



THE BEAR FACTS

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BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

APRIL 2022



Baseball team proving dominant

By Sam Benton

With their sights set on a state title, the varsity baseball team is steamrolling through district. Currently ranked seventh in TAPPS 5A, BCS is 24-1-1 overall and 5-0 in district after their win against St. Mary's Hall on April 12.

The Bears are tied with Boerne Geneva for first place in district with five games remaining. BCS is scheduled to play the Eagles at their place on April 22 before their last two district games against Hyde Park on April 26 and TMI on April 29.

"I think we just have to play our best game against Boerne," senior Keller Jackson said.

Playoffs are set to begin on May 3, and the team remains focused on making a strong run for the state tournament.

"To be the best, we're going to have to play the best and beat the best," head coach Jeffrey Doege said. "Consistency is something our team is still working at, but it really helps that we have 10 seniors, seven of which are starting, who can lead the underclassmen and help eliminate holes."

Senior Jake Amoroso leads the team with a .541 batting average, followed by senior Seth



photo: J. Lynn Carl

Untouchable Senior Jack Spring leads the Bears with an 8-0 record and a 0.34 ERA.

Taylor (.500) and sophomore Tabor Tyson (.482). Six starters are batting over .400.

Tyson leads the Bears with 43 runs scored, while Amoroso leads with 38 RBIs. Taylor has seven home runs.

On the mound, senior Jack Spring is 8-0 and has allowed only two earned runs in 41 innings. Taylor is 9-1 with 102 strikeouts in 53 innings.

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BCS tops in TAPPS academic

Led by a dominant math team, BCS took first place at the TAPPS 5A state academic and speech competition in Waco on April 11-13. Brentwood students swept the top three places in number sense and calculator, and almost did the same in math.

"These kids represented our school well," TAPPS coordinator Michele Broadway said. "They used their talents to God's glory."

BCS finished with 130 points overall, followed by Grapevine Faith (74.5) and Tyler Grace Community (72.5). Hyde Park (45 points) finished seventh; Regents (29) was 12th, and St. Michael's (5) was 15th.

"I was so excited today," math teacher Kaleen Graessle said. "It didn't just happen; they worked so hard!"

Graessle said math students have prepared by competing in several math tournaments against very difficult competition.

"They have been representing us well across the state of Texas all semester," she said.

Sophomore Nancy Kwak won calculator and mathematics, finishing second in number sense. Junior Nathan Esche won number sense and was second in calculator.

see **TAPPS**, page 2



photo: Michele Broadway

Top talent Dakota Johnson, Nancy Kwak, Nathan Esche, Harry Lu, and Renne Cooper enjoy down time at the TAPPS meet on April 13 in Waco.

BCS disc golf course nears completion

By Laynie Ruiz

As spring dawdles into summer, people are excited for change – a change in weather and plans, and enjoying days away from the daily grind. Many people celebrate the season flying colorful kites; however, at Brentwood there will be new types of objects soaring through the air: discs.

Over the years of dealing with Covid, many people have lost touch with community. Brentwood's CFO Jeff Morris said he thinks it's time to bring back the community that the virus stole. He believes a disc golf course can accomplish just that.

Just north of the athletic field and the lower elementary playground, a disc golf course will appear. The course will extend into the edge of the woods, providing an ample amount of obstacles for a fun challenge. It will have competition-level baskets from the Disc Golf Association (DGA) and is open to the Brentwood community.

Morris said the course should be completed by April 22. There will be nine holes, all of which are par 3.

The idea for the course was sparked by president Jay Burcham after Morris said he was heading out to play one day in the early spring. Shortly after the idea was thrown out, Burcham placed Morris and high school teacher Jimmie Harper in charge of the disc golf project. Harper got right into it by beginning design and finding places where the course could fit. However, when they got in contact with DGA, it was recommended that BCS hire a professional to design the course for safety reasons.

"I was happy to design a course when I was asked to," Harper said, "but was thrilled when I learned the school was willing to invest in a professional designer."

The DGA put Brentwood in touch with the design firm M Disc Golf LLC, who was really interested in supporting BCS and gave a huge discount on the price of the design. They also brought a world-class course designer out to

design the course for Brentwood. Two of the designer's courses hold the title of the best-rated courses in the United States.

Morris, Burcham, and Harper have a goal of starting a disc golf club that can compete against other schools. For now, the course will be used for recreational purposes. Morris said there is a plan to host a spring tournament to celebrate the finished course.

Morris described the course as a "cool asset for the community," as it is a sport that's available for all levels and is a way to get people to try something new while building camaraderie. He said it also promotes health and education and can be used for P.E. classes from elementary through high school. Both Harper and Morris said they are excited for the completion of the course.

"All students can benefit from it," Morris said.

There will be two tee pads, with one location for beginners and another for more experienced players.

Keep an Open Mind with Kaitlyn Weilemann

Editor shares concerns regarding space exploration

The '60s, '70s, and '80s are memorable to us now for a whole slew of reasons such as the groovy music, iconic celebrities, and the great leaps forward in the civil rights movement. But they're also known as eras of nearly constant, inspired progress in the fields of space exploration and scientific innovation. Back in those days, even the smallest triumphs like sending the Russian dog Laika into space were widely celebrated and remembered for decades following. "The Space Race" and the Apollo missions were causes to rally around in the name of furthering mankind and preserving a certain childlike curiosity about the great expanse of space that was shared between many engineers and astronauts alike.

There were several notable tragedies – for example, the launch of the Challenger space shuttle in 1986 when all seven crew members were killed in a fatal failure of the shuttle's solid rocket booster. Yet the movement remained something that united people all around America no matter their race, gender, or class. The at-

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titude towards space exploration has shifted in a different direction within recent years, which has done more to separate people by pointing out their differences than uniting them around a common cause.

Established and famed billionaires have turned to space travel and space colonization as a way to expand their brand and businesses, successfully gaining public support for their projects by rekindling the past flame of romance between humanity and space. Jeff Bezos, so far, has gone more in the direction of expanding his brand by flexing his money through doing something so incredibly out of reach for most people: taking a ride in his very own rocket, Blue Origin. While it might excite people to hear that space travel is back on the radar for scientists and developers, Bezos' choice to use his money in this way – that is, to explore a domain that most people will never have access to – calls attention to how unattainable his lifestyle is to the majority.

It's disheartening to see how the misuse of the unexplored vastness above us is creating a palpable divide among humanity rather than uniting us under a single, wholesome cause regardless of age, ability, or income level. Along with his flights beyond the atmosphere, Bezos has distant plans to make colonies that orbit Earth. But Elon Musk's plans have focused largely on what can be accomplished using the land and resources on Mars.

Musk's grand goal of building a city on Mars through his company SpaceX and their privately owned endeavors shows the recent attitude shift in regards to space, tracking its movement from exploration and research focused work to efforts pointing toward colonization. Historically, the moment one organization narrows in on a space-related goal, other

capable organizations take that as a challenge to achieve this goal first or next. A very well-known example of this is the momentous "Space Race" during which the Soviet Union and the United States were in competition to see who could develop the most advanced space technology. This rivalry was partially fueled by the Cold War and general animosity between the two nations, but that same pattern of a goal selected by one side followed by the other racing to do it first continued to arise as time went on, which leads me to think the phenomenon will continue to take place. Once one city is built on Mars, whether it is by Elon Musk or a different organization, other privately owned companies as well as public ones will now view setting up a city on the planet or even a different planet as the next big goal. By taking up the limited and unexplored space on other planets with fully functioning cities, there will be an inevitable pull to abandon our own planet rather than continuing the arduous work of trying to fix our past mistakes.

Abandoning Earth for a different planet could mean the harmful patterns we use here will be brought to another place, leading to yet another trashed planet and a humanity unwilling to make a valid attempt at stopping those harmful environmental and societal behaviors. This type of advancement could lead to a dismal, pessimistic future. Rather, humanity should focus on continuing to enact the changes needed to keep Earth inhabitable and humanity-friendly for as long as possible and



Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin rocket photo: qz.com

should protect the curious and reverent attitude toward space exploration in order to secure a brighter tomorrow.



Elon Musk's SpaceX shuttle photo: aa.com.tr

TAPPS

continued from page 1

Junior Harry Lu won advanced math. Elsewhere, junior Zoe Cooper took first place in social studies, while sophomore Andrew Kent was the winner in spelling.

BCS has won the TAPPS state academic contest every year since 2017 except for 2020, when the contest took an abbreviated format.

Meanwhile, 61 choir and band students performed in the TAPPS solo and ensemble competition on March 25 at Concordia and came away with strong scores.

"I was pleased with the way our BCS Bears worked hard to prepare their music, and I'm proud of their results and the way they glorified God," choir director Daniel Watkins said.

Grady out; new hires made

By Evelyn Lee

Last month, middle school principal Dr. Amber Grady left BCS to return to the Houston area and become the first principal of a large school for freshman-age students opening next year. BCS president Jay Burcham said this is a great opportunity for Dr. Grady for two reasons.

“First, she loves working with students who are either disadvantaged or under-represented,” he explained, adding that the school will allow her to serve and minister to students who have socio-economic challenges.

Second, Dr. Grady will also be in charge of hiring all faculty and staff to build the school’s community from the ground up. She will be able to put her skills to use and implement processes from scratch.

“Dr. Grady is exceptionally strong operationally,” Burcham said. “I think this was very appealing to her and it definitely plays to her strengths.”

Burcham said Dr. Grady’s work at Brentwood laid a foundation for autonomizing the middle school, and that process will continue. As BCS wraps up the interview process for a new middle school principal, staff and familiar faces are helping out.

Dr. Libby Weed had taken over as the primary middle school principal and educational consultant. She retired seven years ago after holding the position of elementary principal for 30 years, but she has continued to stay connected to the school by running the BCS tutoring program and maintaining close relationships with Brentwood’s staff and faculty.

Tere Hager and Leah Smith have also assisted in managing middle school.

In other news, Brentwood has made two additions to the staff, working in the areas of counseling and building maintenance.

Cathy Minns will provide counseling to students individually and in groups when needed. “My hope is to provide evidence-based interventions that will alleviate stresses of our young people as they navigate their day to day lives to meet life’s challenges and grow in Christ,” Minns said.

Minns is a licensed master social worker with 20 years of social work experience, including working with juvenile drug court outpatients, medical social work, and case assessments through Texas Department of State Health Services.

Students will be able to meet one-on-one with the new counselor soon, but at the moment, group and class counseling sessions are available.

Brentwood is also welcoming Greg Parker to assist Glenn Davis in providing maintenance around campus and managing school facilities. Parker has worked in construction and building maintenance for over 20 years and has experience with several city water departments.



Cathy Minns

Tornado impacts families

By Clive Whaley

A sudden outbreak of tornadoes and heavy rains cut a path of destruction through the Austin area on March 21, impacting multiple BCS families, causing severe damage to various homes, and forcing BCS teachers to leave campus by 4:30.

Seventh-grader Jocelyn Piche’s family was one of those affected by the tornadoes. She and her family were making their way downstairs in their Hutto home when the tornado hit them, shattering their windows.

The Piche family’s home sustained significant damage from the tornado, as it knocked down their backyard fence and damaged their gutters, roof shingles, and patio roof.

“Something we learned is that people should prepare, and be ready for anything, even if there is a small chance,” Piche said. “One sec-

ond and everything could be OK, and the next, it’s a completely different situation.”

The family of seventh-grader Ella Dannhaus was also impacted. Their house’s windows and their walls were damaged, and two holes were put into their roof from a neighbor’s fence that had broken.

The Tucker family, with three girls at BCS, sustained heavy damages at their home. Their chicken coop was uplifted and thrown through their barn, which was destroyed. Seventh-grader Peyton Tucker said several BCS families came together to assist with mass cleanup.

“Now we are just working on how and when to rebuild,” she said.

The largest of the tornadoes originating from the outbreak had a wind speed of 135 mph and traveled nearly 30 miles, through Travis and Williamson counties.

Scholarships await

With work, students reap great rewards

By Anjie Popoola

Ever since 1943, scholarships have been used to reward or financially support students. Scholarship packages from colleges and universities are not easy to receive, but they can significantly reduce the burden of student loans after college and improve quality of life during college.

Being one of a few thousand applicants for a college can make the idea of being awarded a scholarship seem like just a dream, but with hard work and effort, academic goals can be reached. BCS senior Sydney Cooper, who received more than \$1 million in academic merit scholarship offers, proved that getting a scholarship doesn’t need to just be a dream.

“When schools have scholarship applications, fill them out,” she said. “When they have optional essays, write them. You never know what can happen.”

Thinking about the trials and sacrifices that it takes to earn it can make the path to a scholarship seem nearly impossible, but by focusing on her priorities and the goal of getting into a good school, Cooper managed to earn a lot of scholarship money.

Some schools are able to offer full-tuition scholarships, whereas others might only of-

fer a \$5,000 scholarship. Of course, Cooper will not use the entire amount offered; she only uses the money offered by the college she chooses to attend, which happens to be Vanderbilt.

“So no matter where you hope to attend college, or what you plan to do after graduation, do everything now to the best of your ability, even the things you don’t love,” Cooper suggested.

High school principal Carol Johnson said that colleges and universities look for students who are strong academically and who participate in sports or the arts. They are also interested in students who are leaders, who are servants of the community and have good character. Johnson encourages students to work hard but also to pray for guidance along the way.

“Decide for yourselves that you are going to live your lives for God, and he will bless you,” she encouraged.

Brentwood’s academic adviser Leah Smith had a lot of advice and information for those striving for a scholarship. When looking to award scholarships, colleges usually look at two things: test scores and GPAs. During the

see **SCHOLARSHIPS**, page 4



photo: Mollie Walters

Poignant play Middle schoolers performed the one-act play ‘The Yellow Boat’ on April 1 in the school theater. Based on a true story, the play featured sixth-grader Hollis Leeward as eight-year-old protagonist Benjamin, pictured here with parents played by seventh-graders Ellie Walters and Dalton Griswold. Throughout the play, Benjamin expresses his feelings through drawing colors as he undergoes medical treatment and dies of AIDS-related complications. The play was directed by theater arts teacher Vanessa Maleare and juniors J.C. Samson and Mollie Walters.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: **Ava Alvarado**

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

Devoted athlete proud to be a Bear

By **Davin Ha**

Ava Alvarado is known for her athleticism and her tenacious work ethic regarding her studies, but she is much more than just your star athlete. She was born in Austin, which she says allowed her to pursue all kinds of sports thanks to the many club teams. Classmates note her unique “Ava” energy that is constantly giving out positive vibes and kindness.

“Everytime Ava says ‘Hi’ to me in the hallways it makes my day,” classmate Quinn Fowler says.

She’s loved sports since she was little and has always played on some sort of team. That high-energy personality is active when she’s on and off the field, as she puts that same determination into her studies and friendships.

“Ava is caring and always has good energy,” best-friend Sadie Mancias says. “She’s always smiling, encouraging, and very determined. She knows what she wants to do.”

Ava puts many hours a week into her extracurricular activities, which have included competing with many different club teams through the years. Her main sports are softball, soccer, and her favorite – volleyball.

“I love playing volleyball,” she says. “I got into it at a young age since my mom used to play volleyball.”

Ava credits her family as her main support system, constantly uplifting her and giving her the energy to push forward and chase her dreams.

“I think a big part of me playing volleyball or any sport really was seeing how happy it made my parents,” she says. “Watching the livestreams and watching my family cheer for (junior) Ashlynn and me literally makes me the happiest person ever.”

Volleyball coach Rory Tyson said she admires Ava’s enthusiasm when her teammates make big plays.

“She’s such a team player and supporter, and I love watching her celebrate everyone’s successes,” Tyson says.

Ava has played volleyball at Brentwood for six years, starting in seventh grade, and has been a key factor in the success of the program.

“She’s the setter, so the game tempo is based a lot off of what she does,” Tyson says. “She’s very focused and court savvy and is able to run our offense and pick up on the other team’s weaknesses.”

Tyson says she also appreciates Ava’s quiet leadership and commitment to making her whole team better.

“She’s very level-headed and keeps her composure no matter what is happening in the game,” she says.

Ava does many things in and out of school, but her favorite has to be watching movies.

“My whole family are big movie people,” she says. “When we went to see *Batman v Superman*, my whole family went and took up two whole rows in the movie theater.”

Ava has watched all the classics, as well as all the Marvel and Disney movies, one of her favorites being *Moana*. She loves the characters and how the story revolves around family while balancing individualism.

“I just get so attached to the characters that I end up crying at the end of so many movies!” Ava proclaims.

A veteran user of the movie rating app “Letterboxed,” Ava rates and reviews a lot of films. Her all-time favorites have to be from her favorite director John Hughes, who directed popular cult classics like *Sixteen Candles* and *Pretty in Pink*.

Ava is currently trying to decide on which college she plans to attend, but she knows she wants to move to Hawaii at some point and work as a nurse.

“I visited Hawaii when I was five and I loved it,” she recalls. “This sounds really cliché, but it felt so much like home. The beach, the air, the food, everything about it felt so welcoming.”

Ava’s trip to Hawaii was not without complications, though. At the time her mother was suffering from a kidney disease called membranous glomerulonephritis. The condition occurs when the small blood vessels in the kidney become damaged and thickened. As a result, proteins leak from the damaged blood vessels.

“It was actually a really scary trip because my mom got sick and I had to leave her in Hawaii,” Ava says.

Ava’s mother was unable to board the plane back to Austin due to her kidneys worsening while in Hawaii.

“I wanted to die for not being able to be with the both of them,” Ava’s mom says, recalling saying goodbye to Ava and Ashlynn.

There is no cure for the condition, so her mother had to get onto the transplant list. Fortunately Ava’s grandmother’s kidneys were a match, and the transplant was successful, with both Ava’s mother and grandmother fully recovering and doing better.

After their trip to Hawaii, Ava had developed a love for the state but had also developed the resolve to become a nurse.

“When she was sick I hated seeing her in so much pain,” she recalls.

An athlete, a student, a volleyball player, a future nurse, a daughter – Ava is all of these things as well as one more: a Brentwood Bear.

“Brentwood has given me the most precious thing,” she says, “and that’s all the wonderful friendships I’ve made. They have helped me become who I am today. And I love Brentwood for leading me to these wonderful friendships.”

Ava promises being a Brentwood Bear doesn’t stop after you graduate.



Scholarships

continued from page 3

pandemic, most colleges waived the SAT and ACT, but colleges have been making those tests a requirement this year.

Smith also advises students to pay attention to every question that the college application asks. Making sure to fill out the FAFSA is also important because it is required to receive any kind of scholarship or work-study opportunity.

“It’s important for students to start taking entrance exams no later than spring of junior year,” Smith said. “Giving yourself time to retest and potentially raise your score can lead to more scholarship dollars.”

For those who receive scholarships, Smith said it’s important to know that if you want a little more money, then you can ask for more money. For example, if a student receives a large scholarship package from a school that she is OK with going to, and then she receives a smaller scholarship package from her top school, then she can tell that school that she would love to attend but has a much better offer from a different school. There is a chance that the college will offer the student more money.

Scholarships can also be applied for outside of university scholarships. A high score on the PSAT can earn someone a national merit-based scholarship, and applying for scholarships like the Davidson Scholarship and the Gates Millennium Scholarship can also be worthwhile. Many civic organizations, businesses, and professional associations offer scholarship money too.

“Make sure you are providing everything to the college that they are asking for,” Smith said. “This can make a difference not only in scholarship money but also acceptance.”

In the past five years, Brentwood scholarship recipients have averaged a total of \$2.9 million in scholarship offers a year. The amount of athletic scholarships has also steadily climbed in the past six years, and the number of academic scholarships has held strong throughout the years.

The path to getting a scholarship is not easy, but with hard work and the determination to supply colleges with every optional application, it can be possible.

“God has a plan for each person,” Smith said. “Pursue your goals with zeal, recognizing that your path to your goals may not look the same as someone else’s. That’s OK. It may not look exactly like you thought it would, but continue to pursue your goals one step at a time.”

Staying the course: BCS serious about mission

A History of BCS, Part 2 of 2

By Lucy Belcik

As Brentwood Christian School celebrated its 25th anniversary in the 1987-88 school year, school leaders were determined to meet the growth of its community while remaining true to its core values and mission. When the school graduated its first senior class of 10 students in 1988, K-12 enrollment had risen to 260, with a total of 47 students in the high school. As enrollment numbers continued to rise, BCS introduced new programs and events.

It was also in 1988 that the school launched its European trip program, which gave BCS seniors the opportunity to travel abroad with their class. The program was part of a travel education plan, which eventually would include a trip to Washington D.C. for eighth-grade students.

The school had held its first Jog-a-fun a few years prior in 1984, and in the years following would also organize and host its first Partnership Dinner in 1991, with both events raising tens of thousands of dollars in their first iterations. These events still remain the largest fundraisers at Brentwood, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for facility updates and new equipment, but more importantly, to keep tuition low.

Aiming to maintain affordable tuition has been prioritized at Brentwood from the very beginning. Plans for the formation of an advisory committee to address this issue were initiated as early as 1990, and this emphasis on making sure that the school is accessible to many has continued throughout its history. Marquita Moss, long-time president and prominent figure in the founding and development of BCS, shared her motivations behind this focus on affordability.

“That has always been my goal ... to make

it a school for ordinary Christian families,” she said. “We wanted to serve average church families, to help them raise their kids to have a lifelong faith in Christ.”

Jay Burcham, who took over from Moss as president in 2015, shares the same vision as his predecessor. He said that in his six years at BCS, financial aid for the school has tripled and 19% of revenue goes back to the community, whether through direct financial aid or donations.

“We are much more affordable than most,” Burcham pointed out.

Burcham explained that although Brentwood is much less expensive than many other private Christian schools, for some families it is still a sacrifice to send their kids to BCS, but that this sacrifice is what makes the school so special.

“Because it is a sacrifice for some, that means that the parents value their children’s time here and want to be involved,” he said. “You come to any event, parents are there. They show up and they care about what the kids are doing.”

This was certainly the case in 1991, when Brentwood added a second kindergarten class to keep up with the growing demand for a private Christian education. The school continued to add a new section of each grade through the 2002-03 school year. In that year, K-12 enrollment reached 600 total students: 335 in elementary (including sixth grade), 96 in junior high (seventh-eighth), and 169 in high school. The senior class was a record 44 students.

During this period of growth, Brentwood saw its first of many recognitions from the Texas Christian Schools Association (TCSA). Becky Stewart, long-time sixth-grade teacher, was named by the organization “Teacher of the Year” for her work in curriculum development.

TCSA would continue to honor BCS teachers with this title. This included science and Bible teacher Kevin Moore in 1995, math teacher Kaleen Graessle in 1997, second-grade teacher Linda Gregersen in 2002, and English teacher Linda Pimentel in 2007. Mel Witcher won “Fine Arts Teacher of the Year” in 1998 as a band director, before winning awards for his history and Bible teaching in 2013 and 2014.

Several “Educators of the Year” would also be named by the National Christian School Association, including librarian Sandra Morrow in 2001, president Moss in 2003, and elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed in 2008.

A growing number of students meant the need for the expansion of campus. The year

1997 saw the completion of the C-building as it is used today; in 2000 the Athletic Center was finished, and in 2003 the B-building. As buildings were completed, grades shifted accordingly. While the bottom floor of the C-building was originally occupied by upper elementary, with the completion of the B-building, these grades were moved to the new building, while middle and high school grades were shifted downstairs.

As Brentwood has grown into what it is today, its mission has remained the same: to lead students to love God and to nurture them in a Christ-centered academic environment. This is why parents continue to send their children to the school and why teachers choose to dedicate their time to it despite the opportunity for larger salaries elsewhere.

Burcham, prior to assuming his position as president, co-founded and owned a company that provided educational and behavioral resources to schools across the country. He witnessed all kinds of awful behavior issues.

“When bad things happened at schools, they called my company to deal with it,” he explained. “I saw kids, at such a young age, with no innocence, with no hope, with no love of family or God. But I would visit Brentwood every Friday, as I was also board chair at the time, and I would walk out into the hallways and be reminded that there was a place where kids were happy, where they can be kind to each other, and where God is present.”

Moss experienced a similar joy and satisfaction regarding Brentwood’s role in God’s world.

“More than just a place where our children can be safe, as important as that is,” she said, “we saw every day as an opportunity to equip our students to deal with the challenges they face as they launch out on their life adventure. We sought to inspire them to be part of God’s grand plan to renew and restore His good creation and to spread the good news of the full and everlasting life we can have in Christ.

“What joy it gives me when I hear stories about our graduates who are strong in their faith, serving others who are in need, and making an eternal difference among those in their sphere of influence,” she said.

These descriptions of the true heart of Brentwood are summarized well by Witcher. He and his family came to Austin in the late 1980s so he could study the Bible and move into full-time ministry.

Witcher said he came to view all of life, including academic subjects, through the eyes of faith, and he found that BCS was not only the place where he could do God’s



Libby Weed / Marquita Moss, 1990s

work, but it was also where he wanted his four children to learn to “think Christianly” in all their various pursuits.

“I love Brentwood because it is a place where we are encouraged and empowered to see all of life through the eyes of faith, and to respond to God’s faithfulness in love for God and neighbor,” Witcher said.

Through nearly 60 years of history, Brentwood Christian has strived to maintain this heart. Through trials and triumphs, growth and setbacks, its original purpose and mission have remained. It is now up to the students and community of the school to continue this legacy, because Brentwood isn’t just buildings and programs, events and fundraisers. It is primarily people who seek to love God and others, and who strive to maintain his purpose, whatever the circumstances. This is the true heart of Brentwood and the core of its history.



Mel Witcher, 1990s



Summer (Fowler) Best / Kaleen Graessle, 1997

Young squad learning through tough district

By Taylor Cunningham

After picking up a 10-7 win over San Antonio TMI on Tuesday, the varsity softball team heads into the second half of district play with one district victory and an overall record of 7-13.

The girls are still trying to find their groove this year with a young team that has struggled but, according to head coach Rory Tyson, played closer games than some scores will indicate.

“Everyone is making contact with the ball, and we only have a couple strikeouts per game,” Tyson said. “Our opponents have been hitting the ball up the middle or finding holes on the field, and that’s really been the difference in the last couple of games.”

Brentwood only has one pitcher on the roster this year, so they’ve had to rely heavily on the arm of sophomore McKenna Counts and her pitching. Tyson said she has seen improvement from Counts since the start of the season.

“She’s minimizing free bases and the other teams are having to earn their runs. She is showing a lot of stamina on the mound since she’s our only pitcher and has to pitch every inning of every game, including double headers,” Tyson said.

Key players offensively so far this season are sophomores Macie Griswold (batting .500), Keira Black (.475), and Counts (.324), as well as seniors Taylor Kerr (.368) and Lola Ohlhaber (.375).

Following are the team’s most recent results:

3/22: @ John Paul II 19-4 L

Brentwood started off strong, scoring all four of their runs in the first inning, with both Kerr and freshman Charis McGaughy hitting a triple, then couldn’t generate anything offensively or defensively after that. JPll hit the ball in the gaps and the Lady Bears had a few errors. The game was called after four innings.

3/25: Hyde Park 13-1 L

The Lady Bears struggled against the district rival Panthers. Black knocked in the lone run and senior Alicia Gardner had three catches in the outfield.

4/1: Boerne Geneva 12-9 L

Brentwood hit the ball well, including an in-the-park home run by Kerr, three hits by Black, and a pair of hits by Ashlynn Alvarado and Griswold. Black had 10 putouts defensively at shortstop.

4/1: Boerne Geneva 16-6 L

In the second game of a doubleheader, Geneva took the early lead, batting all the way through their lineup in the first, second, and fourth innings. Up 16-0 after four innings would have ended the game, but the Lady Bears rallied to score six runs in the fourth to take it to one more inning. Offensively, Brentwood was solid with Black, Kerr, Counts, and Griswold all recording a pair of hits. Kerr had five putouts on defense along with four by Counts and two by Griswold, one of which was running full speed backward to make the catch and prevent a home run.

4/5: Incarnate Word 15-0 L, 10-0 L

BCS batters were overwhelmed by two strong pitchers, getting only one base hit in the doubleheader. Counts pitched both games.

4/8: Providence 16-6 L

The Lady Bears lost as they struggled to stop the offense of Providence. Gardner went 3-for-3 with five stolen bases; Black went 2-for-3 with two stolen bases and six put-outs; and Ava Alvarado had two RBIs.

4/12: TMI 10-7 W

Brentwood took a 5-0 lead but later found themselves tied 5-5. Key hits by Stanglin and Wilson helped start rallies late in the game to help the Bears pull away to win. Ava Alvarado had three RBIs; Olhaber, McGaughy, and Counts each went 2-for-4.

3/17: Nixon-Smiley 9-3 W

The Bears scored early and kept Nixon-Smiley scoreless until the fifth inning. Copeland led the team at the plate with three hits and four RBIs. Spring was solid on the mound with 12 strikeouts in six innings.

3/19: @ Live Oak Classical 14-2 W

With the Bears’ seniors back from Italy, BCS scored early and had little trouble facing the Falcons’ ace. Brentwood scored 14 unanswered runs with doubles from Amoroso and senior Conner Rohlack and a grand slam by Spring. Rohlack led the team with three hits and three RBIs. Taylor pitched a

see **BASEBALL**, page 8



photo: Michelle Anthony

Good eye Sophomore McKenna Counts watches a pitch in her team’s loss to Hyde Park on March 25. Counts is the Bears’ pitcher as well as one of the top hitters.

Golf team improving

By Karlee Lawrence

With a young team, and one of the biggest teams in Brentwood golf history, the Bears have played four tournaments and are busy preparing for their district tournament on April 24 at Lakecliff Course on Lake Travis.

After starting practice the last week of February, the Bears have been working hard on their driving, chipping, and putting at Greenlawn, a local range, and occasionally at Top Golf. The only golfers who played for BCS last year are juniors Clara Tillotson, Dakota Johnson, and Alisha Mohammed. The other nine are either new to the game or freshmen.

The first tournament of the season was held by Regents at Plum Creek course on Feb. 23 and was only played by three team members: Tillotson, Johnson, and freshman Jack Fluitt. It started with a temperature of 34 degrees and a wind chill of 19 and sleet. Tee time was delayed by two hours, and after hole nine the tournament was concluded.

“Students were heard saying they would rather be in school than playing under these conditions,” head coach Randy Tillotson said.

The Hyde Park tournament was held at River Place Course on Feb. 28. Competitors consisted of Tillotson, Fluitt, Johnson, and Mohammed. With rough wind and rolling fairways the team did their best to stay in the fairway and sink their putts. Tillotson placed 10th, her first time to be posted on the leaderboard.

Regents Invitational Tournament at Grey Rock course on March 22 was the first tournament for the full Brentwood golf team. The Bears brought a total of 12 players, mostly brand new to the game. The top for boys was Fluitt, scoring 89. Tillotson led the girls with a 108, followed by Mohammed (115), and freshman Karlee Lawrence (119).

“I was so proud to watch each player hit their shots in the fairways and putting well on these fast greens,” Coach Tillotson said.

The Hyde Park Tournament at Lakecliff on April 5 was a big tournament for the whole team, with everyone scoring their personal best for the season. Fluitt led the boys with a 79, placing eighth. Top for the girls were Tillotson, placing sixth with a 96, Mohammed (102), and Lawrence (106). The girls placed third among eight teams, scoring a 424.

Baseball

continued from page 1

Following are the team’s most recent results:

3/8: Veritas 13-5 W

Brentwood’s bats came alive as the Bears’ scored six runs in the third and two in the fourth with doubles from Amoroso, Jackson, and Taylor.

3/10: @ Hill Country Christian 9-3 W

With three starting seniors gone to Italy, BCS played a relatively close game against the Knights. After falling behind, BCS took the lead in the sixth inning and then scored five runs in the seventh.

With multiple stars, boys' team focused on goals

By William French

With the ultimate goal of repeating as state champions on May 6 in Waco, the varsity boys are preparing for their district track meet on April 21 at St. Michael's.

The Bears' relay teams all rank among the state's top three, and their 200-meters runner, senior Chris Mayo, has the fastest time in the state. The combination of talent and hard work has head coach Correy Washington confident going into the district meet.

"We'll definitely win the district," he said. "It could be a little harder, but from last year and this year and every year my expectations are gonna be winning a state championship or competing at a high level."

Senior Brandon Tindel reflected the confidence of his coach.

"I think we've got a strong chance at state, and the time between now and district will only make us stronger," he said.

At the Salado Eagle Relays on March 10, Mayo ran an 11.03 in the 100 meters and a 22.10 in the 200, winning both events. Sophomore Jakob Megilligan was third in the 200 (24.14), and fourth in the 100 (12.03).

Runners also took first in the 4x400 (3:37). Juniors Brecken Lee and Rodrigo Real took third (55.78) and fourth (56.27), respectively, in the 400. Lee again took third in the 800 (2:07), while sophomore Renne Cooper placed second in the 3200 (10:29).

Overall the Bears placed fourth behind larger public schools despite having only one senior racing.

Two weeks later, the boys took home second place at a meet in Lago Vista on March 24

against more large public schools. Megilligan got second in the 100 (11.52), while Mayo took first in the 200 (22.02) and senior Brandon Tindel was fourth (23.46). In the 400, Lee (54.65) and Real (55.13) were fourth and fifth, respectively, while Lee came in fourth in the 800 (2:08).

Cooper's time of 4:50 in the 1600 got him fifth place, and his 10:36 in the 3200 got him third, while senior Jack Leidlein was third in the 300 hurdles (42.96). Senior Nathan Joseph finished second in the long jump with a mark of 20-2, and Tindel was fourth at 19-5.5. The 4x100 relay team came in fourth (44.8); the 4x200 was third (1:32), and the 4x400 was second (3:38).

At an early April meet in Marble Falls, Brentwood took first place and placed well in numerous events. Sophomore Tabor Tyson took third with an 11.64 in the 100, while senior Parker Combs got sixth (11.97). Mayo was first in the 200 with a 21.82, while Tindel ran a 23.52 to earn fourth.

Senior Will Hughes was fourth in the 400 with a 56.00, while Lee and Real took second and third with 2:07 and 2:11, respectively, in the 800. Cooper and freshman Hollis Harlan took first and second in the 1600 with

a 4:55 and a 5:14, respectively; Cooper also had a second-place finish in the 3200, running it in 10:11.

Freshman Griffin Smith's time of 18.92 earned him fifth in the 110 hurdles, and Leidlein ran a 43.14 in the 300 hurdles, earning him fourth. Bears took second in the 4x100 (44.03), second in the 4x200 (1:32), and first in the 4x400 (3:37).

Junior Ben Gatlin took third and fifth in the shot put (38-08) and discus (92-00). Leidlein finished third in the high jump (5-06), and Combs was fourth (5-04). Tindel and Joseph took second (19-07) and third (19-05) in the long jump, respectively; Joseph also came in second in the triple jump with a leap of 42-04.

On an overnight trip for the Fort Worth Christian meet on April 7, the boys finished second to the host school. Cooper led the way with first place in both the 1600 (4:46) and 3200 (10:45). His 1600 time was a school record. Mayo won the 200 (22.35), while Leidlein won the 300 hurdles (42.34).

Lee got fifth in the 400 (54.51) and second in the 800 (2:08). Real was fifth in the 800 (2:12). Harlan finished sixth in the 1600 (5:18) and fourth in the 3200 (11:54). Joseph won the triple jump (40-8) and took second in the long jump (20-3), while Tindel was fourth (19-8.5).

The Bears' 4x100 relay took second (44.80); the 4x200 team won first place (1:34); and the 4x400 team finished second (3:38).



photo: Sydney Cooper

Golden Senior Chris Mayo, running at the Marble Falls meet, is the top 200-meters runner in TAPPS.

Girls' track team wins meet, prepares for district

By Daniel Womack

The Lady Bears took first place overall at the Ft. Worth Christian Lena Nelson Relays on April 7, placing in nearly every event.

Sophomore Juliet Booker finished first in the 200 meters (26.59), and sophomore Katie Pittner won both the 800 (2:39) and the 1600 (5:34).

Sophomore Lyla Kate Jackson placed second in the 400 (1:10), and senior Sydney Cooper came in third in the 3200 (14:39). In field events, sophomore Mattie Hannah placed second in long jump (15-08) and third in triple jump (31-04).

The girls' relay teams dominated, placing first in both the 4x200 (1:53.39) and the 4x400 (4:22) with many seconds to spare.

"I'm so proud of how our team did at the Fort Worth Christian meet," Booker said. "I cannot wait to see how the rest of the season will go."

The girls have been preparing for the district

meet at St. Michael's Christian Academy on Thursday, April 21, with high hopes. According to head coach Katie Smith, the team has been improving as the season progresses.

"We have quite a few new athletes who are just getting better each meet and a couple coming back from injury, so that helps," Smith said. "We are hoping to be completely healthy and competing at our top level by our district meet."

Rewind to Saturday, April 2, at Faith Academy in Marble Falls, where the girls placed second overall while also placing individually in several events. Hannah took first place in the triple jump (35-02) and placed sixth in the 100 (13.97). Booker finished third in the 200, while Pittner came in second in the 800 (2:30) and first in the mile (5:41).

Cooper placed fourth in the 3200 (13:55) followed by sophomore Lucy Belcik in fifth place (14:37). The relay teams also finished first in the 4x100 (53.68) and 4x400 (4:32.04) with

many seconds to spare.

A little over a week prior, Brentwood placed sixth overall at the Lago Vista meet on March 24. Booker finished second in the 200 (26.45). Pittner came in second in the 800 (2:33), while Hannah took first in long jump (16-0). The girls finished third in the 4x200 (1:53).

Two weeks earlier, the girls placed fifth overall at the Salado Eagle Relays with Booker placing first in the 200 (27.14) and Pittner finishing second in the 800 (2:31) as well as fourth in the 1600 (5:42). The relay teams also came in third in the 4x200 (1:55) and fourth in the 4x400 (4:40).

On March 19 at the Carment Kiara Relays, Booker came in fifth in the 100 (13.39) and fourth in the 200 (27.13). Pittner won the 1600 (5:49) and placed third in the 800 (2:34). Belcik finished second in the 3200 (14:35), while junior Rebekah Echols took fourth place in discus (24-10).



photo: Sydney Cooper

In stride Sophomore Katie Pittner has excelled in both the 800 and 1600.

THE BEAR FACTS APRIL 2022

Reporter shares anecdotes from Italian vacation

By Sam Benton

Early Thursday morning (3/10) around 4:00, I threw my phone across the room after it began screeching at a thunderous volume from my bedside table so I could wake up and leave for the airport. I arrived along with the rest of the group, and we swiftly checked our bags and breezed through security in only a few hours. After hopping on a plane we flew for three hours to the airport in Philadelphia where we saw a lifesize Lego replica of the Liberty Bell. After a six-hour layover we hopped on an airbus and I had the pleasure of sitting by Atticus for the eight hour flight to Rome. Thanks for not snoring, hombre.

We landed in Rome at about 9:00 in the morning and in about an hour and a half (gotta love airports) moved outside to hop on a bus which would take us to our hotel. Of course, having previously been lectured on how it was practically a certainty that Italian pickpockets would try to steal our stuff during every second of our time in Italy, Keller and I went around testing people’s awareness. For the majority it was very low.

We got on the double decker bus and our driver Giuseppe expertly weaved the enormous vehicle through the crowded streets of the ancient city. After quickly dropping our luggage off at the Exe hotel, we had some time to walk around and grab a bite to eat. I was amazed at the oldness of the city as well as how close the ancient buildings and ruins were to the newer pieces of the city, like McDonald’s.

The next day we walked from our hotel to the Vatican where there were hundreds of incredible paintings and sculptures as well as some beautiful architecture. We walked through the

immense collection of art as our tour guide spoke to us in a heavy accent about the history of the major art pieces. The highlight of the Vatican had to be the Sistine Chapel, where we stood underneath the incredible frescoes painted by Michelangelo five hundred years ago.

After leaving the Vatican, everyone got some time to wander around and find a spot to eat near the Piazza Navona. Of course I stopped for pizza for the second day in a row. After lunch we went to the Colosseum and followed a tour guide through the incredible arena. Unfortunately, Keller and I weren’t allowed on the partial reconstruction of the Colosseum floor, otherwise we would’ve been down there reenacting a grueling gladiator fight and likely been kicked out. We left the Colosseum and headed about a hundred yards to the Roman Forum, where we walked through the same ruins where some of the most notable biblical figures had walked thousands of years ago. We even saw from a distance the prison in which Paul was held and where he wrote his letters! After some dinner and gelato we spent another night at our hotel and got up the following morning to drive to Florence.

After a couple hours in the comfy double decker bus we arrived in the birthplace of the Renaissance. The bus always seemed to be playing some strange American 80s pop song. I woke up at one point to a song called “The Summer is Magic” by Playahitty. I strongly encourage you to give it a listen. We stopped for lunch after checking into our hotel and walked to the Galleria dell’Accademia, where Michelangelo’s The David is on display. The pasta we had for dinner wasn’t quite as stunning as David, but it was really good. After losing a Euro to Ava in Dutch Blitz back at the hotel, we all



photo: Suzy Benton

Unforgettable BCS seniors enjoy a ride in a gondola during their stay in Venice last month. The seniors started in Rome before touring Florence, Venice, and Milan.

rested up for our final day in Florence.

The next morning we traveled to the Piazza del Duomo, where we climbed up the dome which was over 400 steps of stairs. We also saw the Santa Maria del Fiore, Ghilberti’s Gates, and Giotto’s Bell Tower. After more delicious pizza for lunch, we walked through the Uffizi Gallery. Afterwards we had free time to walk around and shop. Will, Jack E., and I walked across the Ponte Vecchio bridge, which was the only bridge that was not bombed during WWII. Across was many leather shops, including a shoemaker’s shop. We got to walk inside and see how the shoemaker actually designed a shoe and fit it to the buyer’s foot.

The next day we headed out of Florence and toward Venice. On the way we stopped in Verona and saw Romeo and Juliet’s balcony as well as the arena, which Keller and I sat in

front of while we ate lunch. I had even more pizza and this one was particularly delectable. After leaving Verona we arrived in Venice and took a “people mover” to the area near our hotel which was on the edge of a river. The view of the water with the boats floating by and the buildings on the other side was unbelievable. The next day we walked through Venice to the Doge’s Palace. We also visited the Basilica of St. Mark. Afterward, many of us hopped in a gondola and floated through the winding canals. Walking around the streets of Venice, I found a glass shop where I bought a glass turtle which I appropriately named after our bus driver Giuseppe. He safely resides in my house now.

We left Venice and drove to Milan, where we visited the Duomo and ate lunch before flying out of Italy that evening. It was a fantastic trip and I can’t wait to go back.



photo: worldwatch.news

Bears on film Eighth graders got a visit from WorldWatch reporter Caleb Bailey (white shirt) on Friday, April 1. They were recorded saying “Whatever the news, the purpose of the Lord will stand!” It aired on the Christian news show on April 4.

Baseball

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complete game and had nine strikeouts.

3/25: @ Gonzales 3-0 W

Gonzales struggled to put the ball in play against Brentwood’s ace Taylor. BCS had seven hits to the Apaches’ two.

3/29: @ St.Michael’s 6-0 W

Spring had 10 strikeouts in six innings and only allowed one hit. Taylor had two home runs over center field in the third and sixth innings.

4/1: St. Anthony’s 10-0 W

The Bears struggled to put things together in the first four innings. It was scoreless until the fifth inning, when BCS scored 10 runs to end the game.

4/5: St. Anthony’s 21-0 W

Brentwood started faster in this rematch

and ended with 21 hits, including doubles from Amoroso, Copeland, Jackson, Taylor, and Tyson. The Yellowjackets managed only three hits off of Spring.

4/8: Hyde Park 11-1 W

BCS clung to a 1-0 lead at the end of the first after Spring struck out three. Brentwood picked up four in the third inning, including a two-run home run by Taylor. The Panthers scored their only run in the fifth, but BCS responded with a three-run bomb over the left-field wall by Spring. Brentwood mercy-ruled the Panthers in the sixth, finishing with 13 hits. Spring pitched five innings and had seven strikeouts, allowing one hit, before Taylor came in to close the game.

4/12: St. Mary’s Hall 13-0 W

Tyson went 4-for-4 and Taylor pitched the first three innings without allowing a hit as the Bears cruised to another easy victory.