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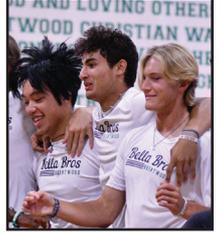
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THE BEAR FACTS

VOL. 34 NO. 1

BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

OCTOBER 2021



New events meet old traditions

By Lucy Belcik

Cheerful chattering can be heard throughout the Brentwood Christian hallways as costumed high-schoolers open their lockers and get ready to begin a week brimming over with fun events, exciting games, and plenty of Bear spirit.

BCS students enjoyed a jam-packed homecoming week this year, incorporating dress-up days, two pep rallies, and a decisive football victory against St. Dominic Savio. In addition to traditional homecoming festivities, students participated in a first-ever homecoming parade and Saturday night party, all set to the theme of "Passport to Homecoming."

Seniors Keller Jackson and Sydney Cooper were crowned homecoming king and queen by the student body during Friday night's game.

"I was so grateful for the honor of queen!" Cooper said. "It means a lot to me that people respect and look up to me, and I hope to be a positive role model for everyone at Brentwood."

Sam Benton and Cruz Wilkie were also nominated for king, while Claire Pittner and Bailey Harris were runner-up queen nominees.

A notable feature of Brentwood's homecoming in 2021 was the addition of two events – a homecoming parade held on the morning of

Friday, Sep. 17, and a homecoming party held on Sep. 18. Both parade and party were spearheaded by Lady Bellas instructor Lisa Warner.

"I felt like a lot of students got cheated (out of events) last year," Warner said. "My favorite part was getting to see the joy on kids' faces. That's why I did it."

The parade featured numerous floats from fall sports and school clubs. The floats paraded around Brentwood's campus, while the float owners tossed candy to crowds of students lining parking lot curbs. First place among floats was awarded to the BCS Lady Bellas, while second place went to the Brentwood football team.

"Second place was actually a three-way tie," Warner said. "I had to have it broken by the administration."

Float designs included a see **HOMECOMING**, page 8



photo: Kevin McKimmerney

Royalty Keller Jackson and Sydney Cooper were crowned homecoming king and queen on Sep. 17.

Cooper sets school record; BCS hosts run

By Reid Alexander

The top runner on one of Brentwood's strongest cross country teams ever, sophomore Renne Cooper has broken the school record for the event. Currently his best time in the 5K is 17:01.

"It feels great to break the school record as a sophomore on the first meet of the year, knowing that I still have over two years to get it lower and improve," Cooper said.

The Bears have completed six meets and have two weeks before the district meet, which is hosted by BCS on Oct. 23. The teams consist of nine girls who run two miles, and 11 boys who run a 5K, or 3.1 miles.

Brentwood's most recent meet was their own BCS Invitational last Saturday, Oct. 2. The campus was filled with the colors of 29 different schools, and cars filled not only the parking lot, but the neighborhood streets near the school's back entrance. The course was hilly and muddy from the rain a day before, but the Brentwood teams had experience running this course and ran well.

The girls placed second behind Houston St. Agnes, which swept all positions from first to fifth. Brentwood sophomore Katie Pittner came after this group in sixth (14:15). Her classmates Lucy Belcik (14:52) and Macie Griswold (15:05) placed 12th and 15th, respectively.

The boys placed first, with Cooper leading all runners, winning in 18:21. Senior Jack Leidlein was second overall with a time of 18:51; sophomore Colton McLain (20:03) and freshman Hollis Harlan (20:12) finished seventh and 10th, respectively.

Of all the courses they run, Brentwood athletes agree that their own is the most difficult.

"This course is very hard," Cooper said afterward. "The hills combined with the mud slowed me and everyone else down by a lot."

see **CROSS COUNTRY**, page 6

Brentwood welcomes new faculty, staff

With a new school year comes new faces – and not just among students, but also among the teachers, coaches, and staff. Several Bear Facts reporters have combined their efforts to help the BCS community get to know these new leaders.

Note: For a full story on new middle school principal Dr. Amber Grady, who was hired in the spring, please see the April 2021 edition of the Bear Facts, available on the school website.

Cum laude graduate and "dedicated educator," **Sani- tra Forte** joined Brentwood Christian as a first-grade teacher this year.

Forte has been teaching for 10 years and has a bachelor's in biology from New Or-

leans' Xavier University and a master's in education from UT-Arlington. She loves teaching science and, through that, was called to teach at Cook Middle School in Houston. After spending time there, she and her family moved to the Austin area where she picked up her teaching career at Mott Elementary for two years.



Forte

Forte is married to her college sweetheart, and together they have two daughters, Faith and Olivia, and a black dog named Fluffy. Besides teaching, Forte loves jogging, playing board games, walking, and studying God's word.

Her family has attended Westside Church of Christ for the past seven years. She taught at the church's preschool, where she said she re-

alized she loved teaching young children.

"I enjoy teaching this age because each student grows and gains so much in a small amount of time," Forte said.

Forte said she believes relationships are vital and that God gave her the opportunity to teach children and the ability to grow close with each one.

"I have not forgotten what it's like to be a child in a classroom," Forte said. "I teach because I care and want to make a difference in the lives of students who have been entrusted to my care."

—Laynie Ruiz

After hearing for years about "just how great a school" BCS is, **Julie McElroy** opted for a change and became the new kindergarten teacher at BCS. When the position came open, she decided moving to Austin would be

see **NEW TEACHERS**, page 5

Editor ponders method for resolving conflicts

By Kaitlyn Weilemann

In a modern world inhabited by about 7.6 billion people, each with a unique life experience and worldview, and approximately 4.6 billion of those people having access to the internet where they can share their own ideas and come into contact with new ones, there is bound to be conflict. Even among those who belong to “the same side,” there are often disputes over things like the true definition of a term relating to their topic or differing opinions on the validity of opposing ways of looking at the issue. It’s within our very nature as human beings both to want to win an argument and to be curious about what the right answer to the proposed question could be, and therefore it’s pointless to attempt to completely avoid something as inevitable as conflict. However, one can look at various different examples in nature, history, and even game theory for inspiration as to how to go about solving potential conflicts while keeping all parties happy and safe.

The strategy known as “tit for tat” is one of the most successful solutions to the “prisoner’s dilemma” in which the given agent, let’s call them Team Blue, is faced with a choice: They may either choose to trust and be cooperative with the opponent, respectively Team Red, or choose to distrust the opponent and defect from the partnership. According to the tit-for-tat strategy, Team Blue replicates whatever decision Team Red made in the previous round, cooperating if Team Red chooses to cooperate and defecting if Team Red chooses to defect. This concept is very similar to the biological idea of “reciprocal altruism” aside from one key difference: tit-for-tat forgives. If Team Red chooses to defect in a given round, so will Team Blue, but if Team Red then has a change of heart and chooses to cooperate during the next round, Team Blue will follow suit. In many cases, bacteria that make use of reciprocal altruism can’t afford to be forgiving and therefore stop cooperating from that point on if the equivalent of their Team Red defects from the partnership.

People tend to replicate this pattern of mimicry in their daily lives without conscious thought, adopting a mirror-like method of interacting with other people because of how successful it tends to be. We like hanging out with people that are similar to us because conversation comes easy, common interests are easy to find, and disagreements are easily avoidable or dealt with. But when conflicts inevitably do arise, there’s a tendency for people to throw all rational thought out of the window and focus on winning the dispute by arguing their points and proving their opponent wrong. However, if we instead approach a conflict with the conceptual idea of tit-for-tat and reciprocal altruism in mind, we will be looking for opportunities to cooperate with our supposed opponent and turn our interaction from an argument to a civilized conversation. Yet this still leaves one important question unanswered: Should Team Blue forgive Team Red if they choose to defect from the partnership?

Obviously, the majority of real-world conflicts are packed full of nuanced stances that are difficult to compare with my contrived concepts of Team Blue and Team Red, and therefore the answer to the above question is situational and, arguably, personal as well. If a conflict is taking place over a sensitive issue that both sides have personal attachments with, agreeing to disagree if one party crosses the line and says something hurtful rather than continuing on with the interaction is completely understandable. For example, if I, someone who has some family near Chicago, am talking to someone about why I like traveling around Illinois, and they begin to attack the reputation

of Chicago because of its crime rates, I have the right to recognize my rising emotions and choose not to continue having that conversation. Even though in that unique situation I’ve chosen not to forgive the other party, I’ve done that in the name of respecting my own personal boundaries, a time when backing out of an interaction is the correct decision to make.

With that distinction made clear, the larger idea to take away from this is that entering a conflict with the mindset of cooperation rather than with a combative state of mind is the key to both getting more out of the encounter and

to avoid ruffling any feathers that don’t need to be ruffled. In a culture that runs largely on the idea that there’s a definite “us” and a definite “them” as well as that “we” are right and “they” are wrong, cooperation within a conflict is made to look counter-cultural in comparison. However, countless species of animals, game theory strategists, and even bacteria endorse this idea of cooperation within a partnership and making the best out of a tense situation, so adopting a new way of doing things might just be the answer to helping all of the unique ideas floating around the world be heard.

THE BEAR FACTS

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The Bear Facts is published monthly by the journalism classes of BCHS. The paper is a learning tool which informs the student body while teaching students to become critical observers of their environment and to validate Truth within the context of the Christian world view.

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www.brentwoodchristian.org.



Tasty treat Third-grader David Ha shows off his colorful tongue at a class party.

photo: BCS yearbook



photo: BCS yearbook

Up and away Freshman Nathan Czerlinsky is launched from “the blob” at Camp Buckner. The Class of 2025 had their class retreat there on Sep. 12-13, where they discussed smoothly transitioning from middle school to high school and bonded with their classmates. They also voted on a class scripture, motto, song, and cheer. In the evening, they gathered around a campfire for s’mores, prayer, and singing.

Two-for-one theater special

Students will present two plays at month’s end

By Lily Trueper

With a zest for the stage and a passion for performing, the BCS theater department will be presenting two one-act plays on Oct. 30.

One of the plays, *The Summer People*, is a suspenseful story that centers on Robert and Janet Allison, a blissfully naive couple, played by senior Atticus Wiginton and junior Mollie Walters.

The Allisons are city people who take an annual vacation in the countryside during the summer. However, this time they decide that there really isn’t anything waiting for them back in New York, and choose to stay in the countryside town past Labor Day. Unfortunately for the Allisons, the townspeople are quite displeased when they discover this, and a perilous plan is formed.

The Summer People was written by Shirley Jackson in 1948. It first appeared in *Charm* in 1950, and was later anthologized in *Best American Short Stories* in 1951.

“I think we’re bringing a really impressive play to competition because of how much is pantomime,” Walters said. “It is dependent on the actors’ ability to convey their imagination to the audience.”

The second play, *Sorry, Wrong Number*, is a radio play written by Lucille Fletcher. It first premiered in 1943 and later became one

of the most legendary radio plays to date. The protagonist of the play, Agnes, played by junior Kennedy Drennon, is a woman confined to her home who receives a phone call where two people are discussing their plans to murder someone. The play follows Agnes attempting to get to the bottom of what’s going on.

Since *Sorry, Wrong Number* is a radio play, there will be no set for it. The actors will be voicing their parts in front of the curtain, unlike what BCS has typically done for past productions.

“I’m really excited to see how it turns out as it’s different than anything we’ve ever done before,” Drennon said.

Since the performances will take place the night before Halloween, theater teacher Vanessa Malecare carefully selected both plays due to their rather dark nature.

“I wanted to do something fun and seasonal this year to go along with the holiday. So I chose two plays that I call ‘tastefully creepy.’ I’m also fond of *Sorry, Wrong Number* because I acted in that play before,” Malecare said.

Although the timeframe for rehearsals is quite short, the casts have been hard at work memorizing lines and attending two-hour rehearsals three days a week. In addition to the performance on Oct. 30, *The Summer People* will be taken to competition this year, the date of the event still to be determined.

Long-awaited church remodel nears final stage

By Laynie Ruiz

Day by day, the piles of bricks and stone and the pounding of hammers become less and less as a new, rejuvenated church emerges from hard labor. Brentwood’s church remodel job could be done by the end of 2021 with a budget of more than \$2 million.

Doing Good Better, the fundraising campaign for the church, had a plan to redo the church with a goal of about \$2 million. According to church office manager Pam Fowler, the original blueprint included an expanded footprint and adding a second level where the original church offices were, but this plan was altered to fit the new budget and meet City of Austin impervious cover requirements. A small committee of designers came up with the plan that should be finished by the beginning of January.

The church auditorium and the rest of the A building, which was completed in 1981, was not up to code with the current city requirements and required the installation of a fire sprinkler system in the ceiling. Though the

offices are nearly complete, the fire marshals assigned to the project have not allowed the church staff to occupy the newly built rooms. The fire marshal has required that there be a completed route of egress in case of a fire.

In addition, the fire marshal needs to inspect and test the new sprinkler system while having water pressure in the pipes. The completion of this part of the project is expected in mid-October. Extra security, including a live “fire watch,” has been implemented during school hours.

Upon entering from the courtyard through the large wooden doors that have now been moved forward to extend the indoor space, there will be a large, open area called the Welcome Center where people can gather together and chat before a service begins. The old “parlor” area where special lunches and small gatherings have been held has been expanded to a larger parlor for parties, including sliding doors to access an outdoor patio for weddings and other gatherings.

New offices for the church ministers and a large classroom that can fit up to 100 people

have been added as well. All of these rooms will have gray tiles or gray-and-white carpeting for a more modern look. More windows have also been installed throughout the church.

In the chapel, there is new gray carpet replacing the old red-orange flooring, and the pews have been sent to get refurbished. In addition to this, there are going to be flat screen TVs and a brand new stage.

The signature Brentwood limestone on the outside of each building has been taken down from the church, but Fowler said it will be put back up on the inside to “keep the history alive.”

Fowler, a dedicated employee at BCS since



photo: Davin Ha

Rebuild After 40 years of use, Brentwood’s church auditorium, chapel, and the surrounding office area are being remodeled. The work is expected to wrap up by January.

1992, said she’s excited about the new remodeling job and hopes it can bring more people together once finished.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: Cruz Wilkie

Seniors featured in the Bear Facts were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS Class of 2022.

Fun-loving Cruz emanates warmth, lifts spirits

By Davin Ha

There's a light at Brentwood Christian that emanates from the senior class and brings warmth throughout the campus. That light is Cruz Wilkie, and while he stands five-foot-one with a slight build, the light spreads far and wide. Lifting up spirits with his friendly humor is what Cruz does best.

Cruz has been a Brentwood Bear for six years now, and he has been a cornerstone of the Class of 2022 ever since seventh grade.

Cruz was born May 11, 2004, in a hospital in Texas. Where exactly that hospital was is a question Cruz could not answer at first. But after checking, Cruz found he was born at Austin's Seton Northwest Hospital at 4:40 a.m.

Cruz's mother is a nurse, while his father is a race coordinator who has worked Brentwood's Jog-a-funs for several years. Cruz will often wake up in the early hours of the day to help his father set up various runs for charities or other organizations.

One of Cruz's favorite activities at BCS is theater, and last year he starred as Linus in the Charlie Brown musical. Cruz will also appear in this year's one act play *The Summer People*, later this month.

Theater director Vanessa Maleare says Cruz has a great sense of humor that has added a lot to the theater classes.

"He's really, really creative. He makes people feel comfortable," she says. "He's just weird enough that everyone knows they'll be accepted."

Maleare first had Cruz as a student in his sophomore year.

"He was unfocused and kinda spastic, but he did this hilariously funny scene on paintings. He picked this really freaky painting and he created a whole backstory for it and it was really funny.

"But my all time favorite Cruz moment has to be when we were teaching the dance for Linus where he tangoes with a blanket, and he performed it in a way where he took really stiff steps and it was so funny. He's so good at doing things I don't plan, but afterwards I realize it's so much better than I had ever imagined."

Studying art and literature is one of Cruz's passions. He's particularly very passionate about how art and emotion play together.

"That's what I'm most interested in, whether it be music, books, paintings, or stupid video games," he says.

Whether he's talking about movies like *Whiplash*, which is one of his favorites, or he's involved in a class discussion, Cruz has made an impact on those who have had the pleasure of teaching him.

"When he makes comments he has creative insights," says English teacher Dr. Paul Robison. "He has a love for acting so he interprets literature in a good insightful way."

English teacher Taylor Mayfield reflected on the time Cruz was in his 10th grade English class, and vividly remembers his hard work ethic. He recalls a time when Cruz worked very hard on his dialectical journals as the class was having an elimination style competition, and Cruz came out on top as the victor.

"He has a very endearing personality, and you may not suspect his work ethic because of how goofy and approachable he is, but he works very hard," Mayfield says.

This year, Cruz was determined to try something new and challenge himself, so he joined the cross country team.

"Cross country is really hard, and I hated it at first, but it's really fun and challenging," Cruz

says. "I don't really do any other school activities. I just enjoy getting to meet new people and seeing my friends at school."

Cruz lives with his mother, father, older sister, and his fat dog, Machete. As for the future, Cruz is ready.

"My plans for the future are to buy a van and live in it," he says.

In his free time he enjoys procrastinating on all his homework and playing video games like Bioshock and Deltarune.

"Other than that I just watch dumb YouTube videos all day," he says, before adding: "I will take the occasional walk."

Cruz also enjoys hanging out with his two closest friends, Jonathan Parker and David Ayala.

"We've been friends since seventh grade and have been like brothers ever since," David says. "Our friendship can really be described in

one word: insults. I love insulting him, and he loves insulting me. I insult his chihuahua and he insults my pet bunnies."

David says one of his favorite memories is when he and Cruz played a single video game for 12 hours straight.

"It was a rollercoaster of emotions," he recalls. "Sometimes I would get tired, and I would get mad at Cruz for not listening to me."

Classmates have observed that when you see David, you're likely to see Cruz somewhere nearby.

"It's really enjoyable being Cruz's friend because we are so alike," David says. "We both like playing Bioshock, and I like listening to his in-depth analysis of video games."

Mayfield says he loves watching how people interact with Cruz.

"Ever since their freshman year, the senior class has rallied around him and really uplifted Cruz and who he is," he says. "It's really nice to see the class support and rally him."

Dr. Robison also sees how well Cruz interacts with his classmates. Cruz is always affecting the environment around him with his bright personality and quick off-the-cuff remarks.

"He's not the star dunker, but he's good at giving assists," Dr. Robison observes. "He might comment on something that spurs another student to say something. He's a catalyst for someone else to jump into the conversation."

Mayfield recalled the beginning of the year when Cruz had been the senior class representative for the "Brentwood Olympics" and stood atop the first-place podium as his class cheered him on. Seniors were not surprised to see their diminutive classmate selected to compete in the opening-day activities. Classmate Marisol Jimenez explained it: "His constant positivity and spirit represent our senior class the best."

One of Cruz's most identifiable qualities other than his knack for making people laugh is his short stature. While this has always been a somewhat endearing quality, Cruz recently shared his thoughts on his height and the challenges it has presented him.

"I'm glad you asked, because no matter who you are or what you do, if you are below the average height then it really affects a lot of your mind and how you perceive yourself. It really affects your confidence. At the end of the day you'll never be detached from your height, and that part of you will always be there and reflected by you or others. But you have to just embrace it."

Then the contemplative look on Cruz's face quickly transforms into his trademark grin.

"But you know, at the end of the day, it's a good gag I'll use to my advantage."



New teachers, coaches feel BCS blessings

continued from page 1

better than driving back and forth to spend time with her grandchildren.

McElroy, one of four girls, was born in Ft. Worth but moved around a few times before she went to Abilene Christian University, earning a degree in mass communication-radio/TV. She started off as a substitute teacher and realized that she liked teaching kids. She went on to teach public school for 12 years after going back to school to get her teaching credentials.

"This is just a really nice change," McElroy said, comparing her new position with previous teaching jobs, "because we get to pray and talk about God."

Making connections with kids is one of McElroy's favorite things about teaching. She said that she likes to make school fun for the kindergartners because, for most, it is their first exposure to school.

McElroy said her favorite thing to do is playing with her one-year-old granddaughter.

—Anjie Popoola

Angela Wood is the new Geometry and Algebra II teacher, replacing Kaylin Mannon, who left in the summer to take a job at Harding Academy in Memphis, Tenn. She graduated from Texas A&M University with a bachelor's degree in actuarial science.

Wood grew up in Ft. Worth but moved to Pflugerville when she was eight. When Wood was in high school, she was first chair in the Regional Choir for three years in a row.

Wood has a husband and two kids who both attend Brentwood: first-grader Corbin and fourth-grader Allison. Wood met her husband, Chris, in fifth-grade as they went to elementary, middle school, high school, and college together.

A certified scuba diver, Wood also sings and plays the piano at weddings as "favors" to close friends.

Wood heard about Brentwood through the extended family of Dr. Libby Weed, who was the elementary principal for 30 years. Wood worked in the secondary office last year but made the switch to full-time teacher when it



McElroy



Wood

was offered.

"I like BCS because I feel like everyone is respectful and nice to each other, and I like the small community feeling," Wood said.

Wood previously worked at John B. Connally High and for Laredo ISD as an Algebra I and ESL Algebra teacher.

—Taylor Cunningham

Charles Bollinger coaches varsity football and baseball, and he also teaches middle school history. Born in Snyder, between Abilene and Lubbock, Bollinger pitched for the Snyder Tigers in the state baseball championship in 1983. His son, Brent, did the same for Snyder in 2008 – the only state championships for Snyder in boys' athletics.

Bollinger went to college at Baylor and Hardin-Simmons, earning a degree in education. Since then, he has coached and taught mostly P.E. for 29 years. He recently coached baseball in Denison with his son as an assistant. When he moved to Austin, his son became head coach.

Bollinger also has two daughters: Brook, who is an ICU nurse in Florida, and Faith, who is a student at Canyon Ridge Middle

School. Bollinger got married in Austin in 2019 and now has three more children in his blended family.

Last year Bollinger began assisting baseball coach Jeffrey Doege, and soon he began substitute teaching to get to know the kids better.

"The kids were very kind and respectful which made it fun to sub," he said.

Soon he was offered a full-time job.

"What I love about Brentwood is the atmosphere of the school," he said. "You can see the students and staff demonstrating actions pleasing to God. Brentwood kids are awesome."

—Bear Facts staff



Bollinger

Dustin Karrer has joined the BCS community this year as the new varsity boys basketball coach, after Donte Mathis left in the summer to join the coaching staff at Texas State University. Karrer is also teaching computer science.

Karrer grew up in New Braunfels; he majored in kinesiology and minored in history at Texas State University. Karrer, who has been playing basketball since he was six years old, said it taught him discipline, team work, and how to win and lose the right way.

Karrer has travelled to many different countries with the opportunity given to him through basketball, both for coaching and playing. He has lived in Pristina, the capital city of Kosovo, to coach in their professional superleague. He has also worked with FIBA Europe as a clinician and regional coach working in Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia, and Moldova. Karrer said that Istanbul and Bucharest have been his favorite countries because of the unique cultures, people, historical sites, and beauty.

When asked about what stood out to him about the BCS community, Karrer praised both the administration and the student body. Now, a month into school, Karrer says he likes what he's seen from the team so far and is eager for the season to begin.

"We have a long way to go, but I think our guys are up for the challenge and excited about our chances to compete at a high level. We want to be a team that the Brentwood community will be proud of and get behind," Karrer said.

Outside of basketball, Karrer enjoys reading, listening to podcasts, exercising, traveling, and trivia.



Karrer



Nunn

—Caleb Arellano

Theresa Nunn has joined the athletics department as the Lady Bears head basketball coach and the athletics business director. She was previously at the state and fed-

eral programs department in Duncanville ISD near Dallas.

Nunn went to high school at Churchill in San Antonio and graduated from Valley City State University in North Dakota. She has been playing basketball since she was eight years old, and played in both high school and college. She is very passionate about basketball, having coached it for 18 years, and is very excited about the season approaching quickly. She is looking forward to teaching growth and hopefully experiencing a winning season.

"I hope every single girl here comes out for the basketball team," Nunn said.

Nunn said she came to Brentwood for its close knit community and great morals, adding that, "Everyone is like a family." She said she has felt great support from everyone.

Nunn also enjoys spending time with her children. She has a daughter, Deja, who is a sophomore basketball player for North Carolina University. She also has a son, Trae, who is an eighth grader at BCS and, like the rest of his family, enjoys basketball.

—Karlee Lawrence

Fine arts assistant **Stephanie Martinez** is the newest addition to the BCS fine arts department. A band member in high school, Martinez really enjoys hearing the band every day.

Having two of her own children in the band has made the job even more enjoyable for her.

"I've missed that because I loved band," Martinez said.

Most of her time outside of work is filled with taking care of her kids and teaching group fitness classes. Martinez has four kids at BCS, from K-4 to 9th grade.

Attending church with some BCS faculty had familiarized Martinez with the school and made her transition easier. Being able to work while her kids are in school, and then pick them up when she gets off of work, made Martinez more inclined to apply for the position.

Martinez came to Texas at age 10 and moved to Austin at 11. Despite having been born in Tacoma, Wash., Texas was always home because so much of her family was here.

—Anjie Popoola

Volleyball team nears 30 wins, eyes district title

By Karlee Lawrence

With Tuesday night's thrilling four-set win over Boerne Geneva, the Lady Bears varsity volleyball team is 7-2 in district, with an overall record of 28-6-1.

Brentwood won the first two sets with identical 25-22 scores before Geneva staged a comeback and took a 27-25 win. In the fourth set, BCS was trailing 20-16 before taking the next five points and eventually winning 27-25.

Head coach Rory Tyson said the team's main goal right now is to "win out" in district, meaning they will not have to rely on other teams in order to win district.

The district schedule ends on Nov. 1, and playoffs begin a few days after that.

"We are trying to win the district first," senior captain Ava Alvarado said, "then get our minds set on the playoffs after that."

Coach Tyson also said a secondary goal has been to win 31 games, which would be a school record.

After finishing 23-5 as district champs last year before losing in the second round of playoffs, the Lady Bears wanted to push themselves even harder this year. But beginning the season Tyson was nervous about missing four of their starters from last year, noting that there were

"lots of holes to fill."

She soon found that this year's squad had plenty of girls who were ready to play at a higher level. Alvarado said she could see the team improving quickly back in August.

"We started to get comfortable with each other and trust each other," she said. "We're definitely capable of getting first in the district."

The Lady Bears have had some great successes this season, beginning in the pre-district schedule, such as five-set wins against Boerne Geneva and St. Stephens. They also won the Rockdale tournament against a 6A UIL team and finished third in the Florence tournament.

Tyson said she has been very impressed with the play of the returning starters: Alvarado, her sister Ashlynn, who is a junior, and sophomore Aubrey Acheson. Tyson said Ava is hard-working, a good leader, and "runs the team." Aubrey and Ashlynn are outside hitters who their coach says have had a huge impact on the team's success.

Interestingly, the team has five seniors, but only Ava was on the team last year. Alicia Gardner had not played since middle school but is a starter for the Lady Bears. Other newcomers are junior Tynneson Allen, who couldn't play last year due to an injury, and freshman Rayen Flandes. Tyson described Flandes as "a differ-

ence maker, an impact player."

"We really have a rounded offense," Tyson said. "We have six players who can actually score kill points, when we're healthy."

Unfortunately, the team has not been healthy all season, and as district play began, they were missing some starters. But this year the district schedule is different from last year, when teams played each other only once. This year teams play each other twice, for a total of 16 games. Coach Tyson likes the fact that they will get another chance to play some teams, meaning they still have the opportunity to win district.

Right now Tyson says the girls' biggest weakness seems to be inconsistency.

"We are hot and cold," she said. "We are our own worst enemy."

Defense, on the other hand, is their strength.

"Our defense is really our strong point when we're playing together and being aggressive," she added.



Reaching high Senior captain Ava Alvarado, here setting the ball for a teammate, is a key reason the Bears are closing in on an all-time record 31 wins.

photo: BCS yearbook

Cross country enjoys full, fast teams

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He went on to describe the difficulty of being the lead runner.

"Running by myself with nobody in sight was hard, and I had to be mentally focused to remember I was still in a race," he said.

The BCS Invitational also featured races for younger age groups. For the middle school girls, Brentwood eighth-grader Harper Counts took first place. Her fastest time of the year in the two-mile distance is 12:06.

Coach Katie Smith said she is happy to have two full high school teams of boys and girls for the first time in years.

"This season has really been a breath of fresh air," she said. "This team is a great mix of experienced runners and new runners, and they have really just clicked as a team. They work hard and have fun together, and I am excited to see how we do in district and state."

The Bears opened the season at Wilco Park for the Founders Classic on Friday, Aug. 20. This meet was a two-runner relay, with each person running two miles. Cooper (11:01) and Leidlein (11:21) ran a combined time of 22:22,

placing 22nd.

On the girls' side, Pittner and Belcik were Brentwood's first pair, running 27:52. The meet served as a practice for the team.

On Saturday, Sep. 4, the teams went to the FEAST Patriot meet in San Antonio, a notoriously fast course known to be great for personal bests. This is where Cooper nearly went below 17 minutes, breaking the school record of 17:41 set by Evan Herring in 2014. Cooper finished fifth overall, followed by Leidlein, who tied the old school record and finished 19th. Junior Rodrigo Real (17:54) was 23rd.

Overall, the boys finished eighth out of 28 schools in the small school division. The girls came in 13th, led by Pittner, who finished 18th with a time of 12:55. Belcik was next for BCS (13:49), followed by junior Kennedy Drennon (13:50).

A week later, the teams ran in the Cedar Park Invitational, where the boys placed second. Cooper was the top runner (17:17) and was followed by Leidlein (17:45), who placed fifth. Real was next with a time of 18:30 and he placed 18th.

Pittner finished in second place, only six sec-

onds behind first with a time of 12:56. Belcik (14:01) placed 11th and Drennon (14:06) 13th.

Next came the Salado Tenroc Invitational on Thursday, Sep. 16, which was one of the harder courses of the season, run on hilly and muddy ranchland. While the boys had been expecting to race in the small school division, Coach Smith had them placed with the large schools. Although Cooper said this move did not sit well with the team, the boys took second place. Individually, Cooper (17:32) was fifth and Leidlein (17:45) was ninth.

The girls finished third among small schools, led by Pittner (12:46), Belcik (13:50), and senior captain Sydney Cooper (13:53).

On Sep. 24, the Bears competed in the McNeil Invitational, a meet that brings in schools from all around Texas. Brentwood ran in the 1A-3A division, and Cooper placed fourth with a time of 17:20, while Leidlein (17:38) was ninth. The team placed fifth in a group of 21 schools.

With Pittner out for the girls, Belcik and Sydney Cooper led the team, both running 14:30. Drennon (14:52) was next.



photo: BCS yearbook

Pulling away Sophomore Renne Cooper has the school cross country record at 17:01, with senior Jack Leidlein not far behind on a very talented BCS team.

High-scoring football team looking to rise in district

By Sam Benton

The Brentwood Bears' football team is 3-2 overall and 1-1 in district following their loss against St. Joseph in Brownsville on Oct. 2. Brentwood is fourth place in the seven-team district and is set to play their third district game at home on Oct. 8 against St. Michael's, who is 3-2 overall and 1-1 in district.

The Bears have five games left on the schedule, the last one being against first-place Regents on Nov. 5.

Last weekend's trip to Brownsville is one the team would love to forget. After problems with the buses and with heavy rains, the Bears' Friday night game was moved to Saturday, when they had to play without key players. Head coach Correy Washington called the loss a setback, but he still said he has high expectations for the team.

"Our goal is to be a playoff team and to play (till) Thanksgiving," he said.

According to Washington the team's offense has been a strength, averaging 49 points per game with a good balance between throwing and passing the ball. But Washington says the defense has trouble being consistent and that the kick coverage needs work.

Many players are returning from last year's team; however there were multiple positions that needed to be filled after last year's seniors graduated following a disappointing 27-21 loss in the Bears' first round playoff game against Victoria St. Joseph. Among the graduated seniors are linebacker Aaron Lilya, wide receivers Zack Billante and Riley Keeseey, lineman Isaac Olewin, and running back and defensive lineman Baley Cordes. This year's new starters include sophomore wide receiver Micah Otts, who has seven catches for 85 yards and

three touchdowns. Sophomore running back and cornerback Jakob Megilligan and junior linebacker Ben Gatlin, who was out last season with a broken arm, have stepped up on defense and offense, along with junior defensive end and tight end Andrew Landry.

"This year's team is much more experienced and focused, and we are also having a lot of fun," senior quarterback Keller Jackson said. "My expectation is to win at least ten games this season."

Jackson is leading the offense in his second season as starting quarterback. He has thrown for 886 yards and rushed for 473 yards and 10 touchdowns. Senior Conner Rohlack leads the team in rushing yards with 634 and 14 TDs.

Sophomore Tabor Tyson leads with 383 receiving yards and four TDs, followed by Rohlack with 136 yards receiving. Senior Cason Best has six receptions for 111 yards, and senior Sam Benton has nine receptions for 109 yards.

A linebacker on defense, Best has 27 tackles, two forced fumbles, and one fumble recovery, while senior Ben Copeland has 28 tackles and one caused fumble. Jackson and Rohlack both have two interceptions, one of which was returned for a touchdown by Rohlack, followed by Benton with one interception.

Following are the team's results thus far:

9/3: McKinney Christian 57-33 W

The Bears' defense was put to the test in the season opener as they faced McKinney's heavy pass-focused offense. The first half was a back-and-forth effort between the two teams, but the Bears had pulled to a 36-26 lead by halftime. Brentwood controlled the ball for most of the second half, only allowing McKinney one TD. Jackson led the Bears with 178 rushing yards and three TDs, followed by Rohlack with 146



photo: Kevin McKinnerney

Knockout Senior quarterback Keller Jackson and the Bears had their homecoming opponents St. Dominic Savio way outmatched on Sep. 17, and Brentwood led 46-0 after only one quarter. The Bears will face a challenge against St. Michael's on Friday.

yards and two TDs. Jackson grabbed an interception in the red zone on the Mustangs' first drive. Benton also had an interception to get the Bears' offense back on the field early in the second quarter. Brentwood's defense came out strong in the second half, only allowing one TD by the Mustangs late in the fourth quarter against the Bears' second string.

9/10: @ Yorktown 45-40 L

The Bears started off slow against Yorktown, fumbling the ball on the first play and allowing Yorktown to score early. Blown coverages on the Bears' part resulted in a score of 20-7 Wildcats by the end of the first quarter. The Bears worked to keep up, and by halftime they trailed 33-21. Brentwood managed to tie Yorktown in the third quarter and stayed neck and neck with the Wildcats until the final minutes of the game when Yorktown pulled ahead and kept the Bears' offense from scoring before the clock ran out.

9/17: Savio 52-6 W

Rohlack scored on the opening kickoff in the Bears' homecoming game, and by the start of the second quarter the Bears had a 46-0 lead. Brentwood's offense moved down the field with ease, and the defense kept the Eagles from scoring until late in the third quarter. The Bears scored one last time in the third quarter before putting the second team in for the remainder of the game. Tyson, Landry, and Best each had one caused fumble, and Tyson had two fumble recoveries followed by one recovery for Gatlin and senior Andrew Phipps.

9/24: Hyde Park 58-14 W

Brentwood's longtime rivals fell short in the Bears' first district game. It appeared as though it would be a closer game than expected when the Panthers scored on the opening drive. However, the Bears quickly moved the ball down the field to score their first TD of the night. Brentwood scored on every offensive drive except for two. Rohlack had six carries for 167 yards and 3 TDs. Jackson threw for 295 yards and 3 TDs to Rohlack, Otts, and Best. Jackson also recovered a fumble caused by Best late in the game. At halftime Brentwood was up 29-14 and after that the Bears pulled away while the Panthers were held scoreless.

10/2: @ Brownsville St. Joseph 55-34 L

On Friday the Bears' already long, 14-hour drive turned into an even longer one when the bus broke down 30 minutes outside of Austin and the players had to split up and continue the trip on two separate buses, one of which ran out of gas just outside of Brownsville. On top of that, heavy rain and flooding in Brownsville caused the game to be rescheduled for Saturday at 11 a.m. That meant the Bears would be missing Best and Gatlin, which forced freshmen Jack Copeland, Griffin Smith, and Conor Schehl to step up and fill in on defense. With little to no rest for the starters, the hot sun and coastal humidity began to take its toll on Brentwood by halftime. The Bears' offense had little trouble scoring in the first half, but the defense struggled to keep the Bloodhounds out of the endzone.



photo: Kevin McKinnerney

Fumble! Junior Drew Landry knocks the ball away from a Savio player, and sophomore Tabor Tyson pounces on it during the Bears' 52-6 homecoming win on Sep. 17.

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Homecoming features parade, pep rallies

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beach-themed Lady Bears volleyball float, a trailer styled to appear as a football field from the Bears football team, and a large cardboard representation of the Lady Bellas' signature pink flamingo on the winning floats.

"I've known all the people in theater for so long, but the more projects I do with them, the more I learn about them," said senior Atticus Wiginton, who was a part of the theater float in the parade. "The event was all around a blast to be a part of!"

The homecoming party sponsored by the Lady Bellas the next day was also a hit, featuring music, refreshments, and plenty of photo ops. Students enjoyed playing cornhole, spikeball, and other lawn games, as well as talking and having fun with their friends.

Besides new events, more well-known homecoming traditions were also celebrated. Students dressed up to follow themes throughout the week, which included a tropical "Cancun to Miami" day and a movie character "Bollywood to Hollywood" day. Even the cafeteria staff followed along, with various meals that matched each day's theme.

To further encourage student participation, "Passports to Homecoming" were handed out and were stamped each day by homeroom teachers if a student's attire matched the theme.

Even elementary students were invited to participate and show school spirit, with dress-up days that mirrored secondary's, such as crazy sunglasses day and cowboy day.



photo: BCS yearbook

Spirit! Senior Bella Olivia Osborn plays Annie in the homecoming pep rally Sep. 17.

"It's the first time elementary has had their own specific dress-up days," StuCo adviser Jeffery Morris said. "I was excited that they were able to be more involved this year."

StuCo made sure the hallways were full of Bear spirit also, utilizing the weekend before homecoming to decorate the high school halls with various designs of colorful paper that matched each day's theme.

"This was my fourth year working on home-

coming decorations, and I have to say that it might have been my favorite," said Cooper, who serves as StuCo president in addition to being crowned as homecoming queen.

Two individual pep rallies were held on Sep. 17, so both elementary and secondary Bears would be able to experience the rally in the Athletic Center. The rallies featured a staggering amount of performers, with the Lady Bellas, BCS cheerleaders, StuCo, and Bella Bros

all sharing the stage to get the crowds excited for the football game that night.

The game, a blowout victory for the Bears, ended Friday night on a high note. Halftime entertainment included routines by the Lady Bellas and cheer team and several numbers by the Brentwood pep band. Following these performances was the crowning of the homecoming court by secondary principal Carol Johnson.

Besides the coronation of Jackson and Cooper as homecoming king and queen, junior class prince and princess Rodrigo Real and Tynneson Allen, sophomore class duke and duchess Kaden Crow and Juliet Booker, and freshman class lord and lady Gavin Martinez and Valeree Cordes were also honored.

Although Morris said problems were minimal, StuCo and the Lady Bellas did face a few roadblocks while planning the week. The most notable of these was that homecoming was held more than a month earlier than in previous years.

"Last year it was Oct. 30, and this year it was Sep. 17, so it was hard to get everything coordinated early enough," Morris said.

However, despite any challenges faced, Morris said he feels the week was definitely a success.

"I've heard really positive feedback about the new elements we incorporated, and the dress-up days seemed to be really highly participated in," he said. "I think with everyone being back on campus, there is a lot of school pride and spirit that I feel was very much exhibited during this homecoming week."

