



THE BEAR FACTS



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BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

DECEMBER 2021

BCS Christmas traditions abound

By Clive Whaley

Christmas music echoes down the halls and colored lights twinkle on a classroom tree as students make their way to class. The last few weeks before Christmas break have featured Christmas parties for the elementary students, decorations throughout the middle school hallway, generous donations, and plenty of holiday-themed music concerts.

After a year and a half of separate chapels using livestream, all-community chapel took place on Wednesday, Dec. 8, in the church auditorium, where students could once again participate in a raucous version of “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” led by Mel Witcher.

Middle school principal Dr. Amber Grady started a special competition in which each homeroom decorated its door in the spirit of Christmas to compete for a donut party. The doors featured lots of colored paper, Christmas trees, lights, and creativity.

Middle school teachers also had twelve days of wearing Christmas-themed attire, joined by students in the final week. Outfits featured crazy hats, socks, and sweaters, and lots of red and green.

Elementary students were able to resume the age-old tradition of presenting a Christmas program in the auditorium. On Friday, Dec. 10, students in pre-K through third grade took the stage to sing Christmas songs under the direction of music teacher Amanda Stanglin. Stan-



photo: Brandy Gauthier

Christmas spirit The Lady Bellas performed to Christmas tunes along with the Grinch, Santa, and two hippos during the winter sports pep rally on Nov. 30.

glin said it was the students’ first time to sing on the stage, and she “could not be more proud of them.”

“It is always such a gift to be able to share the story of the birth of our Savior through these precious voices,” she said.

Families who came to this month’s choir or band concert could not have left without picking up the spirit of Christmas. From “Sleigh Ride” to “Silent Night,” students played, sang, and harmonized, making beautiful music that filled the theater.

Pre-K through eighth-grade students also

participated in the annual Angel Tree program, a part of the Prison Fellowship Ministry. Students did chores at home to earn money they could donate to the program, which helped purchase gifts for underprivileged children.

Other festive activities included Christmas rock songs being played over the announcements, as well as daily jokes related to the holiday season. Now, on the last day of school before the holidays, students and teachers alike are eager to take a break, visit relatives, celebrate the birth of Christ, and carry out precious family traditions.

Students prep for ‘Newsies’

By Laynie Ruiz

For a few select winter days, the audience in the CSA theater will have the opportunity to be swept away into the streets of New York City – sharing the dreams of a boy longing to be in sandy Santa Fe, tapping their feet to the songs of worker boys, and facing a great, greedy oppressor.

BCS theater students will present four shows of their upcoming musical *Newsies*, starting with evening shows on Thursday, Feb. 3, and Friday, Feb. 4. Saturday will feature both a matinee show and another evening show.

Based on the 1899 Newsboys Strike in New York City, *Newsies* is a musical telling of the story of a young newsboy, Jack Kelly, and his fellow employees rebelling against their publisher, Joseph Pulitzer, after the prices for papers are heavily increased. Along the way, Jack meets allies such as the free-spirited reporter Katherine Plummer. With his friends, Jack is able to fight against the injustice Pulitzer has brought upon them and settle the score once and for all.

The musical stars junior JC Samson as Jack Kelly, with juniors Lily Trueper and Kennedy Drennon playing Katherine Plummer at his side. The main antagonist is Pulitzer, who will be played by high school teacher Jimmie Harper.

Newsies was always close to theater teacher and director Vanessa Maleare’s heart and was bound to be shown at Brentwood eventually. It was her favorite movie in high school, and she said she’s seen it at least 20 times. Actor Christian Bale was her first crush, and she knows all the lyrics to the songs to this day.

Last year’s *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown* had to use a small-scale cast for Covid reasons, and many other students who wanted to participate in it were unable to. Since many of the restrictions have been lifted, Maleare has more room to be flexible and creative this year. *Newsies* has lots of characters and a huge cast, making room for everyone who wanted to be involved. There are about 65 people going into the produc-

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Return to 4A brings new opponents, opportunity

By Lucy Belcik

Brentwood Christian high school athletes can anticipate several changes to their competitors beginning next school year, as BCS prepares to make the switch from TAPPS 5A to 4A. TAPPS performs a realignment every two years based on enrollment, deciding each school’s classification and district.

“Although we are up in numbers, TAPPS numbers have gone up also,” BCS athletic director Jeffery Doege said. “This means instead of being on the low end of 5A, we are now on the high end of 4A.”

Districts vary across different sports; football will play Houston schools, with softball and baseball competing against mostly

Austin schools. The remaining round-ball sports, plus track and cross country, will face off against schools from San Antonio, Corpus Christi, and Austin.

“I’m excited about the new volleyball district, but the top teams are going to be very strong,” volleyball and softball coach Rory Tyson said. “I don’t think the move is going to necessarily make things easier, so we’ll have to fight that mindset and start working early to reach our goal of making the state tournament next year.”

Correy Washington, head football and track coach, said he thinks football will be much more suited to playing in 4A.

“I think our team size is more comparable to 4A teams. It makes sense for football to be

in 4A because of numbers,” Washington said. “No matter what division we are competing in, my goal as a coach is to compete at a high level.”

Sophomore student-athlete Renne Cooper, who runs both track and cross country, as well as playing soccer, said he believes it will be much easier to do well “race-to-race.”

“Personally, I think I will have a much better opportunity to place high at cross country state as well as in regionals and state for track,” Cooper said.

Washington says he still expects success from his state-champion track team, even with the change in district.

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Keep an Open Mind with Kaitlyn Weilemann

THE BEAR FACTS DECEMBER 2021

Editor contemplates length of Christmas season

The Christmas season is a joyful time when we all get a break from our regularly scheduled responsibilities to gather around our Christmas trees with our loved ones and celebrate the Good News by sharing gifts and traditions. This time is often what helps stressed students and teachers to get through the busy end of the calendar year, promising the deep rest they'll need to face the spring. So with all of these good things packed into one December, who wouldn't want to extend that holiday spirit both backward and forward throughout the year? Well, as it turns out, some people have their own reasons to wish Christmas would stay put in its month.

A popular pet peeve of Thanksgiving lovers and even a joke made among Christmas connoisseurs themselves is when celebrations for Christmas seem to creep across the timeline, infecting other important holiday seasons like Thanksgiving, Halloween, and New Year's. That's the main argument against this extended celebration, having some worried that the message of giving thanks for all of the blessings one has will get lost in the sleigh bells and tinsel, or that the time for spooky costumes and candy collecting will be overtaken by the anticipation of Santa's slide down the chimney. Other holidays have important messages and traditions of their own which should be respected and given their own days to celebrate. But those on the other side are



interested in making Christ's season last a little longer.

Christmas is the most historically celebrated time of the year, even for those who celebrate different December and January holidays. But for us, we give gifts, sing songs, bake cookies, and travel to see our loved ones, all to joyfully celebrate the coming of Christ, and with his birth, the Good News that anyone

can be saved. This is the greatest news of all, so there's a desire in many big hearts to stretch out this season of joy so that we celebrate Jesus' birth all year around and spread this news to more people. And with this desire comes the urge to keep up other more tradition-based aspects of the Christmas season, like the tree and the wreaths and the jingle bells, for longer than just a few weeks at the end of the year. However, there's a happy medium for everyone amidst this December discourse.

Other holidays are incredibly important to maintaining our dearly held traditions, and because of that, should continue to receive their own time for celebration. Leaving behind the sleigh bells and tinsel at the end of the year only serves to make those fun traditions more special and makes those times decorating with our families and baking cookies for Santa more memorable. However, the true message of Christmas can be celebrated all year around. Continuing to celebrate and share the Good News throughout all twelve months allows us to spread the holiday joy no matter what time it is while still giving the other holidays we observe their due respect.

So next time you find yourself sympathizing with the Grinch when you hear a Christmas song in September or can't bring yourself to take down the tree in January, remember this happy medium approach to the contagious nature of Christmas.

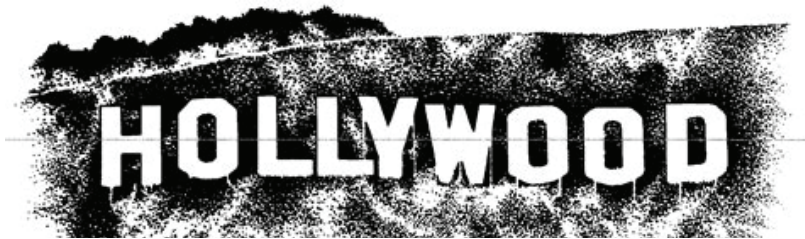
Freshman gives account of acting gig in Los Angeles

By Cristian Soto

My life has been a whirlwind lately. I'm a freshman here at BCS, and I'm an actor. On Oct. 22, I received a call that confirmed I booked a role in an NBC television series in California.

I auditioned for the undisclosed role the week before I found out I was playing it. I'm an avid auditioner and was shocked to see that I finally "booked the job," meaning I'm verified to work in that project. Up until now, my only acting has been on stage at local acting camps. God has blessed me to work in Los Angeles twice in the past two months, and I got to experience Hollywood in ways that are beyond my imagination.

When my family and I heard the news, we instantly planned our flight and flew to Los Angeles on Oct. 25. When we arrived, I noticed how different it was from Texas. Los Angeles feels busy in every corner of the city, especially in this line of work. The immediacy of the job gives you a good sense of preparedness and responsibility. I was required to get Covid tests and wardrobe fittings in advance to filming. While we were driving to where we needed to



go, I gazed at famous production studio buildings and landmarks I would usually see on TV.

The buildings were lined with posters of upcoming movies and television shows. I noticed that all these production studios were just blocks away! When I arrived on set, my mom and I were welcomed to one of many trailers to settle in. It was compact, but luxurious. The best thing was, it was nobody else's. Another amazing convenience was the meals they fed the cast: grilled salmon, brisket, salad selections, and pastries, just to name a few.

One of many important things when it comes to children working on set is doing a sufficient amount of schoolwork per day while they're away from school. Each student cast member needed to fulfill a minimum of three hours of work per day before we actually began filming. In between filming, our teacher would take us back to do more school work. On-set school was a big help. It made it much easier to catch up when I came back to Texas.

After school, the cast members and I rode on a shuttle to film on-location. Thankfully, my mom was there to supervise me the whole time.

When we arrived, I got to have conversations with the other talented people working on the show. Everyone on set had collaborative things to do, even if they weren't in the same scene. The main cast had such a great connection and they were really welcoming.

When filming a single scene with different takes, it may seem repetitive, but you learn with each one. This work cycle continued for the rest of the filming days. After I finished filming, my family and I returned to Texas on Oct. 29, knowing I had to keep the confidentiality of my work. I was scheduled to return to work in California a second time a month after, but in the little time I was in Texas, I got a part in the new BCS production, *Newsies*.

By the way, I have participated in many local plays, church productions, and a few BCS one-act plays. I have been involved in theater arts since joining Brentwood in sixth grade. I started acting when I was four years old in a local *Alice in Wonderland* play.

But obviously, the project that I was working on in California was much bigger, especially on my second trip. My family and I flew to Los

Angeles for the second time on Nov. 13. We settled in a nice rental apartment in Glendale that would be suitable for a longer period of time. In our free time, my family and I decided to explore the area, finding a dining and shopping mall that was a great place to spend our free time, plus it was within walking distance.

Since we were away from Texas during Thanksgiving, my family and I spent the holiday with one of my co-stars and her family. We ate a delicious dinner and walked in the mall, which was decorated with Christmas lights and a huge tree. It was a beautiful day and we all had a lot to be thankful for.

When I returned to the set it felt refreshing, and I was thankful to be back. We got an early morning call time, so they welcomed us with delicious breakfast that I got to enjoy in my deeply missed trailer. When we weren't filming, I was very thankful I got to know the cast and crew more. The actors are full of positivity and energy, and are very easy to communicate and work with. Even though they've been in many projects before, they're down to earth and treat everyone equally.

The cast wouldn't be filming on-location, but in Universal Studios. The time filming prior to this one was done somewhere locally. So, a question I pondered ever since I was interested in filming was, "How do they film inside?" In Universal Studios they have studio sets, better known as stages. In general, it's easier to film

see **HOLLYWOOD**, page 5

Correction

Fifth-grader Ella Hinds led all elementary runners with 33 laps in Jog-a-fun last month.

Holiday concerts make triumphant return to BCS

By Anjie Popoola

After a year of restrictions and social distancing, the fine arts department gave family and friends the opportunity to feel the Christmas spirit and hear the musical abilities of the band and choir students with four holiday concerts in the past month. These were the first full concerts in the Iva Lea Worley Barton Theater in two years.

First came the fourth and fifth graders with their concert before Thanksgiving, and then came the choir and band concerts earlier this month. Between those was the traditional concert by pianist Don Irwin.

“Everything feels new right now because we haven’t done it for so long,” band director Travis Pollard said.

The middle school and high school choirs filled the theater with songs and carols at the annual choir concert on Dec. 2, the Thursday after Thanksgiving break. This featured performances from Encore, sixth-grade girls, middle school boys, middle school girls, and the high school choir.

“This group has stepped up to the challenge, from sixth grade up through twelfth grade, so I’m really really pleased with them,” choir director Daniel Watkins said.

Encore started things off before the six girls of the sixth-grade choir followed with three songs, one of them being “O Come, All Ye Faithful,” with senior Tessa Whitaker on flute. Encore then returned to sing “Silent Night.”

The middle school boys sang two songs, with instrumental assistance from seniors Olivia Osborn and Jaedon McGaughy. Encore followed them with “White Winter Hymnal.”

The middle school girls then performed three songs with instrumental support from several high school musicians, and featuring a descant sung by eighth-graders Emma Kent and Caroline Nagle.

Encore and the 53 members of the high

school choir sang four songs, with senior Israel Williams performing a solo in the performance of “Sweet Little Jesus Boy.” As the concert neared its end, all of the students encircled the audience and joined with them to sing a few Christmas carols.

Throughout the concert, students were accompanied by Sami Froncek on the piano.

Five days later, after a one-year hiatus, Don Irwin and Santa Claus joined forces in the ninth-annual Don Irwin Christmas concert on Dec. 7. Prior to the night-time performance, Irwin played several shows for the students and faculty during the school day.

The CSA lobby was decorated with nutcrackers, Santa’s chair, and a grand Christmas tree adorned with lights and ornaments. It was then filled with Christmas cheer as families arrived at the concert.

Following the introductions, Irwin made his entrance with a welcome from event sponsors Ron and Ali Knight. He began his concert with classical songs, followed by a few Peanuts songs and an adaptation of “Chopsticks.” After Irwin’s piano performance, elementary music teacher Amanda Stanglin sang “O Holy Night” and “Noel” for the audience. The evening closed with the singing of two classic Christmas carols.

Coming back after a year off, the secondary band Christmas concert offered an immersive experience and some festive Christmas music on Dec. 9. The concert also gave alumni an opportunity to play along with the band.

Jazz band opened the concert with “You’re a Mean One, Mr. Grinch” and “Big Band Holiday.” The sixth-grade band was next with five songs, followed by four songs from the seventh- and eighth-grade band.

Wrapping up the night, the high school band played five songs. At one point, Pollard performed a short exercise with the band to show the audience just how precise the band has to be to sound good. He had the students play



photo: Brandy Gauthier

Showman After a year off, Don Irwin returned to the stage at BCS on Dec. 7, where he delighted the audience in the evening after playing for students earlier in the day.

90% of the notes correctly. The results showed that getting the notes 90% correct is not as acceptable as scoring a 90% on a math test, Pollard pointed out.

A feature that was last included six years ago was brought back to give the concert a surround sound experience for the final song. With the band on stage, the antiphonal brass on the sides, and the choir in the back, the audience was surrounded on all sides by various instruments.

Before the three big December concerts, parents and family gathered in the theater on Nov. 18 to see the fourth- and fifth-grade music program perform 15 songs that varied in language and genre. The choir, the fourth-grade recorder ensemble, and fifth-grade beginning band all performed.

Realignment gives Bears new opponents for next two years

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“I think we will be successful in track as well, as we have a lot of young talent coming up and have another state championship in sight this year in 5A,” Washington said.

Doege also shared that he hopes the switch to 4A will allow Brentwood to be more competitive for a Henderson Cup, awarded by TAPPS to the overall champion in each of its classifications. The champion is determined by the points each school earns in

the TAPPS championships held throughout the school year.

“I would definitely like to be in the top three in the coming year, if not win it,” Doege said.

The realignment affects academic competition as well, although not as prominently as it does the athletics program.

“We have always competed well at any level,” math teacher Kaleen Graessle said.

Cooper, who competes in academics as well as in athletics, says he doesn’t expect the district change to affect competition much.

“To be honest, I don’t think most students who do academic competitions care who the competition is, and they will compete in the same way regardless,” Cooper said.

Changes can also be expected in facilities available, with the addition of a long jump pit and discus ring for track and field, and a completed press box for soccer and football. New bleacher seats have also been added to the Athletic Center.

An endowment fund set up by a donor provided the funds for the press box and bleacher

seats, while contributions towards the track facilities were made by families of past and current Brentwood students.

“We appreciate everything that our families, donors and boosters continue to do for our school,” Doege said.

Doege also expressed optimism about the direction of the athletics program this year.

“Overall, with the switch in district and the renovations, I think all of it is great for our kids, great for our athletes, and great for our school,” Doege said.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: Sydney Cooper

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

Servant leader models Godly devotion

By Davin Ha

Sydney Cooper is a student of the highest standard. She works with speed and accuracy, and her hardworking nature is seen by her peers and teachers constantly.

But that’s not the only place Sydney shines brightly. As president of the Student Council, she oversees all the activities that are planned and executed. She manages a large team of other StuCo members as well as balancing school work and extracurricular activities like cross country and track. As captain of the girls’ track and field team, Sydney competes in the 1600 and 3200 meters.

”She’s a hard worker and has been the backbone of our team for the past four years,” head coach Katie Smith says.

Her teachers have all kinds of compliments ready to describe Sydney.

”If I could give a reward for the most beautiful homework, I’d give it to Sydney Cooper,” math teacher Michele Broadway says.

Sydney loves English and math the most out of all her classes, which is apparent in how much passion she puts into her studies. Math teacher Kaleen Graessle says she has always been impressed with Sydney’s professional and mature demeanor.

”She has a professional attitude about her which is rare for her age,” Graessle says. ”She’s respected by everybody – students and faculty.”

This attitude comes out especially in her service work with charity organizations during her time in National Honor Society.

”In some ways she’s the ideal student,” Graessle says. ”I think what she does with the NHS is often under the radar and underappreciated. Of course she doesn’t do it for the kudos, but because she’s a servant.”

Sydney has been a student at Brentwood for 13 years, since studying the alphabet in Linda Allen’s kindergarten class in 2011. Both of Sydney’s parents are graduates of MIT who have worked hard in every aspect of their lives, and making sure that their children grow up in a loving, Christian household with opportunities to become amazing people is no exception. Sydney’s father is the manager of product test engineering at Cirrus Logic. Her mother teaches Bible classes at their church and works for the donor department of a Christian publishing network. Sydney’s mother also volunteers at a crisis pregnancy resource center, and teaches fitness classes at a local gym.

”My parents are both inspirations to me,” Sydney says. ”They have worked so hard to arrive where they are spiritually and in their careers, and my goal is to become more like them

in the coming years.”

Sydney has a younger brother, Renne, in 10th grade. Renne says he sees Sydney as an inspiration to him and he couldn’t ask for a better older sister.

”She is a great role model for me,” Renne says. ”In the last few years, she has become my best friend, and I love her for who she is.”

Graessle admires the efforts put into the upbringing of the Cooper children.

”Their parents are very intentional about how they’ve raised them, with such high expectations in a loving way,” she says.

Sydney’s favorite memories

at Brentwood have always revolved around the worship she gets to do through singing at Encore chapels, when she is able to sing the entire time. She has looked forward to these special times of worship every year and says



that it makes her feel like she is really connected with the church and God. One of her favorite chapel songs is ”I Stand in Awe of You,” since she says it is a prayer of admiration to the Lord.

Sydney plans to go into biomedical engineering in her coming college months. She has applied to over a dozen schools and is awaiting their responses any day. She does not have a specific career she is looking to enter; all she knows is that she wants to use that degree to help people in developing countries.

”Biomedical engineers are greatly needed in many countries around the world,” she says.

Sydney wants to help far-off communities with the gifts God has given her. She says Brentwood’s community has encouraged her to want to help less fortunate families around the world, since she was so blessed to be raised in such a nurturing one. And it’s that sense of family that she says she will miss the most when leaving Brentwood.

”I am very grateful for all my classmates who have supported me throughout the years,” she says. ”Countless people have encouraged me and been kind even during tough times. The Brentwood community is something I will truly miss in the coming years.”

Sydney is continually grateful for the things Brentwood has allowed her to do.

”I have appreciated Brentwood so much,” she says. ”The size of the school has allowed me to try new things and have opportunities I likely would not have had at other schools.”

Outside of school, Sydney enjoys writing, playing piano, photography, and reading. She loves reading books, but the one book she reads the most persistently is the Bible. She wanted to share her favorite Bible verse, which is Psalm 19:14. It says, ”May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

”This has been my goal while at Brentwood,” she says, ”and will continue to be even after I leave: to speak the truth and to honor God with my actions, showing Christ to everyone around me.”

Newsies

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tion of this musical. This includes over 40 cast members, 15 crew members, and about 10 in the orchestra.

Newsies was originally a Disney movie in 1992 but was later adapted to Broadway shows starting in 2011. Harvey Firestein wrote the adapted story with songs composed by Alan Menken. The movie and play have some differences in songs and characters but are very similar.

Choir teacher and experienced vocal coach Daniel Watkins said *Newsies* is a fun show that ”isn’t about a princess,” and he is a big fan of Menken’s work. The songs in Brentwood’s musical will be from both the Disney movie and the Broadway adaptation, so there will be some familiar songs such as ”Carrying the Banner” and ”King of New York.”

Because so many of the characters are males, girls will be playing some of the main parts. Watkins claimed there was a ton of talent and that if there were lead roles for everyone, he would have given it to them. After auditions closed and everyone was assigned, Watkins said they have a ”top-notch, dynamite cast.”

Practice for the actors is held on an abnormal schedule, usually from 4-5 p.m. but can sometimes end around 6 or 7 p.m. As they get closer to the opening show, Maleare says the schedule will become ”more intense.”

”Being in *Newsies* has been an absolute blast,” Trueper said. ”The cast works so well together and there is truly never a dull moment during rehearsals.”

Maleare is the director, which gives her the ”ultimate artistic vision” and the ability to oversee how everything is going. She runs the tech for the show and was the student recruiter for actors and behind-the-scenes helpers. Pollard recruited the orchestra playing the musical’s songs, and he runs the budget for the show. Watkins will be the orchestra’s conductor. Drill team instructor Lisa Warner will teach the actors the choreography. Maleare and Watkins plan to bring in light, sound, set, and costume professionals to help out.

There will be a two-story set structure representing a skyline that can safely support the actors on-stage. It was architecturally made to ensure the actors’ safety, and Maleare has the official blueprints of it.

Watkins is eager to see the final product. ”The songs will leave you humming in the car and tap dancing in the street,” he said.

Cheerful teacher crazy about kids, books

By Evelyn Lee

While many love her for her kind soul and heart, she is also admired for her determination and patience in all that she does. There are many more wonderful things to be said about kindergarten teacher and cheerleading coach Julie Ann Harper.

Harper has been a kindergarten teacher at Brentwood Christian since the fall of 2017. She has also coached high school cheerleading for four of her five years here. After graduating from Harding University in Arkansas with a degree in early childhood development, Harper was in search of a teaching job.

“I had just done a phone interview, when I got a spot for an in-person interview here at BCS,” Harper says. “I took the spot, and knew that this is where I wanted to be.”

Harper’s brother, high school history teacher Jimmie Harper, had been at BCS for three years when she was hired. He had recommended her for the position and let her know of an opening.

Harper has loved every minute of her time teaching kindergartners. She enjoys the hugs she receives from her students, and seeing them grow and learn important lessons and skills.

“I love how joyful they are in all that they do, and getting to see how proud they are of themselves as they learn,” she says.

From a very early age, Harper knew she wanted to work with children, although not at first as a teacher. She started college with plans to become a pediatric nurse. However, after her freshman year at Harding, which is in her hometown of Searcy, Ark., Harper was not digging the thought of nursing school. A call from her mother, who works back at Harding Academy – a pre-K-12 school affiliated with the university – is what changed her future. Harper’s mother asked her to come and substitute for a class of young students for a week. Harper immediately fell in love with the kids and the job.

“At the end of the week I emailed my academic adviser and told her I wanted to change my major from nursing to early child education,” she recalls.

Some of Harper’s favorite memories from teaching so far include the many kindergarten class parties, and a recent activity this fall of smashing pumpkins open on the football field. Harper also recalls with fondness the time she had a “chill day” reading stories to the class on the floor.

When Harper was young she was an avid reader of all types of stories. She carries that love for books and storytelling with her into her classroom and life today. One of her all-time favorite activities to do with her young students is to share stories and read books to the class.

Harper is a fan of all things Harry Potter, having read the stories several times over. She and her brother are often invited to the home of BCS teacher Taylor Mayfield and his wife Amanda, the school nurse, to play Harry Potter Hogwarts Battle.

Harper is an active member of Round Rock Church of Christ along with several other teachers at BCS. She, her brother, the Mayfields, and the Stowes are all part of a Sunday night fellowship and dinner group. Harper is known for her “yummy, homemade” food and snacks she brings to events like this.

Back in Searcy, a small town where only a few days a year see traffic, Harper attended Harding Academy from fifth grade to graduation from high school. She has fond memories of the friends she made during her time in school, many of which she also attended church with.

“We went on different kinds of trips together and encouraged one another every chance we could. I loved the close-knit community,” she says. “It was like a big family.”

Harper got started with cheerleading in middle school. After participating in gymnastics since she was 18 months old, Harper switched to cheerleading when she was 13. In her first year at BCS, she was an assistant cheerleader coach. The next year she became the head coach. Since then, the number of girls in cheerleading has grown significantly, and a middle school team has been added. Harper has expressed joy for the growth in numbers.

“It’s wonderful seeing more girls fall in love with the sport I grew up loving,” she says.

The new cheerleaders on the team have enjoyed working with Harper and building each other up under her guidance. Such a coordinated sport requires everyone to understand each other and work together.

“She has always made an effort to support and encourage us, and she knows her stuff too!” says cheer co-captain Kailey Willard, junior.

Even more important to Harper than cheerleading is her faith. A very formative part of Harper’s faith was her yearly trips to Guatemala with her father. Rick Harper made regular



photo: Julie Ann Harper

Joyful Kindergarten teacher Julie Ann Harper, here with last year’s student Yoon Choo, has been at Brentwood since 2017, and coaching cheerleading just as long.

mission trips down to Guatemala, and young Julie Ann would tag along with him nearly every summer. She has many fond memories of her summer mission trips, and she feels a connection to the country after making countless friends and growing close to people she considers a second family. Harper has spent time in language school in Guatemala, and she con-

tinues to practice Spanish in hopes to be fluent some day.

While Harper doesn’t know what the future holds, she does know that BCS is a great place to be, and she expects to be teaching children for a long time.

“I love knowing that the next day holds joy and seeing my students!”

Hollywood

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on a stage for a certain place that needs to be filmed many times. Stages can also be used to capture a scene that happens at a certain time of day. They do this with the magic of lighting, camera placement, and set building. When I arrived on the stage, I was amazed by the attention to detail. Even if something

wasn’t going to be captured in the scene, I felt it was there to help the actors and give realness to the performance.

When filming for a single-camera take, it could take hours to achieve a few seconds of a scene; it may need to be filmed from different angles that can’t be done all at once. So, it takes patience and composure to be cooperative while filming.

After we wrapped the final scene I was in, I got to spend a little more time at the trailers

and say goodbye to a few of the castmates. I’m so glad I still keep in touch with some of my co-stars who I will forever remember working with.

At the end of the day, I knew that none of this experience would’ve been possible without God and all that He has done for me. My life and my career have changed for the better, and so many opportunities have been opened. For me, this is only the beginning. I can’t wait to see what God has in store.

Talented boys' team looks to contend for district

By Karlee Lawrence

Led by a new coach and a freshman point guard, the varsity Bears are 14-3 overall and 1-1 in district. Their next game is Dec. 18 at home against John Paul II for a non-district game.

Freshman Adrian Mathis leads the team with 16 points and 5.7 assists per game. Junior Nicholas Makumi leads with eight rebounds per game.

Brentwood started district play on Dec. 7 with a loss to St. Michael's, a team ranked number two in TAPPS 5A. The Bears will also face the number-nine team, TMI-Episcopal, in the district schedule.

"They are both teams with a lot of talent and are well coached," BCS head coach Dustin Karrer said. "We believe that the level of our district is a challenge that we are more than capable of and we are excited for it to bring the best out of us."

With the district looking tough, coach Karrer and the team have been setting goals and holding each other accountable.

"Our goals are to take small steps each and every day at getting better and focusing on our process," Karrer said. "If we do this, we think that we can win our district and make a deep playoff run."

Senior Rylan Acheson also has high expectations for the team.

"We expect to be top contenders for district champs," he said. "We expect to go deep into playoffs, and we are excited for what the rest of the season holds for us."

Since the start of the year, Karrer said the

Bears have developed their chemistry with each other as they have enjoyed eight- and four-game winning streaks. But he also sees plenty to work on, and said he thinks the Bears really need to improve in all facets of the game.

"Complacency is the enemy of excellence, and we need to continue to grow and improve to achieve our goals," he said.

Following are the team's recent game results (*denotes district game):

11/16: Austin Royals 75-52 W

Mathis scored 25 points and had six steals as the Bears defeated this home-school team. Junior Evan Gruis scored 17 points and had six rebounds.

11/18-23: BCS Inv. W W L W W

The Bears crushed Round Rock Christian 77-26 in the first game, as Mathis scored 22 points and had six assists. Gruis scored 13 points and had 10 rebounds, and Acheson scored 11 points with six steals. By the beginning of the second quarter BCS was 33 points ahead. Next, the Bears beat Hill Country 88-59. Mathis poured in 31 points to go with six assists. Acheson scored 18, and Makumi had 11 points and seven rebounds. The Bears then lost 71-52 to a big and physical San Marcos Homeschool team. Mathis had 16 points and Acheson had 9. BCS followed this with an 81-64 win over Veritas Academy. Mathis had 20 points and six assists, and Gruis had 16. The Bears finished with a 78-48 win over Taylor. Mathis scored 25, and Gruis had 23.



photo: Brandy Gauthier

Opportunity Junior Evan Gruis is off to the races during the Bears' home tournament game against San Marcos Homeschool last month. BCS is off to a strong start with a 14-3 record.

11/22: @ Austin Achieve 75-49 W

Brentwood overwhelmed the Polar Bears with a 75-49 win. Mathis had 16 points, and Acheson scored 11.

11/30: St. Dominic Savio 84-49 W

The Bears scored a decisive triumph over the Eagles, as Mathis scored 21 and Gruis followed with a double-double – 16 points and 11

rebounds.

12/2-12/4: @ Thrall Tourn. W W W

The Bears started with a bang, destroying Thrall 90-38 in a fast-paced game. Gruis had 19 points and eight rebounds. Junior Mason Emerson played his best game, with 18 points and

see **BOYS'**, page 8

Football ends in playoffs

By Sam Benton

The Bears' football season ended abruptly with a 59-12 loss to 8-3 Fort Bend Christian, on Nov. 12 in Sugarland. Fort Bend, the champs of their district, would go on to beat St. Michael's 69-28 before losing 14-13 in the state semifinals to Houston Second Baptist.

The game was a mismatch from the beginning, as Fort Bend scored on the first play of the game. The Eagles, led by junior Brady Dever, who had 14 completions for 369 yards and seven touchdowns, gave the Bears' secondary little time to catch their breath.

Senior Conner Rohlack led the Bears with 21 carries for 65 yards and two touchdowns, and 3 receptions for 78 yards. Senior quarterback Keller Jackson completed 7 of 13 attempts for 94 yards.

Brentwood was missing starting senior

lineman Caleb Riley, and Jackson was still suffering from a knee injury that restricted his ability to run, which had been a great asset to the Bears' offense this year. With a quarterback who couldn't run and inexperienced players having to start, there wasn't much the Bears could do against the Eagles' defense.

It was a similar story with Brentwood's defense as sophomore Bryson Best and freshman Jack Copeland filled in as safety and linebacker, respectively. Brentwood's inability to put pressure on the Eagles' quarterback, and the speed and physicality of Fort Bend's receivers, resulted in a catch almost every play.

Brentwood's final game was certainly disappointing, but head coach Correy Washing-

see **FOOTBALL**, page 8

Boys open with victory

By Will French

The Bears opened their soccer season with a 2-0 victory at St. Stephen's on Monday. Senior Jack Leidlein scored the first goal on an assist from senior Josh Trevino to put the Bears up 1-0 at the half. Midway through the second half senior Nathan Joseph headed the ball near the goal, and sophomore Ryder Shelton-Lamb finished for the score.

With nearly 30 players, Brentwood has more than enough to field a JV team, which has won all of its games so far: 2-1 and 4-1 victories over St. Andrew's, and a 2-0 win on Monday against St. Stephen's.

The Bears ended last season tied for fourth in district with a 5-5 record. Unfortunately, they were knocked out in the first round of playoffs by a speedy attacker who scored on them three times. Only three players graduated from that

team, and their leading scorer last year, Nathan Joseph, is now a senior.

Practices officially started on Oct. 17, but in a way, they began months ago with summer workouts, where about 10 players attended daily, adding up to over 100 hours of training. Trevino said he believes all this hard work will lead to success on the field.

"I think we have all the pieces; we've just got to put it together. And I think we can," he said.

Cash Miller returns as head coach, assisted by Mason McCormick (BCS 2016), who went to state with the Bears in 2015. Miller said his plans for the season include "fluidity" and "playing soccer with all 11 and moving together."

In terms of form and positioning, coaches said they have a strong midfield and the form changing will always depend on personnel.

Lady Bears seeing ‘fruits of labor’

By Taylor Cunningham

Heading into the break, the varsity girls’ basketball team has a 4-2 district record (6-7 overall) and has already won as many district games this year as they have in the last three seasons combined, thanks in part to new head coach Theresa Nunn.

But for Nunn, it was an expectation going in to do better.

“The wins are a testament to how much work they’ve put in,” she said. “I’m just glad they’re starting to see the fruits of their labor.”

Nunn said the girls have done a phenomenal job of being coachable and have a strong desire to improve individually and as a team.

Key players thus far have been sophomore Aubrey Acheson, senior Alicia Gardner, and juniors Abbie Burcham, Tynneson Allen, and Carolyn Morgan. Nunn also said she is greatly encouraged by the play of the team’s freshmen.

“They have a lot of passion and energy when they play, and it shows in practice and in games,” she said.

Right now Nunn is working with the team on limiting turnovers and also getting stronger on the defensive side of the ball.

Gardner leads the team with eight points and six rebounds per game. Acheson leads the team in assists and steals.

“I love the chemistry and support we have together as a team and family,” Acheson said. “I also love Coach Nunn and how much passion and care she gives us. You can really tell she loves us and believes in us.”

The next varsity game for the girls will be in San Antonio on Jan. 7.

Following are the team’s recent game results (*denotes district game):

11/16: Geneva* 63-22 L

In the girls’ first district game, three starters returned from volleyball: Acheson, Allen, and

Gardner. But it was not enough to get it done at home against the district-leaders from Boerne. Gardner led the team in scoring with 16.

11/19: Regents* 51-46 W

The Lady Bears were led by Gardner and also Burcham, who recorded a double-double. The girls started off hot and began to pull away but got in foul trouble with three fouling out.

11/30: @ St. Michael’s* 63-21 L

The girls had trouble taking care of the ball, with 34 turnovers due to solid young talent by the Crusaders. Acheson led the Bears in scoring with 7, and Gardner pulled down 9 rebounds.

12/2-4: @ New Braunfels Tourn. L L W L

The Bears opened up with a tough loss against Antonian Prep 88-26. The Apaches were led by three players all scoring over 15 and one recording a triple-double. Acheson

and Gardner both scored 8. Later that day the girls faced Veterans Memorial Academy and had difficulty containing the Chargers defensively in the 60-27 loss. Acheson led the Bears with 12. The next day Brentwood beat New Braunfels Canyon 31-27. Gardner led with 11 points and 9 rebounds. In their final game, the girls had difficulty getting shots to fall in a 75-22 loss to Rouse. Freshman Eden Peterson led the Bears in scoring with 6.

12/3: @ TMI Episcopal* 57-25 W

Brentwood defeated TMI on the road thanks to their exceptional defense. Gardner had 13 points, and the Bears combined for 23 steals.

12/7: St. Mary’s Hall* 47-45 W

The Lady Bears were on the verge of pull-

see **GIRLS’**, page 8



Hot pursuit Junior Celeste Flores, sophomore Aubrey Acheson, and freshman Jenny Van apply defensive pressure during the Lady Bears’ game against Geneva on Nov. 16.

Big season ends for volleyball

By Daniel Womack

The BCS Lady Bears’ volleyball season came to a close after a regional-level loss to Houston Second Baptist on Nov. 13 in Flaton. Although BCS led the first set 6-0, the Eagles came back and won all three sets.

The girls earned a first-round bye in play-offs before winning a home playoff game against Frassati Catholic on Nov. 9.

Regardless of the loss against Second Baptist, the Lady Bears still had a record-breaking season, with an overall record of 36-8 and going 13-3 in their district.

“We worked really well together. Our team chemistry helped us beat any team we played against,” sophomore outside hitter Aubrey Acheson said.

Coach Rory Tyson said the playoff game was the first time for a lot of the girls to play in a game with that much on the line, and the pressure really got to them early in the match, making it difficult to find their rhythm.

“Overall, this was a successful season, and I’m so proud of these girls and really all the players in the program,” Tyson said.

Varsity set school records for most wins in a season and longest win streak, as they have now won back-to-back district championships.

“It was a fun year and we will build on that for next season,” Tyson said.

Although the Lady Bears were disappointed with the loss, they feel they had a great season overall.

“Our team really grew,” senior setter Ava Alvarado said. “When we all played as a team, I believe we were unstoppable. In the end we just found it really hard to find our rhythm and play as a team.”

Tyson said she has a couple of holes to fill for next year, as the team loses Alvarado at setter and Gardner at middle blocker.

“I’m looking for the younger players to put in the work and step up to fill those positions and the returners to come back stronger and with more focus,” Tyson said. “Our goal is to win another district championship and get to the state tournament.”

Junior Ashlynn Alvarado was named first-team all state, and sister Ava made the second team. Both Alvarados joined Acheson as first-team all-district players. Freshman setter Rayen Flandes made the second team, and Tynneson Allen was honorable mention.

Soccer girls raw; coach sees potential

By Bear Facts staff

When the varsity girls’ soccer season ended with a 1-0 loss in the first round of playoffs last winter, there should not have been much optimism about the 2021-22 season. Last year’s Lady Bears graduated seven seniors, and two more girls left for public school. Their star goalie, Caroline Griffith, and their star goal-scorer, Julia Glenn, have moved on after leading the Bears to the playoffs despite only totaling three wins last season.

Even with their disadvantages this year, head coach Cash Miller said he is excited about the season. He is also very thankful for the number

of adventurous girls who agreed to give soccer a try this year, boosting the total number of players on the team to 13.

“This team almost didn’t happen,” he said. “If it were not for volleyball and softball players coming to play, we would really be struggling.”

After nearly two months of practice, the girls will be ready to take the field for their first game on Jan. 4 at St. Mary’s Hall in San Antonio. While they won’t field a team full of experienced soccer players, Miller said Brentwood has some very good athletes.

“We are going to surprise some teams,” he said. “We are rough, but you can see a lot of

potential.”

In spite of their youth and inexperience, Miller has high expectations and said a trip back to the playoffs – even a playoff victory – is entirely possible. He said he will spend extra time working on fundamentals and mechanics, and he will use formations that maximize the girls’ strengths. One of these strengths, he said, is actually their inexperience, which should serve to remove some pressure.

“We really don’t know what we don’t know, so we don’t have to play scared,” he explained. “We just go out and have fun and work. We will earn everything we achieve this season.”



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The Grinch

Max
- Cindy Lou Who

Scrooge

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Past

Present

Yet to Come

Bob Cratchit

Tiny Tim

Della Dillingham

Jim Dillingham

Little Match Girl

Nutcracker

Clara

Sugarplum Fairy

Drosselmeyer

Mouse King

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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Football seniors look toward college ball

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ton had nothing but good things to say about this year’s team.
“I thought we had a great season finishing with a record of 6-5,” he said. “We overcame adversity and competed at a high level weekly. Although the record doesn’t show it, I think this is the best football team in BCS history.”
According to Washington, this year’s team broke every offensive single-season record for the school. The Bears’ offense had 4,500 total yards, averaging 409 yards and 39 points per game. Brentwood changed up their defensive scheme which, according to Washington, helped tremendously during the back stretch of district play.
With seven seniors graduating and a fairly young team to tackle a new district next year, the coaches are aware of the challenges that will undoubtedly present themselves but are optimistic about the team’s ability to perform.
“Next year we have some rebuilding to do,” Washington said. “But we are familiar with playing in the mini-SEC, so I am sure we will be successful at the 4A level.”
Although this is the end of many seniors’ football careers, a few have decided they don’t want to hang up the cleats just yet and are pursuing a chance to play collegiate football. Among these are Jackson, Cason Best, Drew Phipps and Riley. Best hopes to play at Harding University; Phipps is looking at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor; and Riley is hoping to play at the United States Coast Guard Academy.

Boys’ basketball

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10 rebounds. He also had an incredible dunk on a pass off the backboard by Mathis. Next the Bears beat Lago Vista 71-40. Mathis scored 12; senior Conner Rohlack had 11 points, and sophomore Colton McLain had 10. Brentwood finished with a 74-34 win over Bartlett. Mathis scored 23 points, and Gruis had 16.
12/7: @ St. Michael’s* 73-55 L
In their first district game, the Bears faced one of the top teams in the state that features two 6-9 post players. Brentwood fought hard to keep relatively close, led by Mathis, who scored 16 points. The teams will play again in January.
12/10: @ St. Mary’s Hall* 97-60 W
Brentwood planned to pick up the pace and score lots of fast break and transition points. They got what they wanted.

Girls’ basketball

continued from page 7

ing away on several occasions, but St. Mary’s kept coming back. With 14 seconds left, the Barons rebounded a missed free throw but sloppily threw it down the court, where Gardner stole the ball with 10 seconds left. She passed it to Acheson, who drove and then scored on a floater from the free throw line shortly before time expired. Acheson and Allen led in scoring with 11 points each, and Allen also had 13 rebounds.
12/10: Providence Catholic* 64-30 W
Brentwood fell behind early and trailed 19-9 early in the second quarter. But after a defensive adjustment, they took a 26-25 half-time lead. In the second half, the Lady Bears outscored their opponent 38-5, including 22-0 in the fourth quarter. Acheson led the team with 16 points as well as 12 assists and 6 steals. Allen had 13 rebounds.