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# THE BEAR FACTS

VOL. XXIV NO. 2

BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

NOVEMBER 2011



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## IN SHORT

### STACK Week

Brentwood's middle school students will be participating in STACK Week (Start Thinking About College Knowledge) next week, Nov. 7-11. Guidance counselor Dr. D'Lanna Mason and a team of middle school teachers have planned activities for the middle school advisory period every day and for morning study hall classes on Monday and Friday. The goal of STACK Week is to educate some younger students on college facts and options in a fun way.

### Food drive, parade

As they do every year, Brentwood students celebrate Thanksgiving by selfless giving. Students of all ages are encouraged to bring canned or other nonperishable food items to donate to the Capital Area Food Bank this month. The elementary and secondary classes that bring in the most items per student will win a half-day off-campus "service day" in early December.

In another tradition, high school students who are 16 or older are given the opportunity to volunteer as "Santa's Helpers" at the annual Chuy's Thanksgiving Parade on Nov. 26.

### Savings Club

Brentwood Christian School initiated the Green Apple Savings Club for students in kindergarten to fifth grade last month. The club is a savings program through the A+ Federal Credit Union at the Pflugerville branch, which allows children to deposit money into their accounts twice a month. Students began signing up for the savings club at Fall Festival on Oct. 22 and can continue to sign up during the year. Elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed said students can benefit by learning early the importance of saving and using money wisely. Their first deposit day is Nov. 4.

## Fall musical, new theater dazzle

megan **MONACELLI**  
editor-in-chief

The BCS fine arts department will present its fourth performance of "The Sound of Music" in the new Iva Lea Worley Barton Theater tonight at 7 p.m. This is the second weekend of the performances, and two more shows will follow tomorrow, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Theater director Cindy Singleton said all the hard work is paying off.

"I didn't know what to expect, but I couldn't have imagined how great it would be," Singleton said.

Students have been working for two months building and painting the set, learning lines and songs, choreographing dances, making costumes, and practicing cues, lighting, and sound.

According to stage manager and senior Haley

Shake, the set pieces were not finished until the week prior to opening night, and actors were therefore unable to rehearse with the pieces until days before the first performance. Scenes were cut and added, blocking was changed,

and songs were rearranged, Shake said.

"We were changing a lot the week of the opening performance," Shake said, "but it paid off in the end."

According to Singleton, the new facilities have made the musical experience much better for actors and spectators alike. Actors and tech crew are now using proper, theater-appropriate equipment, and the audience can now enjoy the show in a relaxed chair on an incline.

"The orchestra pit allows for a more balanced sound and acoustic system," Singleton said. "The orchestra players aren't drowning out the singers, and the audience gets to hear beautiful music from both the orchestra and singers."

The orchestra does not have to deal with playing more softly anymore, and they do not block the audi-

see **MUSICAL**, page 8



photo: Steve Hamm

**The notes to sing** Teaching the Von Trapp children to sing, senior Kayle Morin is Maria in the BCS production of "The Sound of Music."

## Jesus Painter to inspire guests at annual Partnership Dinner

matthew **ARCHER**  
reporter

A night of singing, painting, eating, and donating awaits guests next Friday, Nov. 11, as the 21st annual Partnership Dinner occurs at its usual location at the Renaissance Hotel in the main ballroom.

The night will kick off with a silent auction where attendees will be able to place bids on various items like gift cards to nearby restaurants and free golf on courses around Austin. During this time the Jazz Band and Encore will entertain guests.

Mike Lewis, the "Jesus Painter," will perform at the dinner. In previous years the main entertainment has been a speaker, but director of development Brandon Tatum, who is in charge of the dinner, says he wants the night to be focused more on the ministry aspect of Brentwood.

"Partnership Dinner is the largest event we have," Tatum said. "So why not spend the time focusing on Christ and emphasizing the whole reason why Brentwood Christian

School is here?"

After this the night will wrap up with auctioneers Jason Rzepniewski and Bob Sheehan, from Gaston & Sheehan Auctioneers. Among other things, the auction will include the paintings that Lewis creates that night.

Partnership Dinner is a very important part of Brentwood fundraising. According to Tatum, tuition only pays for 80 percent of the annual costs of the school, which means that there has

see **PARTNERSHIP**, page 4



photo: submitted

**Holy art** Known worldwide as the Jesus Painter, Mike Lewis will perform at Partnership Dinner.

## Girls third, boys sixth in cross country

hannah **KWON**  
reporter

The countless ounces of sweat shed by cross country runners of BCS during hot September practices didn't evaporate in vain. Varsity girls won third place and the boys took sixth in this year's TAPPS 3A state championships. Hosted by Baylor University in Waco on Oct. 22, the meet included 13 schools in the girls' competition and 16 for boys.

Senior Brittany Brunson finished the race in third place among 106 girls, with a time of 12:34. She was followed by junior Morgan Vandygriff, who came in 17th at 13:32, and junior Priscilla Glenn, who came in 20th at 13:39. The team's fourth finisher was Haley Hutson, who is only a freshman.

Senior Marcus McCormick came in 17th among the 132 boys to compete, followed

see **BRUNSON**, page 7



**Fourth Reich:** Jonathon Reich

# Silent food fights: Starving one's self is a serious issue

In today's society, we tend to focus on the importance of being very fit and skinny. But this often leads people to think things about themselves that aren't true. Don't get me wrong, being fit is definitely important. But because of all this obsession with being thin, people tend to overlook another important problem: anorexia.

Getting enough food to eat is more important than some people might realize. Even if there's not a lot of time to get it, or if it's just "too much of a hassle," that energy is necessary to keep your body going. If you don't have the energy your body needs to function, it goes into something that could be called "starvation mode." The name might sound cheesy, but experts say that when your body goes into starvation mode it refuses to give up as much energy as it normally would and instead stores the energy as fat so that if you skip another meal or just don't get enough energy, it can compensate.

The media play a big role in over-emphasizing the importance of being thin. They bombard us with ads for gym memberships, dieting pills, and other things. Many models today are rail-thin, and that has a big influence on a lot of teens. Teens are still trying to figure out what they want to be like and who they are, and when people that they believe they should look

up to create unrealistic and unhealthy expectations, their perception of what they need to be will turn out that way too.

This is often the reason that many teens struggle with anorexia.

Anorexia is defined as "the loss of appetite or inability to eat." That alone might sound like what happens when you eat too much. But there's also a serious psychological disorder that goes along with that called

anorexia nervosa. This is defined as "a disorder characterized by fear of becoming fat and refusal of food, leading to debility and even death."

Now this is more serious. Losing appetite is one thing, but refusing food to the point that it physically weakens you, just to be skinnier? Even if you used this method to lose weight and it worked, do you think it would make you happy with yourself? Some people think that eating less, or not at all, will solve their problems by magically making them look the way they want to. But from what I've seen from current and former anorexics, this isn't the case.

I have some friends who have gone through this, and their way of thinking about it sometimes surprises me. They think that by starving themselves their bodies will look better and their lives will improve. Some also say they feel bad

and want to change, but when they try to, they give up easily. Some say they are "too scared that going back will hurt," and even though they know getting out of that mental cycle will be better, they're not willing to

because their routine is more familiar.

"I just don't believe I'm worth it," a friend of mine told me recently. "I have to do this to make myself better, and having to be better is all I've ever known."

From being close to others who have gone through this, part of me understands where they're coming from, but at the same time some of it still doesn't make sense to me. It seems like if you hate your appearance enough to be willing to hurt yourself mentally and physically just to make your body look more like the world says it needs to look, becoming anorexic to "help" you

will only make your problems worse.

I wish people would just be happy with who they are, but I know that's virtually impossible in a world full of guilt. It seems that sometimes it's this guilt that keeps people from accepting help, and that's why I wanted to write this. Not because I'm trying to force help on people, but because I want people to know that help is there, and true friends are more than willing to give it to them.

Anorexia isn't the only mental disorder that originates from food. There are others out there, and they're just as bad. Some of these are binge eating, bulimia, and compulsive eating.

First Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."

God intended food to be an enjoyable way for us to get the energy we need to sustain ourselves. Do you think He likes that what He intended for us to enjoy is being used for harm? Surely it saddens Him when we choose to use His gifts in this way. According to Paul, your body is also the host of the Holy Spirit, which is part of God. That just means you should treat it even better!

*I want people to know that help is there, and true friends are more than willing to give it.*

**Megan's Musings:** Megan Monacelli

## Giving thanks meant not just for praying

I love this time of year. Thanksgiving break is peeking from around the corner and the weather is somewhat cooler. Pumpkins pop up on porches and scarecrows become more of a decoration than useful "shoo, get away from my crops!" tools, greeting children as they ring your doorbell dressed up and innocently holding out their baskets for another piece of candy.

In the midst of the sweet pumpkin pies and the excitement of a school break, a constant idea of giving thanks seems to permeate our lives. Saying prayers of thanks is emphasized, and it seems that the more I stuff my prayers with thanks to our Heavenly Father who abundantly blesses me with more than I know what to do with, the more it becomes just a list. I tend to rattle off generic and broad blessings that I'm truly thankful for, but beyond that I don't really put much thought into my words. Thus, a sense of pure sincerity goes missing, and I leave my thanks behind in these prayers, returning to the mundane duties of everyday life.

I wonder if thanksgiving has another home besides our daily prayers before meals. How could we do more to give thanks than just listing out everything God has given us, and how could we carry our thanks beyond our prayers, lacing it into our busy lives?

Giving thanks is just that: giving. Maybe the best way to give thanks and praise to our Creator is to serve, offer, and give back a portion of what He has richly given us – and I think this goes beyond our weekly offering at church. We

could give our time, our energy, and our talents to others, and in doing so, we would be giving thanks to Him. The beauty about service is that God put a little gift of perspective in the act for those who choose to extend their thanks into their actions.

I, along with other BCS National Honor Society members, went to Rosedale School on Monday to organize and participate in a fall carnival for mentally handicapped children. We went disguised as cowboys, doctors, Disney characters, and a hodgepodge of other fun personas to man booths and lead overjoyed kids through a haunted house, a face painting booth, musical chairs, and other various activities. We then danced with them, jumping, conga-lining and YMCAing in a crowd of fun.

Participating in this annual activity is as much of a service as a rewarding experience. Stepping out of the busyness of life to bring and witness ear-to-ear grins of joy allows me not only to realize what I've been given, but also to broaden the scope of what's important in life. It allows me to act out my thanks and realize what all I've been given.

So, enjoy time spent with family, revel in the yummy treats this holiday season, and give a thought or two to giving thanks. Take your thanks with you and act it out through service, even in small ways. Bring cans to the school food drive. Take a toy to the Chuy's Children Giving to Children Parade. Deliver water bottles to the Salvation Army for the homeless. In doing so, unwrap the gift of perspective God leaves in the midst of service.



photo: Mary Monacelli

**Fun service** Senior Shannon Lesko did the face-painting booth at the Rosedale School's fall carnival on Oct. 31.

## THE BEAR FACTS

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The Bear Facts is available online at  
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# Art room expands, creates room for students to work

**jin ha JEONG**  
reporter

When the new Center for Science and the Arts opened, band, choir, and drama got new facilities. Some people might think the art department missed out, but art benefited too.

The art facilities experienced a big change during summer break. The wall between the old Computer Application classroom and Art classroom was removed, doubling the size of the art room. Workers colored the walls in red, blue, and bright yellow, and moved the storage areas into new positions.

Art teacher Lori Morin showed her joy over the better environment for students.

"I'm very pleased with the space that the students now have to work," Morin said.

Morin said she can hold her students' attention better because they now can see her while she provides instruction. In prior years, the students had to face each other during class because of the small space; now, Morin says, it is easier for students to concentrate during her class.

The expanded size of the art class enables the room to hold more equipment and students. It will also be possible for the art class to set up an area for computer design. Before this year, the room was so small and too crowded to hold many people or much equipment. This limited students' choices. But this year, the changes may satisfy the art students' dreams by increasing opportunities to make new forms of art.

Art students now have a satisfying place to work on their pieces, because the expanded room has large enough space to divide into several working sections; they have sections for pottery, 2D-drawing, and computer design. Also, students are allowed to come to the art class during study hall to keep working on their artwork without disturbing the class in progress.

"It is nice to work in the big new class, because I can have more space to work on my art," said senior Julie Kwon, who is a contract art student.

Due to the changed position of art equipment, some of students feel inconvenienced when they are looking for their tools.

"At first it was hard to find stuff easily, because it is the same amount of stuff in twice the space," said senior Carter Boyd, another contract art student.

Although many things have changed, Morin said more improvements are needed. She said if she has a chance to improve her class more, she will increase the number of sinks and storage units. She needs the organized storage area more easily accessible by her students.

Compared to last year, the number of students has not increased very much. Instead, Morin preferred to double the working areas for her students. Now students in the art room have a nice workshop and are better prepared to show their abilities.

"The new classroom space gives our art students a sense

of importance," Morin said, "making them feel like what they do is valuable enough to be included in the fine arts expansion."



photo: Mary Monacelli

**Room to create** High school students in Art I work on scale drawings in the foreground, while contract art students work in the back of the room.

## BCS students take classes at ACC, earn college credit

**kia KHADEM**  
reporter

Several BCS juniors and seniors are currently enrolled in courses at Austin Community College as part of the ACC Early College Start program. The goal of the program is to allow reduced-cost college credits during students' high school careers.

Junior Niky McCaffety is taking Sociology at ACC, after she completed Psychology during the summer. She said the college classes are a change of pace from the ones offered at Brentwood. There is a greater emphasis on notes and lectures, with occasional films being shown.

"As the youngest kid, it's interesting to hear the perspectives from older students," McCaffety said. "They ask how our lessons apply to my high school life and how I interact with others."

McCaffety said she plans on being a speech therapist who primarily works with children with vocal stutters.

According to BCS high school counselor Dr. D'Lanna Mason, the ACC classes allow students to go ahead and get some of their freshman college classes out of the way.

"It gives the students experience for college, as well as reducing time and money needed," Dr. Mason said.

However, she also warned that the classes are not for everyone, as they require large time investments from students. Some students currently taking ACC classes agreed that they can be burdensome on their schedules.

"The college teachers think that we have all the time in the world to do assignments," se-

nior Schuyler Hagen said of her English class. "But they're worth it for the college credit."

Senior Laura Combs described her English class as a heavy workload, with her teacher giving out an essay a week, among homework and quizzes. On the other hand, McCaffety said her Sociology class is spread out and much more manageable, with her teacher being more lenient on high school students.

"I think they're a great value," Combs said. "You're basically taking free college classes."

Other students taking ACC classes this year are Combs, Hagen, McCaffety, and seniors Brianna Maguire, Chance Morris, Anh Tang, Tipp Umrod, and Bryan Williams.

Juniors and seniors may enlist in two courses per semester in one of three programs: the dual credit program, the co-enrollment program, and the tech-prep credit-in-escrow program.

In the dual credit programs, students can earn college and high school credits by successfully completing the curriculum in a college appointed course. If students co-enroll, then they will only receive a college credit from their classes. Students enlisting in the "credit-in-escrow" program are eligible to receive college credits for tech-prep focused classes.

In order to be eligible for the ACC classes, students must be able to pass the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA), purchase required textbooks and other materials needed for their classes, attend class, and follow the process for enrollment. In addition, students are required to provide a transcript to the high school upon the completion of their courses.

## Grades 7, 9 enjoy class retreats

### New site for seventh grade

**m. j. SUNG**  
reporter

All 48 seventh graders loaded the buses and rode to their retreat in the morning on Monday, Oct. 3. Along with six seniors and six adult sponsors, they traveled to McKinney Roughs Nature Park, southeast of Austin, for the two-day retreat which helped them learn to cooperate with each other and to overcome fears.

This was the first year Brentwood has used McKinney Roughs, a Lower Colorado River Authority Park, which was selected by secondary principal Jared Lee. The retreat is usually held at Camp Buckner near Marble Falls.

"I very much liked McKinney Roughs, and I heard a lot of positive feedback about it," Lee said. "We're planning to use it again next year."

On Monday afternoon, Lee had to leave early, which made band teacher Travis Pollard in charge. Pollard said the high ropes course was the "high point" of the retreat. He said it was awesome to watch the students overcome their fears and accomplish something they didn't think they could.

"I think they learned how important it is to encourage each other and depend on each other for support," Pollard said.

After a day of group games on Monday and a taco supper, one of the LCRA staff members gave an astronomy presentation. When it was dark, they walked to a clearing in the trees and viewed the stars and Jupiter through high-powered telescopes in the clear sky.

On Tuesday, the seventh graders enjoyed their last activities, including climbing walls and zip line. On the zip line, Rachel Beggs said she got scared when she looked down.

"I had to try three times before I actually did the zip line," Beggs said.

### Freshmen endure setbacks

**madalyn GARELICK**  
reporter

The Class of 2015 added another chapter to their history of cursed retreats when they left campus at 4 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 23.

While going up the hill to exit the campus, one of the buses' "check engine" light came on and the bus had to be evacuated. Students switched to a different bus and soon resumed their journey to Camp Tejas.

When the buses arrived, the Tejas staff was pleasantly surprised to see the students, as the manager had not told the staff members the retreat dates had been changed.

This class has had their share of unfortunate events on retreats. In seventh grade they were not allowed to do the high ropes course due to flooding, and this year's retreat had to be postponed because of the Central Texas wildfires. But the class did not let this affect them.

"I was not going to let our history of retreats affect this one," freshman class president Madalyn Garelick said. "I tried to make sure that everyone was staying positive, and it ended up being an amazing time."

When they arrived, the freshmen loaded onto a hay ride for a tour around the campgrounds while waiting for pizza to be delivered.

The rest of the evening included time for basketball, volleyball, ping pong, and just being with each other. The night ended with private devotions led by the adults in each cabin.

After breakfast on Monday, freshmen attended sessions led by school president Marquita Moss and secondary principal Jared Lee about how to handle the high school years.

The retreat ended with time to do the zip line or cool off in the pool before eating lunch and returning to Brentwood.



**SENIOR SPOTLIGHT:** Nick Marler

Seniors featured in the Bear Facts were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS class of 2012.

# Who is feisty and eccentric? It's jolly ol' St. Nick!

carter **BOYD**  
reporter

It is a difficult task, summing up eccentric senior Nick Marler in one newspaper story. To begin, he asked for a unique senior feature – for his story to be different in some way than the others that have filled this space before.

Of course, any story written about Nick will be different. It is not enough to say that he is a great leader, a funny guy, a good friend, or that he has a great personality. It is not nearly enough.

Nick describes himself as “fun and perky ... a happy person; here’s a biscuit!” He is a self-proclaimed “PLU Code-master,” a reference to his job as a cashier at H-E-B. His hobbies include reading, playing such games as Modern Warfare, Halo, and Guild Wars, and spending quality time with his supposedly cute chihuahua. Among his favorite things are fantasy and science-fiction novels, working at H-E-B (“only not”), and watching fellow senior Chance Morris play World of Warcraft. In other words, while he’s not your typical senior who plays all of the sports and plays the lead in every play, he still manages to make friends.

Nick’s friends understand that he is not your ordinary person. Senior Duc Anh Phan called him a “sharp cookie,” expressed thanks for the cache of snack foods Nick always has in his locker, and noted Nick’s affinity for referring to his friends, and often to strangers, with off-the-wall nicknames.

“He’s a feisty young fellow, but he’s definitely grown up and matured over the years,” English teacher Chloe Campbell said. “He never ceases to make me laugh, and he’s very intelligent.”

While Nick’s friends certainly see his intelligent side, often praising his hard work and dedication to making good grades, they also acknowledge his outgoing personality.

“He’s a beautiful human being,” classmate Brianna Maguire said. “He likes to make good grades, and he eats anything pickle flavored.”

Nick certainly enjoys the simple pleasures

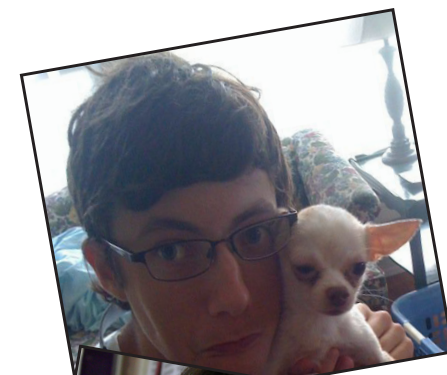
of life, but that’s not to say that he can’t be a hard worker. He works at H-E-B, anywhere from 25-30 hours a week, to make money for college, and he also works a second job at the Villa St. Clair, a wedding venue run by BCS parent Kim Sinclair. Nick also takes his school work seriously. When he’s not checking groceries, he is probably doing calculus homework or studying physics. Nick is a member of the National Honor Society and will be graduating from Brentwood with honors.

After graduation, Nick wants to attend either the University of Central Florida or Texas A&M. His plans for the future include a major in either hospitality management or business, and hopefully a management position at a resort hotel in Hawaii, along with the ownership of multiple chihuahuas.

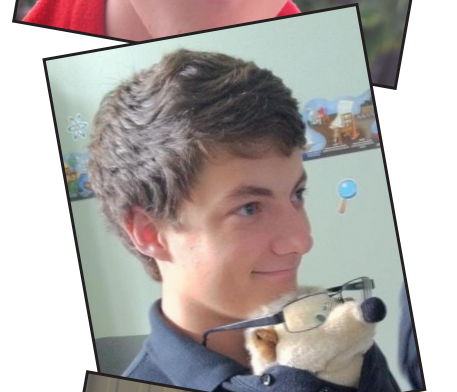
Nick came to Brentwood in eighth grade with his twin brother, Chris. Their first year, it wasn’t unusual to hear someone call one by the other’s name, but their friends insist that they look, sound, and act nothing alike. Without a doubt, the group of people who would say they are friends with Nick is a large group. He is one of the star art students at BCS, and last year one of his works was featured as “Artwork of the Month” in the high school office. He has also been vice president of his class for two years. His class sponsors are glad to have him on board.

“He participates and has great ideas,” class sponsor and art teacher Lori Morin said. “He has a great energy and is willing to do anything we ask; he never complains. He also has a great enthusiasm in such a way that he can get people to do things.”

He’s not in Encore or Jazz Band, he’s not on stage, and he’s not the starting forward for the basketball team, but his friends testify that Nick is undoubtedly a great leader at BCS. Everyone knows him as “that funny guy,” teachers know him as “that funny guy who works hard,” and his close friends know him as Nickles, sugarbooger, “BE QUIET!,” or any number of other things. Whatever you call him, you definitely know who he is.



photos from Facebook



## BCS Boy Scouts to carry flags at Spirit Fest

jackson **HAGER**  
reporter

BCS students belonging to Boy Scout Troop 179 have been chosen to perform the flag-carrying ceremony at Spirit Fest on Sunday, Nov. 13, at the Dell Diamond. Michelle Mohrmann, mother of seventh-grade Boy Scout Joseph Mohrmann, called the officials of the festival several weeks ago to see if there were any opportunities for service, but she was surprised when they were offered the chance to perform the ceremony at the beginning of the event.

“It’s a good chance to represent Brentwood,” Mohrmann said.

The troop’s members include 10 boys in different grades, from freshmen Tyler Clark, Evan Herring, and Matthew Scarborough all the way down to sixth graders. While the troop has done the flag ceremony before at events such as Scout meetings, this will be the first time the boys have ever done the proceedings at a public event.

A flag ceremony usually consists of two lines of scouts, called the color guard, with the American and Texan flags being held by the first people in the lines. But the boys from Troop 179 have also been asked to carry the flags of the armed services. For this reason, a national guardsman will assist in training the boys before the ceremony.

A troop leader will call out commands, such as “advance,” until the color guard has made its way to the front of the stage. The flags will be placed in their stands, and the National Anthem will be sung before the Scouts Oath is recited.

Spirit Fest is an all-day Christian music concert that has appeared in several Texas cities. This is the first year the event will be held near Austin, in it is being supported by the local Christian radio station Spirit 105.9. Christian artists such as Amy Grant and Tenth Avenue North perform at the event, which also honors the military and features a fireworks show which is choreographed to music.

## Partnership

continued from page 1

to be about \$400,000 raised each year, and Partnership Dinner typically takes a big chunk out of that, bringing in a little over \$100,000 on average.

According to his bio on the Partnership Dinner website, Lewis began his “Jesus paintings” in 1998 after a request from his friend to paint a large picture of Jesus on stage while his friend, a Christian songwriter, performed. He was challenged by this and prayed, trusting God to help him. After his first drawing was a success people came up and asked him if he could do this at other events, and from that moment a new ministry was born.



TEACHER FEATURE: April Hejl

# Running on faith

*Motivated by marathons and mission work, second-grade teacher has contagious energy*

lanae **HOLLINGSWORTH**  
reporter

While teaching might be her job and running her hobby, second-grade teacher April Hejl loves to watch motocross.

"I used to go in high school and watch it live," Hejl says. "They are brave enough to do something I would never try."

She is, however, brave enough to spend her life ministering to children, not only at Brentwood Christian as a second-grade teacher, but also in the country of Peru.

Born in Oklahoma City, Okla., Hejl grew up as April Harris, the eldest of three children, in Grapevine. She graduated from Grapevine High School before attending Oklahoma Christian University. Hejl spent her first three years at OCU as a psychology major to spite her mother, who had always told her she would be a teacher. Eventually she changed to an elementary education major and graduated in five years.

Once she decided to become a teacher, Hejl knew she wanted to teach second, third, or fourth grade, but her first choice was second grade.

"They come with the basics," Hejl said. "It is a year they take off, but are young enough to be excited."

She says her favorite part of teaching is watching when the light bulb comes on in students' brains, but she also enjoys the times when her students are not the only ones learning.

"I love when my students are the teachers," Hejl says, pointing out how much she has learned from them. "I think it is important to remember that we are all still students."

During her second year at OCU, Hejl met her future husband Jeffrey (BCS grad '95). They were married in the summer of 2000, two months before she began teaching at Brentwood. Elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed confesses that her initial interest in Hejl was not sparked by Hejl's application.

"The first thing that made me think I wanted her to teach second grade was that she was about to marry Jeffrey Hejl," Dr. Weed says.

But looking through her application, transcript, references, and interviews, Dr. Weed knew that Hejl was the right person for the job because of who she was.

"She really loves children of that age and has a knack for connecting with them," Dr. Weed says.

Hejl taught second grade at BCS for three years before beginning a four-year break in 2003, during which time her sons, Mason and Landon, were born. She spent the next four years raising them and working in Brentwood's

Children's Ark. In 2007, when there was a job opening for a second-grade teacher, she came back to BCS.

"She is incredibly creative and laid back," librarian Tere Hager says. "A little bit of second-grade chaos doesn't bother her."

When Hejl is not teaching kids to multiply or spit watermelon seeds, she enjoys reading and

The biggest challenges she faces in training for her marathon, Hejl says, are scheduling – especially during the week – and staying motivated. She cites her best motivator as the playlist she runs to, which includes music ranging from the Black Eyed Peas to the Zac Brown Band to some Latino bands such as Chino & Nacho. Many of the songs remind her of past

the mornings the teams usually conduct a VBS-type event, and in the afternoons they have things like scavenger hunts or English camp. When Hejl goes in December she will be the only American and will be leading a team of 30 Peruvians.

"She works on it all the time," Hager says. "It is not just something she does for two weeks; it is a year-long passion."

Hejl has often enlisted the help of BCS for various tasks for her trips. Most recently she asked some classes if they could collect "fun socks" and bring money that would be used to buy the children Christmas dinner. She says she keeps returning because of the relationships that she has with the children and how difficult it is to leave them, especially when they are asking her to stay. Her friends have seen this change her life.

"I've seen her become a lot more spiritually focused and servant minded," Campbell says. "She understands people better and their culture and language."

Hejl's experiences in Peru have also impacted others. Juniors Rachel Orick and Morgan Vandygriff, who have been her aides for two years, are both planning on going to Peru this spring break.

"She loves (going to Peru), and it made me want to go and experience the things she did and see the things she saw," Orick says.

In addition to running and visiting Peru, Hejl enjoys spending time with her family. Together they like to participate in outdoor activities such as hiking and camping. On her average Saturday, Hejl goes for "a long run" – at least nine or 10 miles – and watches her sons' soccer games. The Hejl family also has a tradition of

family movie night on Saturdays. "Star Wars" is the family favorite, though Hejl admits it is not her personal favorite. When she is not hanging out with family, Hejl is attending concerts and musicals with Hager and Smith or going to eat after they run.

Some of Hejl's goals include finishing her marathon and being bilingual, which has come about from visiting Peru and wanting to be able to communicate easily with the children. Right now she is taking Spanish classes, as she plans on continuing to go to Peru a couple of times a year. She also plans on being at BCS for many years to come.

"I love being here with my boys and having them close by," Hejl says.

The motocross-loving marathon runner is an example to her students of what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus.



photo: Mary Monacelli

**Hard-working Hejl** A group of second graders gathers to read with their teacher, April Hejl. The wife of a BCS graduate, Hejl has become well known for her passionate interest in a Lima, Peru, orphanage. She will make her eighth trip to Peru in December, and two BCS high-school girls will go there in March.

running. She says she loves to read anything, and that it is often a book someone suggests to her. Recently she finished reading "The Help," a story of the relationships between white Southern housewives and their black maids, and she is currently reading "Sacajawea."

Four years ago when Hejl began Adventure Boot Camp to get back in shape, she hated running. Since then she has discovered not only that she can run, but she actually loves it, because she can set her own goals and is not competing against anyone except herself.

Hejl ran the Vern's 5Ks once a month in Georgetown in 2009. Since then she has run two half marathons, one with English teacher Chloe Campbell and one with former BCS coach Kelsey Smith. Currently she and Smith are training for a full marathon on Feb. 9. Hejl decided to run the marathon to challenge herself and to check something off her "bucket list."

events in her life.

"Every time 'Summer Nights' (from the movie 'Grease') comes on, it brings back memories of my sister and I singing at the top of our lungs," Hejl says. "The downside to having this song on my playlist is that I have a strong desire to bust out in song ... and that doesn't work so well when you are trying to run."

Both Campbell and Hager, who are on Hejl's faculty fitness team, say she is very encouraging and keeps them motivated when they exercise together. Hager says they do non-running exercises like yoga together "because I can't keep up with her" when she runs.

Another of Hejl's favorite things to do is travel on mission trips to Peru. Almost two and a half years ago, Hejl began going to an orphanage in Lima, Peru, with her church, Westover Hills Church of Christ. Since then she has made seven trips to Hogar Sagrada Familia and is going again the first week of December. In



# Soccer season underway with all new coaches

david **LEE**  
reporter

The high school boys kicked off their season on Tuesday, Nov. 1, losing 5-0 to former district rival San Antonio Christian School.

BCS had never beaten SACS, and that streak was not about to end this week. Players said SACS moved the ball fast and accurately, while the Bears struggled to keep possession.

That same day in San Antonio, the girls opened their second season of soccer with a 7-1 loss to Cornerstone Christian School. Brentwood's lack of preparation showed, as they did not even have a coach until about a week before the game.

Also led by a new coach, the boys' soccer team started its after-school practice on Oct. 17. Cash Miller, last year's elementary coach, became the head coach after last year's coaches, Jesse Jordan and Gifton Noel-Williams, both resigned.

According to returning senior E.J. Sung, this year's practices are more focused on basic skills rather than conditioning. Also, sophomore Skylar Treut-Shaffer said that there are fewer shooting drills this year.

Miller, the father of two BCS students, said BCS has made a commitment to develop a complete soccer program for its students from grades 5-12. This commitment, he says, will provide athletes with more organization and more age-appropriate training than in the past.

Practices this year are more focused on understanding the "technical, tactical, and physical" aspects required to play the game of soccer. He said he wants the game to be possession based, rather than a kick-and-run game.

Miller said other goals for the team are to use soccer as a method to share God's words and Christianity.

Although there are 30 players on the team, Miller said it is uncertain whether a JV team will be available this year. However, many underclassmen would like one.

"I want to get a chance to play in a real game," sophomore Jin Ha Jeong said.

The boys will play their first district game on Dec. 8 against San Marcos Baptist Academy. Before that, the team will have seven games.

Led by Jordan and Noel-Williams, last year's soccer team finished third in district with a record of 6-4-2. Brentwood has qualified for playoffs for three consecutive years, but they lost in the first round each time.

The team lost six seniors from last year and players from other classes as well. There are only four returning starters, and two of them are seniors this year. However, there are 15 new players, including nine freshmen, who were excited to join the team.

"My goal is to play on the varsity team," freshman Christian Montgomery said.

Girls were unable to begin practice until Oct. 24, when their new coach was hired. Last year's coach, Steven Colwell, led the team to a 6-2-2

record in their inaugural season, good for second in district. But Colwell was unable to return, so girls' athletic director Devan Loftis assigned Brian Thrift, who is also the new boys' athletic director, as the girls' head coach. Loftis also hired Sierra Pierce as the assistant coach.

Thrift said he wants to build on the success that the girls had last season, when the team advanced to the second round of playoffs before losing in Waco.

"It is a joy to be able to coach the girls' team," Thrift said.

Pierce, Thrift said, was selected through an interview process. She has a passion for young people and soccer. She earned a bachelor's degree in biology and Bible education from ACU in 2008.

The girls practiced with the boys until their coach was hired, which meant the soccer field was too crowded for drills to be run efficiently.

The girls lost four seniors from last year's team – including the

goalkeeper – and another three players from other classes. However, the girls recently found a new keeper – sophomore Jasmine Selman, who has never played soccer before.

"I want to do well in the season," Selman said.

Unlike the boys, the girls have six returning starters and two new players.



photo: Mary Monacelli

**One-on-one** Freshman Yara Qussad faces off with junior Sam Boyd in practice on Wednesday, Nov. 2.

## Volleyball misses playoffs by one set

dennis **CLIFFORD**  
reporter

The varsity volleyball team lost a district tie-breaker in five sets to Bryan St. Joseph on Oct. 14, knocking them out of playoffs. They finished their season fourth in district with a 5-6 record.

"I'm not gonna lie; I was a bit disappointed," senior Brittany Brunson said. "I feel like we could have done so much better."

The Bears also lost to St. Joseph in five sets on Oct. 4.

Most of the girls considered their game against Waco Christian School that took place on Senior Night on Oct. 11 as the highlight of the season. Showing an uncanny team effort, the girls pulled together a five-set victory. Junior Brooklyn Merkord led in serve receiving, and junior Morgan Vandygriff earned points on serves with two aces in the match. Brunson led the team with four assists per set, senior Megan Gum averaged one block per set, and sophomore Avery Westerlund averaged 2.3 kills per set. The win pulled them into a tie with St. Joseph, each with a district standing of five wins and five losses.

The addition of coach Britt James-Sauceda helped the team grow from playing "uncon-

ventional" volleyball to a version that is more structured and professional, according to the players. She also arranged for the girls to have spiritual devotions together to grow as a team and as Christians.

"Coach Britt had a lot of patience with us and helped us grow as a team," Merkord said.

This year's seniors were Brunson, Gum, and Katie Clement. While next year's team will miss them, James-Sauceda said she expects strong leadership from next year's seniors: Merkord, Vandygriff, Masha Heins, and Michelle Dembosky. James-Sauceda also said she anticipates a "powerhouse sister duo" from Westerlund and her younger sister Blair, who will play as a freshman next season.

Brunson and Westerlund were named first-team all-district players, and Vandygriff and Gum made the second team. Freshman Nicole Glenn was named honorable mention.

James-Sauceda said she is proud of the girls' effort this year. She also said she will have a summer program with "hands-on" experience to prepare for next season.



photo: Mark Merkord

**Yeah!** Senior Brittany Brunson (right) celebrates a point with freshman Nicole Glenn (left) and junior Morgan Vandygriff.

## Eighth-grade volleyball eyes perfect season

lanae **HOLLINGSWORTH**  
reporter

Brentwood Christian's middle school 5A volleyball team wrapped up their undefeated regular season with a win over Hyde Park on Oct. 27. They won all of their non-district and district games, as well as the Concordia Tournament in September. The girls won all but one of their district games in just two sets.

Led by coach Kaylee Loftis, the girls are aiming to conclude their perfect season in the district tournament at Trinity this weekend.

The middle school flag football team ended their season 4-3-1 after pulling off a victory over St. Francis on Oct. 21. They did not have an end-of-season tournament.

After two big wins to start the season, the team suffered from poor practice participation and lost some of their effectiveness.

The elementary football teams both finished the regular season with losing records but are playing in tournaments this week.

Basketball tryouts for middle school are this week for boys, next week for girls.



# Basketball tips off for varsities

charlie **SINCLAIR**  
reporter

The varsity girls started their season on Tuesday by defeating Waco Reicher 48-27, led by 18 points from senior Brittany Brunson.

Head coach Devan Loftis said he was impressed with the way the girls played together as a team.

"This was one of the best first-game outings we've had in awhile," he said.

The boys started their season with a 61-8 blowout win on Oct. 28 in a joint team scrimmage against Austin Home School. Because it was a scrimmage, if a lay-up was missed, the player had to do 10 pushups on the court.

The boys play tonight at home against Regents, while the girls have a game on Monday. Beginning next week, both varsities have two more home games before the BCS Invitational Tournament on Nov. 17-19.

Boys' head coach Brandon Tatum is back for his second season with a new assistant coach, Mike Spraggins. At Wyoming University in the 1980s, Spraggins was on the basketball and rodeo teams, and he still does steer wrestling and calf roping. He tried out for the Denver Nuggets and made it, but then he was cut before the season started.

Spraggins was an assistant for Tatum at Abilene Christian High School for a year before taking over as head coach when Tatum moved on. He recently came to Austin when he was hired as a nurse at a local hospital, and Tatum said he offered his friend a spot because he

has coached with him before and understands how he coaches.

David Peyton will remain JV head coach and varsity assistant.

"I think we will be pretty good this year," senior Diego Cole said.

There are 16 total players for the boys: six on varsity, five floaters, and five on JV. There is one returning starter and nine returning players from last year's team that made it to the playoffs but was knocked out by New Braunfels Christian in bi-district.

According to Tatum the team's main focus is to be the best they can as individuals and as a team.

Loftis said the Lady Bears hope to play with passion and make it to the Final Four. There are 16 players on the team, including all five of last year's starters. Last year the Lady Bears made the playoffs but lost in the second round to Katy Faith West.

Asked if his team would be any good this year, Loftis had a quick reply: "We better be. We're returning all five starters."

Brunson and juniors Morgan Vandygriff and Rachel Orick made first-team all-district last year, while senior Megan Gum and junior Brooklyn Merkord made the second team.

Loftis said he will keep 10 play-

ers on varsity and six on the JV.

"I think we will get really good with practice," freshman Megan Burcham said.

Coaching the JV and assisting with varsity this year will be Laci Pounds, a former Pflugerville High player who graduated in 2003. Rebecca Bonds, a college student, will also serve as an assistant.



photo: Mary Monacelli

**No contest** Junior Dennis Clifford looks to add to a 44-point lead in the Bears' opening scrimmage against Austin Home School on Friday, Oct. 28.

# Brunson cruises; McCormick has record, sort of

continued from page 1

immediately by junior Matthew Archer. McCormick's time of 17:46 and Archer's time of 17:50 both broke the school record of 18:03 set by Mark Nesslage ('09) at the 2007 state meet.

But boys' coach Jacob Rotich said this year's route was shorter than it has been in the past. Rather than being the standard five-kilometer (3.1-mile) distance, it was only three miles. Rotich said both the Nesslage time and the McCormick time will stand as BCS state records for their respective distances.

"I am very satisfied," McCormick said. "I made a new record, met my personal goal, and am extremely happy and proud of how it turned out, with God's help."

McCormick said he wants to pursue the sport of cross country when he goes to college next year, either at Harding or UT.

"Marcus is the fastest runner on our cross country team," coach Rotich said, "and he is now the fastest runner in BCS history."

According to the runners, the race was pretty flat and not difficult to run, but there was still a lot of pressure following the name of "the state meet."

In their last meet before state, on Oct. 8 in Georgetown, Brunson led the girls with a time of 12:20, finishing in fifth place. She was fol-

lowed by Vandygriff at 13:09. Overall the girls finished ninth, competing against 27 other private and parochial schools.

McCormick led the team with a time of 18:19, coming in 34th place. Archer followed in 19:26 but was unable to meet his personal record. The boys finished 16th among 28 other schools.

Runners said the course was relatively flat but winding, making it difficult at times to find the trail and stay on the course.

A week earlier, in the McNeil XC Invite in Round Rock on Oct. 1, McCormick was unable to compete since he had to take the SAT that day. However, Archer led the team with a time of 19:16 while competing against 265 boys overall. Varsity boys placed 30th among 35 public and private schools.

Brunson came in at 12:31 and Vandygriff 13:30, and the girls came in 23rd among 37 schools. Like its name, the Round Rock course was very rocky with many tilts. But the course was a loop, which made it very clear where to go.

Overall, the runners expressed satisfaction with how the season went.

"I never expected them to do this well," coach Rotich said. "Archer improved the most, but everyone else ran really well."



photo: Melissa Vandygriff

**Strong finish** Senior Marcus McCormick finishes his record-setting run at state.

# BCS foes must beware new Claw Crew

madalyn **GARELICK**  
reporter

"Go bears, go! Go bears, go!"

Students have begun cheering and showing their spirit in a uniformed fashion during BCS varsity basketball games. Tense moments at the end of a game are a crucial time for the Crew to show what they're made of.

The varsity cheer squad has started a group called the Claw Crew for high school students. This is a fan-led group that will attend the varsity basketball games and give the team support, showing their school spirit by painting their faces or simply standing up and yelling the whole game with organized cheers.

"I'm really looking forward to the Crew," senior Laura Combs said. "I feel like it will get fans to start coming to more of the games."

To help in cheering and supporting the teams, the high school students who have joined the Crew will be wearing black, red, and gold Claw Crew T-shirts to the games. The students will all sit together during the games wearing their T-shirts, which include a claw on the front and a bear on the back, along with "Claw Crew" and other words in modern lettering.

"I really like the T-shirts!" senior Sydney Jung said.

The Claw Crew was created by the varsity cheerleaders not only to get the students more involved with the athletic program but also to encourage and support the teams. This idea of having a "crew" has been used by many different local public high schools, including Pflugerville High School, which typically fills the stands with spirited students.

"I think it will help us do better during our games," sophomore basketball player Wesley Mory said.

Along with their work on the Claw Crew, the varsity cheerleaders have also added three new girls to the squad: freshmen Maddie Ashworth and Isabelle Graessle, and junior Niky McCaffety. The cheer squad now is back to 10 girls, which is their original total from the beginning of the year.

"I feel excited, but I know it's going to be a challenge," McCaffety said.

The new cheerleaders have joined the others at morning practices on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, where they have been doing abdominal work and strengthening their arms to help with stunting.

"I'm really excited - the squad is going to be bigger and louder now. Also we will be more of a group," senior Katie Clement said.

Fans can continue to witness the cheerleaders and the Claw Crew in action for the remainder of the basketball season.



# BCS sophomore has novel published

jonathon REICH  
reporter

After four years of writing, BCS sophomore Elizabeth McKinney will be seeing her first novel, "Young Falcon," arriving on bookstore shelves on Nov. 7.

"Even in her essays she's good," sophomore English teacher Jessica Love said. "Most tenth graders are still learning how all the punctuation works for a five-paragraph essay. Her being this advanced is kind of a big deal."

Apparently, getting the book published wasn't as hard as McKinney expected. In May, after considering self-publishing, McKinney found Book Publishers Network, and after sending a few emails back and forth, they agreed to start the process to publish her book. All they asked from her was a few revisions to fix some mistakes.

"I've read 'Young Falcon' so many times I can practically quote it," McKinney said.

McKinney said her book will be available at Barnes and Noble, Amazon.com, and Smashwords.com. "Young Falcon" is 376 pages long and was written as a young adult fantasy. The back cover of her book will include testimonials from elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed, junior Priscilla Glenn, and McKinney's cousin, who is an English teacher. McKinney said they were given drafts of the book while she was still revising it so she could get critiques and have an extra opportunity to improve her book.

"Young Falcon" is set in a post-modern elv-



Elizabeth McKinney

ish society, which follows the story of a girl named Elysia who sets out on a journey for the elvish capital on an errand for her father. But shortly after, she is captured and sold to humans, who according to legend were wiped out long ago. Then, while in prison, she develops a mental bond with a man she's never met, but it becomes so strong that most times they can't distinguish between each other's thoughts.

McKinney is still working on many other story ideas. She has already written two more books to follow "Young Falcon" and would like to create a total of eight books in this series, which she is calling "Sons and Daughters." She has plans for other series that would correspond with those books, and others that would be completely separate. She also plans to use the money she gets from her first book to help pay for publishing the rest of her books.

Not many who know her can say

ish society, which follows the story of a girl named Elysia who sets out on a journey for the elvish capital on an errand for her father. But shortly after, she is captured and sold to humans, who according to legend were wiped out

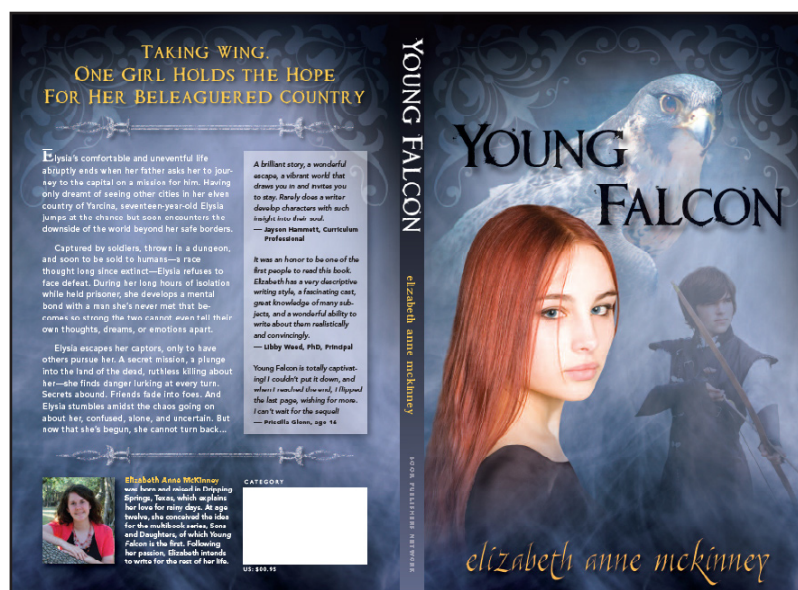
this was unexpected. McKinney has been writing ever since she was five, when she wrote an eight-page story about a TV series called "Redwall." When she was in sixth grade, McKinney got the idea for her first original story, which is now "Young Falcon." In eighth grade, after working on her story for two years, she had written more than 700 pages and her idea had split into two fairly large books.

McKinney also has an online blog which she uses to post updates on how her books are coming, her opinions on different matters, how publishing is working out, and sometimes little segments from her books as well.

"I couldn't imagine a better life for myself than writing the stories my King has given me to tell," McKinney wrote on one post.

However much Mc-Kinney enjoys and spends time writing, she still has a life outside of it. People who know her well also know about her very strong relationship with God. Because of her faith in Him during the publishing process, she never gave up hope that someday He would allow her to publish her book, no matter how long it took. And now, through her faith and determination, she was able to achieve her dream.

"This whole experience feels a bit surreal," McKinney said. "This is the kind of stuff you read about or see in movies, yet it's happening! God is so great!"



Her first book BCS sophomore Elizabeth McKinney will see her first novel, "Young Falcon," hit the shelves this month at Barnes and Noble.

## NHS inducts 28 members with chicken, candles

joseph KANG  
reporter

With a choice of chipotle chicken breast or vegetable ravioli, 67 students, seven faculty, and 49 parents had lunch at Cool River Cafe for Brentwood Christian's 29th National Honor Society induction ceremony on Monday, Oct. 17.

NHS sponsor Kaleen Graessle introduced 41 returning members and 28 inductees to NHS, most of whom were sophomores.

The NHS ceremony followed tradition, including an Encore performance, candle lighting ceremony, and the NHS pledge.

Pastor Sangin Park, from YeRang Korean Church in Round Rock and guardian of junior Ginger Huh, spoke to the students after lunch. Using the examples of Moses and Paul, Park encouraged inductees by emphasizing intelligence and service in kindness.

Graessle said she and NHS officers chose Park as a guest speaker because there are six Korean inductees, including four seniors. Graessle also said she is pleased with the increased level of involvement of foreign students in school activities.

After BCS president Marquita Moss lit the center candle, the NHS officers continued to light the candles by taking the fire from the center candle. NHS president Bryan Williams lit the blue candle which represents citizenship; vice president Lanae Hollingsworth lit

the purple candle which represents leadership; historian Amanda Conway lit the green candle which represents character; secretary Megan Monacelli lit the red candle which represents service; and treasurer Min Shin lit the gold candle which represents scholarship.

"It's great that students get to be recognized for their achievements and character. The whole ceremony was fantastic," junior inductee Matthew Onabajo said.

To qualify for NHS, students must have a cumulative grade average of 91 or above, appear on at least one citizenship honor roll during the year, and have no more than two "S-" grades for citizenship throughout the year. Students must also demonstrate outstanding performance in four criteria of NHS: scholarship, leadership, service, and character.

According to Graessle, the initial grade requirement for candidacy in NHS will be raised again over the next year. In past years, a student had to have a minimum cumulative average of 90. This year (2011-12), the minimum cumulative GPA is 91, and after 2012-13, it will be 92.

Graessle said, however, every year there are several students who are not selected for NHS because they do not show evidence of service or leadership on their Information Request Forms though they have been academically eligible for selection.

NHS members have opportunities to participate in planned NHS activities, which usually

involve service. They can also get an extra day of off-campus lunch on Friday. But they do have responsibilities: They need to participate in peer tutoring and uphold the standards by which they were selected.

"NHS is a well-recognized honor society, so it is helpful to list it on college and scholarship applications," Graessle said.

Two NHS programs are peer tutoring and the Connect Program, in which senior members make friends with elementary students.

According to Graessle, NHS will also continue its partnership with Rosedale School, including their fall carnival, Christmas sing-a-long, and field day. Also, NHS offered "Booth Buddies" at Fall Festival in which members took children to booths while parents volunteered.

"We are open to other ideas," Graessle said. "Last year we had a service day where we split into groups for various service activities throughout our community. We may do something like this again."

This is the third year NHS and NJHS have dined at Cool River Café. From 2004-08, the group ate at Carrabba's Italian Grill, but NHS outgrew their space; according to Graessle, people were in several connecting rooms and unable to see well. Cool River Café offers more space and a significant discount on the price.

"It is my pleasure to work and serve alongside this group of accomplished and dedicated young men and women," Graessle said.

## Musical

continued from page 1

ence's view of the stage, according to band director Travis Pollard.

"It solved all the problems we had in the FLC," Pollard said.

Two weekends of performances has also proved to be a beneficial bonus. The performance part is the most fun part of the entire production and preparation process, according to Singleton. The acting, singing, cues, set changes, and lighting become smoother with each performance.

Singleton said the only downside to the new theater is the inability to use the fly loft. Due to financial reasons, a manual or mechanical system cannot be installed currently into the fly loft for the use of easy, efficient set changes. Building and changing the set was still difficult and took longer because practice in the theater was minimal, according to Singleton. The drama department was not allowed to move in and start practicing as early as she would have liked.

"Everything felt a little rushed because we were on a learning curve, but it will be easier in the future," Singleton said.

All in all, however, the hard work and time paid off.

"We had a good turnout, and I think people really enjoyed it," said Kayle Morin, who plays Maria.