple and three RBIs.

The Bears fell short in the championship game, losing 11-3 to Grapevine Faith Christian. Grapevine had a strong starting pitcher, and the Bears were only able to earn one hit in the first three innings. The aggressive offense shown by Grapevine led to several runs scored in the early innings, and the Bears were unable to come back from this deficit.

**3/4-6: Hondo Tournament L W W L**

Taking two days off of school, the Bears opened the tournament with an 8-7 loss to San Antonio Christian. Leading 6-3 after three innings, Brentwood gave up five runs in the 4th. Taylor led on offense with two hits, including a home run and three RBIs.

The boys bounced back that afternoon with a 9-5 win over Hondo, in which they led 9-0 until sloppy defense gave up several runs. Spring allowed only two hits in four innings pitched, while Amoroso and Jackson each had two hits.

Brentwood’s first opponent on Friday was Canyon Lake, and the Bears broke open a close game with eight runs in the fifth and sixth innings to win 11-1. Amoroso and Taylor had two hits and three RBIs apiece, and Taylor hit another long ball. Keesey picked up his second win on the mound with another strong outing.

That same day, Brentwood’s defense struggled in a 12-1 loss to San Antonio Cornerstone, committing nine errors. Amoroso and Keesey each had two hits.

## Boys’ soccer

continued from page 7

of the game, Ruiz dribbled the ball down the sideline, and with around four seconds left, he sent a cross into the box that found its way to Joseph. With the keeper sprawled on the ground, Joseph nailed the open shot as the buzzer was going off.

The crowd went wild and the team was celebrating and going crazy, but the referees gathered to discuss the play. After a lengthy talk, they gave the win to the Bears, who literally hit a buzzer-beater.

Joseph led the team with six goals on the season, and Ruiz led with nine assists. Freshman goalie Andrew Davis ended the season with 88 saves.

The team plans to work hard over the summer in preparation for next season. Miller is excited about the strength and conditioning the team will do.

“This summer we will have many opportunities to improve in a lot of areas. It will make us a better team.”



# Dream come true: Billante’s Wiffle ball league thriving

By Natalie Hargrove  
Photos by Molly Stewart

Shortly after passing the 360 bridge, you drive into senior Zack Billante’s neighborhood and punch in the gate code. As you drive down the street, there it is: Dogwood Creek Drive, where the famous Dogwood Wiffle Ball League came to be.

If you happen to be there on a Sunday afternoon you can pull up a lawn chair and watch some high school boys and a few dads enjoy a light-hearted but competitive game of Wiffle ball.

Billante says he always wanted to start a Wiffle ball league where he and a bunch of his friends could go out in the backyard and have some fun. It took the pandemic to finally get

it going.

“Quarantine had just started, and we were midway through our baseball season. Everyone was stuck at their house,” Billante said. “Wiffle ball was a generally safe way in which we could social distance, but still hang out.”

Along with Billante, juniors Keller Jackson and Will Hughes were the first to come in and help make this dream a reality. The boys started out by propping up old window screens with rocks to create their fencing, and soon after they were building real fences all around the backyard.

“The field took many different shapes and sizes as our inventory grew,” Billante said. “I never really drew anything up; we just tried to maximize space.”

Since being created, Dogwood has just finished up their second regular season. Season one started out with six teams of two players, while season two had eight teams of three to four players.

“For season one I picked the teams myself and tried to make it as balanced as possible,” Billante said. “After that eight captains were selected and we held a draft where each captain could select players for season two.”

The league is currently set to add 27 players and two new teams, bringing the total to over 50 players. Everyone involved at Dogwood is in some way associated with Brentwood. Most are students, while some are alumni, former coaches, or dads. Each team decides its own name: the Rug Rats, the Business, Top Hosses, and the Garden Gnomes are just a few.

Billante tries to contact teams every week to squeeze games in. Some weekends Dogwood



**Stareddown** Sam Benton, who plays for Team Gainz, prepares for the next pitch.

has up to five series, and other weekends they do not have any.

To prepare for the games Billante takes about an hour to set up the fencing the day before. On game days, as players and fans arrive, Billante spray paints the foul lines and sets up nets, the strike zone, and bases. A camera is set up to record all the action, and the boys are ready to play. Teams play one series of three games, and each game lasts around 30 to 40 minutes.

Billante and the rest of DWB are not alone; they are in contact with 25 other leagues around the United States through social media, which has helped Billante come up with new things like an Instagram account, a TikTok account, a YouTube Channel, a podcast, and merchandise.

Like many other players, junior Jack Spring says he joined DWB because he loves playing baseball and hanging out with friends.

“Wiffle ball is a perfect mix of both,” Spring said. “It allows us to hang out with each other while also having that competitive mindset.”

Billante has built this league from the ground up, and his friends also acknowledge how much work he has put into Dogwood.

“I think Zack has done a great job managing and leading the league,” junior Ryan Crowe said. “He is certainly a nut for Wiffle ball and has turned that into something, owning a league of his own.”

Because he has so much on his plate, Billante even picked up a social media manager, senior Molly Stewart. Stewart helps with taking pictures, making templates, editing, and posting.

“Zack is always up for new ideas,” Stewart said. “He is an amazing commissioner, and he is always working on something for Dog-

wood.”

Billante hopes to continue the league throughout college, but he plans on having Dogwood’s main season during the summer.

“This way we can all come home in the summer from college and hang out with our high school buddies,” Billante said.

Dogwood is about to start playoffs for season two, and Billante expects the Rug Rats to win it all. Then again, the Sandpit Turtles could make it a good playoff series.



**Serious recreation** Seth Taylor stands on third base; Baley Cordes and Connor Rohlack look on as Zack Billante reviews a play during the action on Saturday, March 6.



**The founder** Senior Zack Billante built, manages, leads, and plays in DWB. The league began in the pandemic, but Billante expects it to continue a long time.