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THE BEAR FACTS

VOL. XXII NO. 3

BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

DECEMBER 2009



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IN SHORT

BCS in the News

Admissions director Deborah Hicks sent a press release to the Austin American-Statesman before last month's groundbreaking ceremony, but she was surprised when the newspaper followed up with a full story about Brentwood's building campaign on the front page of the Metro section on Dec. 1. Three days earlier, a photo of senior Aracely Mora carrying shopping bags also ran on the Metro section's front page. Then on Dec. 2, KXAN ran a morning report about a BCS eighth-grader's choking incident several weeks ago, in which mom Patricia Wagner performed the Heimlich on her, safely removing the obstruction.

Musicians Honored

Seventh-graders Mia Dedear (flute) and Nicole Glenn (trombone), and eighth-grader Nathan Dedear (trombone) recently made All-Region Middle School Band. Two of them performed at the Hutto Performing Arts Center on Saturday, Nov. 21. Mia also made the All-Region Middle School Orchestra, which met the same weekend, and she chose to perform in the orchestra concert.

Senior Chris Williams (drums) made All-Region and Area Jazz Band and will perform at Texas State University in January.

Barnes & Noble Fair

The Barnes & Noble book fair – in which a portion of net sales will be donated to BCS – opened on Dec. 4 and will end today, at both the Arboretum and La Frontera locations. Seniors provided free gift wrap at the Arboretum store on Saturday and Sunday, and Encore sang there Sunday as well. Also, Dr. Libby Weed read Christmas stories to children at the Arboretum store on Saturday.

Snowy surprise

Rare sighting of falling flakes delights campus

lizzy DUPOND
reporter

We've seen it hail, we've slipped on ice, we've watched wimpy frozen shavings pattering on the glass, but we just couldn't fool ourselves into naming any of these the magic word, "snow."

On Dec. 4, Brentwood had a white miracle. You wouldn't have believed it unless you stepped outside to the circle drive behind the high school building and witnessed the glorious chaos of children running and screaming,

"It's snowing! It's snowing!" under the falling flakes.

The teachers and older students could only look on in wonder. Those who were fortunate enough that day to be wearing the black fleece uniform coat could easily catch the little flakes on their sleeves and look closely at their starry kaleidoscopic shapes, confirming that the intricate designs are no myth.

At the soccer field, where a tournament was being played, boys were running in the middle

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Dinner features live auction

ryan BRUNSON
reporter

More than 400 guests attended Brentwood's 19th annual Partnership Dinner, with guest speaker John W. Smith, last night at the Renaissance Austin Hotel in the Arboretum.

The night kicked off with a silent auction at 6 p.m., and shortly afterward the Brentwood Jazz Band and Encore added to the classy ambiance of the hotel with their musical entertainment. BCS parent and board member Brian Jackson served as the emcee and welcomed guests before

dinner was served. Guests enjoyed rosemary scented chicken breast with chipotle cream, garlic mashed potatoes, a roasted vegetable medley, and homemade chocolate mousse cake.

Smith, a nationally renowned inspirational speaker and storyteller, soon took the stage and shared several humorous and intriguing stories from his life growing up. BCS faculty members heard Smith speak at last summer's teachers' conference in Midland. Donna Valdes, special events coordinator and head of organizing the

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Teacher travels to holy land

lanae HOLLINGSWORTH
reporter

The holidays are usually a time of tradition, but this year sixth-grade teacher Becky Stewart broke tradition and went to Israel over Thanksgiving break. Stewart left Austin on Saturday, Nov. 21, for Tel Aviv, Israel, where she met with her University of Iowa Alumni tour group.

The group's 10-day tour centered on the capital city of Jerusalem. The 22 American tourists saw many famous attractions such as the Mount of Olives, the Dead Sea, and the Sea of Galilee, and they had time to explore on their own as well.

Stewart also visited man-made sites, including several with religious significance. Adherents of three major religions – Christianity, Judaism, and Islam – have built structures where they believed something important in their religion happened. "Here or near" is a saying that Stewart said their guide used frequently about such sites.

For example, Stewart went to the Dome of the Rock, which was built at the end of the seventh century to commemorate parts of the Islamic prophet Muhammad's life. She also visited several churches built by Christians at spots they believe that events

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photo: Jessica Love

Dig In A host of BCS supporters participated in the groundbreaking ceremony for the soon-to-come Center for Science and the Arts on Nov. 14, between the matinee and evening performances of the fall musical "Beauty and the Beast." About 100 people gathered on the lawn east of the main high school building to sing, pray, and hear an update on the progress of the building campaign. School president Marquita Moss said she hopes construction can begin as early as March.

“Good news” not condemnation

Consider appropriate response of Christians to those with radically different beliefs

When Christians hear the word “persecution,” I believe it safe to assume that images of oppressed missionaries and believers suffering at the hands of extremists (religious or otherwise) are the first to appear in our minds. Although the martyrdom of Christians past is certainly persecution at its zenith, it is my opinion that the worst persecution of all is not done against Christians, but by Christians.

I’m not talking about standing up for the truth or rebuking an evil deed, but the brutal condemnation which so easily comes from us who know the truth against those who are absolutely lost.

It is said that people fear what they do not understand and hate what they fear. I believe this to be true to a certain extent, for some of the ugliest and most embarrassing interactions I have witnessed were conversations held between a group of Christians and a Mormon while I was at Princeton Summer School. The

Mormon was firmly grounded in his faith, but the Christians were not. After the group made their case for the basic truths, I expected them to listen in return and process what the young man had to say. As soon as he made a point they disagreed with, the Christians irately berated the young man and informed him that he would go to hell as they left the room.

Maybe it was just me, but I wasn’t exactly feeling the love of Christ in their words. I will admit that most confrontations of such nature do not turn out that poorly, but nonetheless, it seems that when many Christians face religions they are unfamiliar with, conversation can go awry.

I think most of the problem lies in the incorrect interpretation of “boldly preaching the gospel.” While we *should* speak the truth with confidence and assurance, we *should not* stab people in the eye with it. We must keep in mind that at all times that individuals of other religions have built up a genuine hope and faith in their doctrines, and any change in their heart will be a progressive turning brought about by God.

If you find yourself in a situation where you wish to preach the gospel to someone belonging to another faith, first realize that communication is a two-way street. If you intend to talk about what you believe, you should be ready to listen patiently and fully to their beliefs as well. Be quick to listen, and slow to anger about anything they might say. Ask rather than accuse, and genuinely hear them out.

Second, agree to disagree. Having different spiritual origins will obviously lead you to part ways on issues. Rather than flying off the handle at an injunction, be temperate and toler-

ant when an impasse arises. I know that tolerance usually carries a negative connotation in Christian circles because it is implied to mean the compromising of our faith. I say do not ever back down from Biblical truth, but be tolerant and gracious enough to understand that not everyone believes that the Bible is truth.

Third, please be patient. God moves mightily and powerfully in His own ways, but forcing His hand often results in the end of a conversation and the loss of an opportunity. Pray for perseverance and wisdom as you speak God’s

message, but trust Him to take care of the hard part in His own time.

Above all else, do not let anything come out of your mouth unless it is inspired by a genuine and honest caring for the other person. Keep in mind that Jesus himself did not come to earth to condemn us who are sinners, but to save all people. If we have any hope of following in our Savior’s footsteps, we must graciously and prayerfully reach out to the lost with an open hand, rather than bash them with the shield of faith.



photo: Renee Haws

Solo Time Josh Porter takes off on a saxophone solo at “An Evening of Stars,” a fundraising event held at the Dell Diamond on Nov. 17. The purpose of the event was to raise money for the Center for Science and the Arts. The evening showcased the abilities of students in band, choir, art, and drama.

THE BEAR FACTS

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11908 North Lamar Blvd.
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The Bear Facts is published monthly by the journalism classes of Brentwood Christian High School. The paper is a learning tool which informs the student body while teaching students to become critical observers of their environment and to validate Truth within the context of the Christian world view.

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Thanksgiving reflections

mike LEE
reporter

In the Thanksgiving of a decade ago, I felt as if I was the most unfortunate person on the face of the earth. I shared this idea with my mom; she merely smiled and suggested, “Maybe.”

I had such depressing thoughts, because I was ill. Although I do not remember the name of the illness, I remember that it was a very inconvenient one, as the doctor prohibited me from eating all fatty food. How many Thanksgiving foods are not fatty? Surely they weren’t enough to satiate my hunger. I remember helplessly staring at my brother’s mouth as he kindly consumed my portions of fatty food.

I brought out my childhood memory as a roundabout way of suggesting that food is a big part of Thanksgiving. So if you had a chance to stuff your mouth with typical American Thanksgiving recipes – turkey, hot rolls, corn,

sweet potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, green beans, or pumpkin pies – be grateful: at least you are not the most unfortunate person.

In fact, we ought to be thankful even in bad times. The first American Thanksgiving was held in 1621, when Mayflower Pilgrims held a famous feast in the new land. The Pilgrims, however, had many reasons to be unthankful. After arriving in the new land in 1620, the Pilgrims were not greeted by friendly Indians. They instead encountered an unfriendly continent, harsh weather, and hostile Indians who pointed arrows at the intruders. Especially daunting was the long and harsh winter, which took the lives of the majority of Mayflower Pilgrims.

However, the Pilgrims thanked God. They thanked him for their lives, successful harvest, new friends (friendly Indians who taught the Pilgrims how to make popcorn and other goodies), and many other things that we usually take for granted.

Compared to them, I have a great deal to be thankful for. I know of many nice people – parents, pastor, teachers, and friends – who always care about me and think me very handsome and intelligent. I have a phone that allows long-distance conversations. I have food to fill my

stomach, and health to appreciate it. Most of all, I have celebrated *two* great Thanksgivings this year: American and Korean.

Speaking of Korean Thanksgiving, it is a very special event. Although a typical Korean Thanksgiving doesn’t involve football matches, Black Friday, or even turkey, it has several lovely traditions and traits – including a full moon. Because it is dated based on the lunar calendar (Aug. 15), every Korean Thanksgiving has a full moon. Wishing on the Thanksgiving full moon is an established tradition in Korea, like Americans wishing on shooting stars. One difference is that while shooting stars come and go in seconds, barely enough time to make a wish, the full moon stays there for hours, waiting for you to make a wish, one that you will remember for a year and will not regret making.

Another tradition of Korean Thanksgiving is going back to one’s hometown. City dwellers born in rural areas travel to their hometown, meet relatives, and play the board game that our ancestors played hundreds of years ago. Because urban population makes up the majority in Korea, during Thanksgiving, every highway

Brentwood initiates NEHS

New organization encourages leadership, service

matthew **ONABAJO**
reporter

Starting in February, Brentwood Christian School will begin participating in the new National Elementary Honor Society for qualifying elementary students.

Students will develop leadership and service skills through service projects they will conduct quarterly after school. The chapter adviser, fifth-grade teacher Carrie Hunter, will lead students during meetings and activities.

According to elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed, students will be inducted based on citizenship, responsibility, and academic achievement. Students who show these characteristics will be considered for induction. From that group, select sixth graders will be chosen to fill the roles of president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.

"I hope it will be a good incentive for elementary students to do their best academically," Dr. Weed said. "It is such an honor and will look great on a student's transcript."

Dr. Weed said she is also glad that BCS will play a larger role in encouraging the younger

students to pursue leadership and service opportunities.

The faculty council, which includes elementary teachers Jodie Coyle, Michelle Mohrmann, and Karen Peyton, will help the chapter adviser decide who should be inducted into the society. They have already decided on the chapter bylaws, which are the procedures and requirements for NEHS.

"I think that the Honor Society is a great way to recognize those students who work hard and love their community," Hunter said. "It's also a great opportunity for upper elementary students to grow in service and leadership."

Sixth-grader Ania Franco said she thinks NEHS will help students contribute to the community.

"It helps us to reach our goals," she said. "It also helps us to reach out to other people."

The NEHS was established in 2008 by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. The National Honor Society and National Junior High Honor Society were started in 1921 and 1929, respectively.

Literature comes to life

Freshmen enjoy spooky shows on English I field trip

travis **CLARK**
reporter

It was a day full of horror, mystery, and entertainment for the ninth graders as they viewed performances of several short stories at Georgetown High School on Nov. 16. The freshmen left for the performance at 9 a.m. and returned to school about 1 p.m.

Once inside the Klett Center for the Performing Arts, the freshmen found that the half-hour drive to Georgetown was worth it. As the Brentwood students

filed into their seats, they found that students from many other schools in the area had also come to watch the show.

Most of the freshmen said they enjoyed the performances of each short story, which included "The Tell Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" by Washington Irving, "The Monkey's Paw" by W. W. Jacobs, "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant, and "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" by Mark Twain.

"I think the actors were talented, and the set and special effects were really good," Connor Schiesz said.

These short stories were performed in a two-

act performance called "Encore!" This show is performed in different areas throughout the United States by five actors from an educational theatre company based in Boston, Mass., called Chamber Theatre Productions.

Most students said their favorite story was "The Monkey's Paw," which is about a man who makes three wishes on a magical monkey paw with unexpected results. Many of the freshmen had read this story in eighth grade, so they

mostly understood what was going on. Several even pointed out differences in the story and the performance.

"They acted it out very well, and I understood what was going on," Priscilla Glenn said after the show. "I liked the special effects with their lights and sounds. I also liked the mystery of (not knowing) what's going to happen."

According to English I and drama teacher Chloe Campbell, the purpose of the field trip was to become familiar with these stories they have read or will be reading in later years and to understand them through fine-arts exposure and dramatization.

"I like how the students get to see some classic stories actually acted out," Campbell said.

The adult chaperones who went on the field trip were Campbell, secondary librarian Tere Hager, and history and Bible teacher Mel Witcher.

Stewart makes sojourn

continued from page 1

like the feeding of the 4,000 happened.

When Stewart had some free time, she and some other members of her group arranged to take a trip to Bethlehem. The group's guide, an Israeli, did not take them there because Bethlehem is in the area under Palestinian control, and he is not permitted.

While Stewart was in the Jerusalem area she stayed in a kibbutz hotel. Kibbutzim are run by the native people who live in them. In the past kibbutzim were agriculturally centered, but the one that Stewart stayed at has a furniture factory that makes pews for synagogues. The children who live in the kibbutz go to a day care all day while their parents work, Stewart said.

Stewart's group had the opportunity to tour the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum, where a Holocaust survivor spoke to the group. Stewart said he did a wonderful job.

At one point, Stewart was able to plant a carob tree to help in the reforestation of Israel.

Stewart said that in the cities everything has been built on and changed since Bible times, but in the Galilean countryside things are "more like Jesus' time," and she greatly enjoyed being there. When she was visiting the Sea of Galilee she thought about how Jesus had walked there about 2,000 years ago.

"As I rode in the boat, I looked up in the hills and thought that Jesus and his apostles would have looked at those same hills," Stewart said.

"Perspective" was a word she used often in describing the trip. Stewart gained perspective from being in the middle of the feud between Jews and Arabs that has lasted thousands of years and is currently being fought by Israelis and Palestinians. She sensed an underlying feeling that everyone is on edge and that one wrong move could destroy the "peace."

She also learned more about the three major religions from gaining first-hand experiences. She heard the Muslim calls to prayer, Christian church bells on Sunday morning, and a Sabbath blessing.

Stewart said she had always wanted to go to Israel but has never had the opportunity to go at a time when she would not miss a lot of school and when the weather would not be unbearably hot. She received three brochures in the mail last year before finally deciding in May to go over Thanksgiving; she thought it was too good of an opportunity to miss.

Stewart said she was especially excited about the opportunity to go to Israel because she would be able to share her experiences with her students. She teaches ancient world history and world religions, and she regularly discusses current events with her students.

"Everywhere there was something helpful to what I teach," Stewart said.

Before leaving, Stewart expressed regret because she would be missing three important football games: an Iowa Hawkeyes game and two Texas Longhorn games, one against Kansas and one against the archrival Texas A&M Aggies. As it turned out, she was able to watch part of the Iowa game before she left the United States and to belatedly see the score of the Kansas game later in the week. When she was able to check the scores, she saw that the Aggie game was tied, but it was not until Saturday that she was able to be sure the Longhorns had won.

She returned to Austin on Monday, Nov. 30, and was at school on Dec. 1. By the end of the day she was ready to go home and rest.

This is only the first of Stewart's exciting trips, as she will be taking a similar journey over spring break to Egypt through the University of Texas.



photo: submitted

Sacred Ground Becky Stewart stands in front of the Dome of the Rock, a major landmark in Jerusalem and third most holy shrine in Islam. Each year, millions of Muslims journey to the spot where it is claimed Abraham almost sacrificed Isaac.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: *Skylar Charles Haws*

Seniors featured in the Bear Facts were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS Class of 2010.

Aspiring physician calm, creative, committed to excellence

charles KIM
reporter

Everyone at BCS recognizes Skylar Haws by his height and his blonde hair. He is very quiet, but he's not shy. He is very intelligent, but he's also diligent. He is very logical, but he's also very generous, emotional, and faithful.

Skylar was born in Washington and spent most of his childhood there, but when he was in eighth grade, he moved to Indiana. His next move was to Austin when he enrolled at BCS as a sophomore in the summer of 2007. At first, Texas and BCS were shocks to Skylar.

"My family moved to Texas fairly quickly," Skylar said. "Although I didn't know much about my new home, there were two truths I learned without intense observation. The first was

Texas is hot, and the second was that Brentwood is not an average school."

However, Skylar soon found himself liking this place. He got used to the strange weather of Texas. He also found many friends with whom he could share his ideas and faith.

"Skylar and I quickly became friends because we participated in the same classes and extracurricular activities," senior Marisol Hernandez said. "I admire Skylar's caring nature and calm spirit. He knows how to keep cool under pressure."

Skylar has some distinct gifts. He is the two-time defending champion of TCSIT Bible knowledge. He plays an important role in the debate team. He is also competing for the salutatorian of his class. However, he is not just smart, but he is also very creative and versatile, having taken active

roles in music and athletics. He used to run hurdles in track, he still plays alto saxophone in the BCS Jazz Band, and, strangely, he also won a TAPPS district championship in jewelry making.

"He has been very reliable, and he has developed a lot as a musician in the past few years," band director Travis Pollard said. "When he graduates, Jazz Band will lose one significant figure."

However, Skylar's classmates admire not only his extraordinary talents but also the leadership and great character he has shown. As the senior representative in StuCo and the editor-in-chief of The Bear Facts, Skylar has inspired many of his fellow students with his perseverance, giving spirit, and devotion to his various groups.

"As another member of StuCo, I know that he is always extremely passionate and hard working," junior Caleb Kronke said. "He is always present at every meeting, he always comes up with good ideas, and he is always willing to help others. He is the quintessential member of our student body."

Beyond just memorizing the Bible verses, Skylar has also committed himself to following the knowledge he has learned from the Bible. Many students and teachers praise him for his effort in class, care for others, and deep faith in God.

"Skylar works hard to really understand the material, not just satisfy the requirement," KALEEN GRAESSLE said, praising him for his outstanding work ethic in her AP Calculus class.

"If there is something he doesn't understand, he works quietly until he does."

Skylar also has done lots of volunteer work to help those who need it. He volunteered in Katrina Disaster Relief to help victims recover from the terrible hurricane. He also helped Chinese immigrants study for their citizenship tests in Chicago and was involved in an Alcoa service project in which he planted trees and helped recover wildlife. He even traveled to Brazil in order to deliver dental tools and other supplies to local residents.

On campus, Skylar has been devoting his time and efforts greatly to the BCS Spiritual Life Committee for the past two years. Sometimes, even the members of the committee were surprised by his devotion to their work.

"Skylar is very thoughtful and deep in his devotional thought," committee sponsor Jared Lee said. "I'm very proud that he is a senior leader in that group."

In the future, Skylar is planning to step into the medical field as he has always dreamed of. After graduating from high school, he plans to earn a degree in biomedical engineering before going to medical school. Eventually, he hopes to open his own practice in psychiatry.

Skylar said he is planning to be a psychiatrist so that he can use his talents that God has given him to help others who need it.

"I feel that if God has given me the ability to learn the material, a heart for the sick, and the peace to attend eight more years of school, then my calling is to be a doctor – hopefully a psychiatrist," Skylar said.

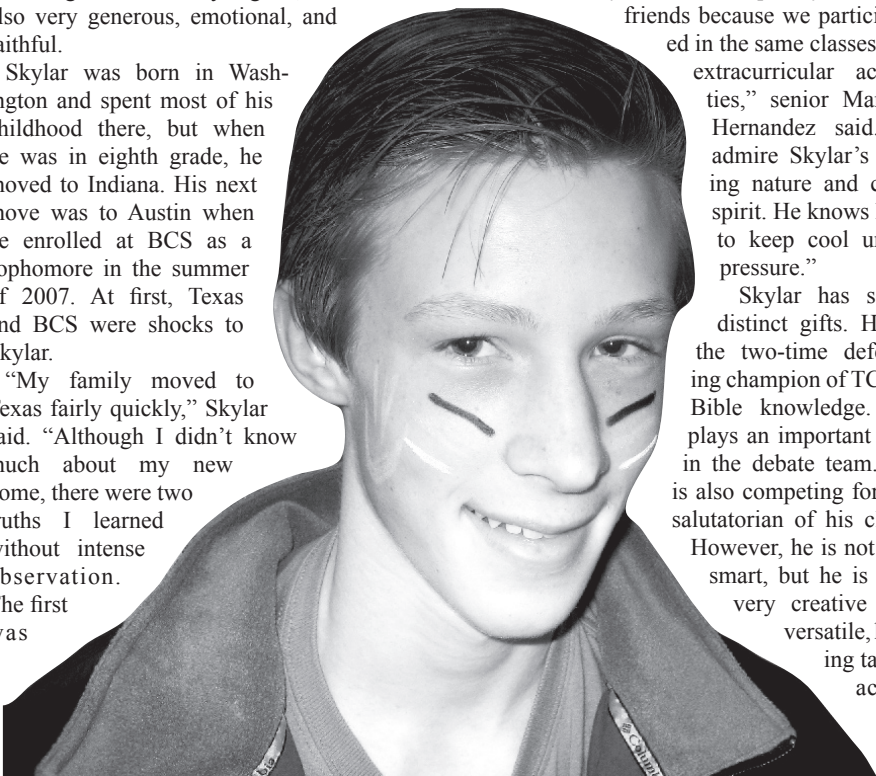


photo: Marisol Hernandez

Christmas spirit sweeps through school

Students from every age group participate in holiday festivities, charities

ashtyn PATE
reporter

Kids singing carols, the principal reading to students, children watching "The Polar Express" while their parents shop for them, StuCo decorating the school grounds one morning, and Santa hats worn all over the school... This is Christmas at

Brentwood Christian.

The Christmas season is always lively around the Brentwood campus. For about three weeks before the holidays, the school adds more colors to the typical green and white. All elementary classrooms are decked out with artwork from the students and lights strung around the room. Every classroom has its own tree that the teachers pull out of storage, except for the first graders. They go to the Elgin Tree Farm every year for their annual field trip to select a new and fresh tree.

While the annual events are going on – such

as Angel Tree, Santa Shop, singing in the gym, and assisting with the Chuy's Parade – many new things are also happening. One of these is StuCo's Santa hat sale. Students who bought a hat were allowed to wear it at school several days and were encouraged to personalize them with their own decorations. All the money raised went to the Dell Children's Hospital for cancer research.

On Thursday, Dec. 17, the elementary will perform its annual Christmas pageant, and this year's show will be "B is for Bethlehem." It is something that all the elementary

students prepare for weeks ahead of time, and then enjoy watching their own dress rehearsal in the days leading up.

On Dec. 18, all the elementary classes will have a final party before the break.

Another December event involves elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed reading to all the elementary classrooms, and every grade gets

*Elementary students raised
\$1,670 this year to buy
presents for 26 children.*

a different story. Kindergarten has "Mr. WilLOWBY's Christmas Tree," the third graders hear "Christmas on the Prairie," and sixth grade gets to enjoy "The Gift of the Magi."

"One of my favorite Christmas events is always the reading to the classes," Dr. Weed said. "It never gets old for me."

Angel Tree, another annual tradition at Brentwood, is to help families with a parent who is in prison. With the help of Shannon Mokry, a BCS parent, elementary students raised \$1,670 this year to buy presents for 26 children. Every classroom had a tree hanging on the doorknob, and every student had an angel on it. They earned their wings by giving some of their own money to the Angel Tree.

According to Dr. Weed, there are two main reasons why Brentwood does Angel Tree. One is to pray for the families, and the other is to raise the money needed for presents.

Christmas around Brentwood is always a colorful time of year that students of all ages anticipate.

"Everyone just seems happier and comes together," sophomore Shannon Lesko said. "Everyone always has a smile on their face."

Thanksgiving

continued from page 2

in every corner of South Korea is jammed with cars, and crossing the nation sized one seventh of Texas takes over 10 hours. In one particular Thanksgiving, I remember gazing up in the sky, while my dad was taking part in the endless parade of crawling cars. I had none of my fatty food, so I was not very happy. But looking at the moon, brighter than ever, I felt my sorrows were nearly gone. So I wished upon the full moon, that I may never be sick again during a Thanksgiving. Perhaps God was listening; I have never been ill during Thanksgiving ever since.

I understand that it is hard to be thankful in bad times. I feel that I may just be in the middle of those times. Nevertheless, I am thankful – even for my problems – because we, the students, are very young and probably have an awfully long time to fix our problems. Of course, our time is limited, and thus we can't procrastinate too long. The idea I am trying to convey is nicely summed up in a quote by twentieth-century actor James Dean: "Dream as if you'll live forever; live as if you'll die today."

Long-time librarian giving, receiving honors

lizzy DUPOND
reporter

Sandra Morrow has been the BCS elementary librarian for 26 years, but she has been teaching for 32 years.

She was born Sandra K. Johnson in Level-land, a rural small town stranded out west of Lubbock. Little Sandra grew up on a farm, tending to the chickens, turkeys, pigs, and orchards. She often enjoyed playing with the kittens and reading books in the branches of a cherry tree.

Her one access to books was from the only town library, which was in the courthouse at the center square. The first book she ever checked out was a biography of George Washington Carver. At that age, she thought that this was the only library in the world and that once she returned the book, she would never read it again. So she tried to keep the book, but her parents made her return it, and they had to pay a nickel fine (a big deal in the fifties). However, the librarian was kind to her about it and assured the child that she could check out the book whenever she liked. Morrow thinks this may have been her first inspiration to her current vocation.

After graduating from Monterey High in Lubbock, she attended Lubbock Christian University and later Abilene Christian, earning her bachelor's degree and teacher's certification. Then she taught English and Spanish at the high school in Andrews, where she met her future husband, Troy, who was then a science teacher at the school. (She also met Max Lucado, now a well-known Christian author, who was a student at the school and a member at her church.)

Later, Morrow and her husband moved to Austin, where she pursued a graduate degree at the University of Texas and received her librarian certification. After graduating in 1975, she

became the elementary librarian for Rosedale, which was then a non-specialized school.

She taught at Rosedale for four years, stopping when she had her first child, Paul (BCS Class of '96). Soon came her other son, Kile ('99), and Morrow became a homemaker for seven years to raise her children. When she finally came to Brentwood in 1982, BCS only went through eighth grade with 250 students, and Morrow was the first librarian.

Dr. Libby Weed, who became the elementary principal two years later, says Morrow often strikes people as "prim and proper" but has another side that might surprise some. For instance, Dr. Weed recalled one fantastic story Morrow told of her high school years about a day at the prom. Sandra Johnson was wearing a pink dress, and for some reason she decided to make her light blonde hair match the dress. No lie – she dyed her hair pink for the prom. In this way, Morrow's fellow teachers know that she has a spontaneous side to her personality, though they also appreciate her qualities of consistency and dedication.

"One of the things people may not be aware of is that she reads hundreds of books every year," Dr. Weed says.

This is due to Children's Crown Award, which annually presents a list of books that are nominated for their concord to Christian standards. Morrow established the Crown Award with BCS president Marquita Moss and other faculty in 1993. Every year, authors and publishers across the country send books to Morrow for her to review and select. She reads as many as she can, but she recruits help from other teachers and friends.

The Crown Award and the new Lamplighter and Gallery Awards for older and younger students have been growing in popularity among Christian schools over the years. Only one month ago, Morrow received an e-mail from a school in Bucharest, Romania, saying



photo: Marisol Hernandez

Story Time In cultivating a love of learning and reading among elementary students, Sandra Morrow regularly reads portions of exceptional literature to classes.

that they had found the Crown award on the Internet and were beginning to use it. Thus, the Crown Award is now international. Morrow says that this is a remarkable example of how God works in tremendous ways out of small means.

"She is a strong believer in what she thinks is important," Moss says.

Morrow has received honors from both LCU and ACU, and by both the Texas and National Christian Schools Associations, for her ongoing work in securing Christian reading material for children.

Though the reading awards take up a lot of her time, Morrow still enjoys her regular job

of being a librarian in Brentwood. She sits quietly at her desk, checking books in and out for young students, while sweet music and singing rings out from the choir room across the hall. Morrow says that coming from her public school background, she deeply appreciates BCS. She feels supported by the administration and loves working with children's literature.

"I can't imagine living anywhere else or working anywhere else," she says.

Morrow says that if she has a dream, it is for the reading awards to leave a legacy of uplifting books that will remain for future generations of students.

Seniors emerge successful from dreaded SATs

taylor SHAW
reporter

Stephane Montgomery slowly rolled out of bed thinking 6:30 a.m. was way too early to be getting up, especially on a Saturday. It was Oct. 10, and thousands of seniors around the country were rising early for the same reason, the SAT. Montgomery had been studying hard in the weeks before the test from one of the SAT study books many BCS seniors could be seen carrying around every day.

"I studied a lot for the test because colleges look at your scores and there's a good chance you can get a scholarship if you do well," Montgomery said.

For many students, the SAT (which originally stood for Scholastic Aptitude Test but now stands alone) is extremely important if they are

counting on getting into certain schools, or if they are expecting to earn scholarships which might help them get through school financially.

"I've been studying for the SAT for a long time, and in the summer I took a class to help me prepare," said senior Charles Kim, one of many seniors who decided to take a prep class for the test.

The hard work of many of the students at Brentwood paid off when the scores were issued online and students rushed to computers to see how they had fared. Several scored very high on the test, including senior Matthew Gardner, who had a 2360 on the test, the highest grade in the class. Several other students also reported scoring more than 2000 on the test, well above the national average of about 1500.

Gardner got this near-perfect score without even preparing specifically for the test,

although his dedication to academics certainly has served as preparation. Gardner also had a pointer for students taking the SAT: When taking the test, do it once without making any random guesses and do it as many times as you can with guessing, in order to determine the best strategy. Most colleges only look at a person's highest score.

A lot of students have different opinions about the accuracy of the test and how important it is to higher-education plans.

"I think the test is a good idea, but some people just aren't good at taking tests and it's not an accurate indicator of how smart those people are," senior Jacob Cardenas said.

Many seniors who aren't the best test takers were aggravated by the exam because it is so vital to achieving the education goals that they have.

"It's annoying that I get really good grades and everything," one senior said, "but I'm not that good at taking tests, so I'm going to have to retake the SAT to try and get a better score."

Despite the troubles that some students had with the test, most seniors remained optimistic. Those who did not earn a satisfactory score on their first test have either taken it again or have made plans to.

While BCS guidance counselor Lacy Dyke acknowledges that the SAT is important, she points out it is not the only factor in gaining acceptance to college.

"Keep in mind that colleges consider the whole package when comparing student applications," she said.

Dyke said schools take into account grades, difficulty of courses taken, extracurricular activities, and volunteer work.

Tested early, Lady Bears prepared for district

megan **MONACELLI**
sports editor

The Lady Bears lost their opening district game to rival Hyde Park 43-41 Tuesday night at the Quarries. The team was ready to play a tough game after losing to this same team Saturday in the championship game of the BCS Invitational Tournament.

Down by four at the half, Brentwood stayed within five points the entire second half. Senior Ashley Clement scored a three pointer with five seconds remaining in the game to bring the score to within two.

"You out-hustled them tonight," coach Devan Loftis told his team after the game. "But we couldn't make our free throws and lay-ups, and that's what cost the game."

Last weekend the Lady Bears got second place in the BCS Invitational Tournament, losing to Hyde Park 54-41 in the championship.

"It was disappointing to not win our own tournament, but second place is still good," Loftis said. "The game allowed us to learn where our weaknesses are and what we need to work on."

The Lady Bears' current record is 7-6 (0-1 in district). According to the four seniors on the team, the goal is a fifth-consecutive district championship.

According to Loftis, the team is playing a tougher district this year, and going undefeated is not necessary to win district.

Following are the team's recent results.

11/6: @ Austin Waldorf School 47-24 W

Clement was the leading scorer with 15 points.

11/10: Thorndale 52-48 W

Loftis said this was the toughest, most physical game so far and that work and determination are what got the team the victory. Clement led

with 19 points, and senior Tyla Wells had 16. Thorndale is a 1A UIL team who beat the Lady Bears last season.

11/17: @ Leander Rouse 39-21 W

The Lady Bears beat this 3A UIL team and Clement led with 19 points. Senior Katie Miertschin took an elbow to the face which resulted in a bloody nose.

"We can compete with most 3A and 4A public schools," Loftis said afterward.

11/19-21: @ Lampasas Tourn. L/L/L

In three games against 4A and 5A public schools with much taller players, Brentwood competed well. They began Thursday with an overtime loss to Lubbock High.

Friday they lost by 20 to Dripping Springs. In that game, Clement led the team with 16 points and was 10 for 10 at the foul line. Wells took an elbow to the eye which resulted in an open wound. She did not play the remainder of the game and received four stitches above her right eye when she arrived back in Austin.

Saturday's game was a loss to Lampasas, and Clement again led the team with 15 points. Loftis said these games were tough, but were good preparation for district.

11/23: @ San Antonio Lutheran 48-43 W

The tired Lady Bears traveled down to San Antonio hoping to start a new winning streak. Despite Wells' injury, she played in this game. According to Loftis, the team played well early in the game but had to overcome a poor third quarter to pull out the victory.

11/24: @ St. Michael's 44-43 L

Down by two at the half, the team stayed within four points the entire second half. Clement led with 20 points and Wells fouled out with less than 15 seconds remaining. Loftis said this was a tough game, but the girls gave their all.

12/01: Austin Royals 49-47 W

The second home game of the season was a



photo: Bear Tracks

Incoming Freshman Morgan Vandygriff prepares to catch a pass during a recent JV game against St. Andrew's. The Lady Bears started district play Tuesday night.

victory. Clement led the team with 16 points. Loftis said this was a good match-up and the Royals played strong defense.

12/03-05: BCS Invitational Tourn. W/L

The Lady Bears had a bye the first round after a school dropped out of the tournament. This also allowed the JV to play in the losers' bracket. The varsity beat Regents 50-39 in the second round of the tournament, and Clement scored a season-high of 26 points.

Before the Lady Bears took the court for the championship against Hyde Park, Loftis told the girls it would be "a war out there." Sure

enough, the game consisted of 52 total fouls. This required some freshmen and sophomores to step up and play more minutes than they usually would.

Loftis said the loss was disappointing, but it gave the team a stronger desire to come back, play smart, and make a positive response in Tuesday's game. While the girls couldn't quite pull off a win in the rematch, the game was closer, the plays were well executed, and the intensity was higher.

"I'm really proud of your effort out there tonight," Loftis said after Tuesday's game.

Guys start slow, eager for injuries to heal

derek **TRESSLAR**
reporter

The varsity boys are not off to a good start this season, but the team still has high hopes for what they believe they can achieve this year.

After traveling to tournaments in New Braunfels and Tyler and playing several difficult opponents, they finished their pre-district season with a 1-11 record.

On Tuesday, they opened district with an 89-31 loss to Hyde Park. Already without senior John Alan Archer, who sprained his ankle three weeks earlier, Brentwood had to play without two other senior starters as well: Ben Kim and leading scorer Jacob Cardenas.

Senior Trevor Atherton led the Bears with 14 points, including three consecutive three-pointers.

"We have a lot of good players; we just need to learn how to play together better and to play smarter basketball, and I believe we will have a good season despite our poor start," senior Taylor Shaw said.

The team believes they are continuing to

improve.

"We're getting better every practice and every game," senior captain Jacob Cardenas said. "We are all becoming better friends in the process and getting to know one another better as people and as basketball players, and eventually that will show on the court."

Head coach David Peyton said that although the Bears' record is not what he had hoped it would be, part of that is due to injuries, and he is encouraged by the fact that the rest of the team has not shown signs of discouragement because of the missing players.

"They are giving me great effort, and my expectations are to see improvement throughout the remainder of the season," Peyton said.

Following are the team's results thus far.

11/14: @ New Braunfels Tourn. L/L/L/L

After losing to New Braunfels Christian and San Marcos Home School on the first day of the tournament, the Bears headed into day two determined to improve against St. Gerard. Things started well, as Archer had 17 points in the first quarter. But then he left the game with a sprained ankle, and the demoralized Bears

lost 58-47. In the next game, Cardenas scored 10 points as BCS lost 44-36 against the same St. Gerard team.

11/17: @ Leander Rouse 63-36 L

Cardenas led the way with 19 points, but the Bears missed too many free throws and lay-ups to come away with the victory.

11/19-21: @ Tyler Tournament L/L/W

Brentwood had trouble scoring and shooting against St. Thomas Episcopal and lost 57-29. Against Trinity the Bears lost 56-40. After these two losses the Bears played poorly in the first half against Katy Faith West but still led by a point. They came out with new intensity after the break and broke out for a 74-48 win. Cardenas led all scorers with 25 points.

11/29: @ St Michael's 93-32 L

Cardenas had 14 points in this disheartening loss against a very good and well developed team.

12/3-5: BCS Invitational Tourn. L/L/L

The Bears lost their first game to a team from California. Their next two games were losses to Bay Area and Austin Royals.

Food drive nets 4,857 items

rachel **ORICK**
reporter

Secondary students started bringing items on Nov. 16 and did so until the all-school chapel on Nov. 24.

Elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed said this year's goal was to collect five to seven items per student, and the total of 4,857 items surpassed this. In 2002 the school collected a record total of 7,305 items.

Karla Smith's kindergarten won the elementary ice cream party by bringing 15.8 items per student, and Michele Broadway's seventh-grade math class earned a party by bringing 10 items per student. In high school, Sandy Wiles' class of seven students brought a total of 241 cans, earning them an extended off-campus lunch.

Collected items were taken to the Capital Area Food Bank.

Soccer team low on wins, high on optimism

gabe **BRETERNITZ**
reporter

In direct contrast with last year's varsity soccer team, which managed to go its first 10 games undefeated, this year's team went the first 10 without a win. The team's record still looks bleak on paper: two wins, two ties, nine losses.

However, coach Joseph Walker says this was

Elementary and JH basketball

Junior high girls AA

Coach: Kaylee Loftis

Comment: "I hope the girls will learn how to work hard and play to their full potential."

Junior high boys AA

Coach: Greg Sansom

Comment: "This team has a ton of potential, but it is going to take a lot of discipline to turn that into real performance and success on the court."

Junior high girls A

Coach: Katie Smith

Comment: "We have been practicing for a couple of weeks now and are inexperienced but improving."

Junior high boys A

Coach: Nathan Smith

Comment: "The goal this year is to learn to play at a higher level while implementing a new offensive scheme centered on the read-and-react system."

Elementary girls AA

Coach: Nicole Ryan

Elementary boys AA

Coach: Casey Fowler

Comment: "The guys are coming out and working hard every practice and getting better every time we meet."

Elementary girls A

Coach: Katie Smith

Comment: "For most of the girls, this is their first year playing. But they are eager to learn, and I expect much improvement throughout the season."

Elementary boys A

Coach: Adam Herndon

Comment: "I don't hope we win as much as I hope we develop players into better young men and more fundamentally sound basketball players."

"by design."

"Last year we played easier teams early on and we weren't prepared for district," Walker said. "Playing a tough schedule early on helps us figure out our strengths and weaknesses."

The team is also optimistic.

"Seems like every year we either start off well and don't reach expectations at the end of the year, or vice versa," senior Alex Georgulas said. "So I'm actually kind of glad we started off like we did."

Through the first 13 games, senior captain Caleb Geer leads the team with three goals, and several other players have scored twice.

Following are the team's results thus far.

11/6: @ Awty 4-0 L

The BCS varsity and JV traveled to Houston for the first game of the season. Several varsity players agreed that the team was hampered by a lack of aggression and their sub-par fitness level. Last year, Awty defeated Brentwood in the playoffs and advanced to the state championship before losing to Northland Christian.

11/7: @ Northland 3-0 L

Following the Awty game the day before, 13 team members, including several starters, returned to Austin for a Saturday musical practice. This left the team severely underpowered for their game against the defending state champs. However, the Northland team was also missing several key players that were playing for their school's football team in the playoffs.

11/10: St. Stephen's 2-1 L

There was a large turnout for the Bears' first home game as several teachers allowed their classes to attend the game. Senior Alex Georgulas scored the first goal of the season for the varsity team off of a penalty kick.

11/13: St. Michael's 6-1 L

For the Bears' second home game, there was another conflict with the fall musical rehearsals, and the team was once again missing several key players. The game started well for BCS, with junior David Ko, last year's leading scorer, scoring the first goal of the game. But when the halftime whistle blew, the score was tied 1-1. Tempers ran high due to frustrations about a lack of team play and the missing team members; senior goalie Stephen Yu refused to play for the rest of the game. The Bears then allowed five second-half goals.

"I realize that my actions were completely uncalled for and if it had been anyone else, I would be seriously disappointed," Yu recanted. "I'm sorry, and it won't happen again."

11/17: St. Andrew's 1-1 T

The third home game gave the Bears their first non-negative result. The only goal was scored by Geer, assisted by Ko.

Before the game, the assistant referee in charge of checking Brentwood's equipment jokingly told the team that the center referee was "pretty sensitive" and they should "take it easy on him." His joke became a prophecy. The game was rife with controversy from nearly the opening minutes. Many St. Andrew's players complained rudely about the referee's calls, and the game was stopped several times to settle disputes — once to award a yellow card to a St. Andrew's player. A goal by Brentwood was taken away due to what many considered a

questionable offside call.

11/19-21: @ Liberty Tournament L/L

Brentwood traveled to Argyle, near Dallas, for a tournament that consisted of several strong teams. The Bears played only two games, after which the remainder of the tournament was cancelled due to rain.

The first game, against Houston Christian, was a 3-0 loss for the Bears. The second game, against Liberty Christian, was a 2-1 loss. The Bears' goal was scored by junior Gabriel Breternitz, assisted by senior Zach Ellis. Despite the loss, the team was happy about the way they played their final game.

11/23-24: @ John Cooper Tourn. L/L/L

After a short weekend of rest, the team traveled to Houston for another tournament. They played three games, once again all losses. After opening with a 1-0 loss to Houston Kincaid, the second game versus district rivals San Antonio Christian was a demoralizing 4-0 loss. The final game, against host team John Cooper, was a 5-1 loss, with the Bears' only goal of the tournament scored by Breternitz.

12/3-5: BCS Shootout W/T/W

The Bears went two weeks without touching a soccer ball due to rainy weather that made it impossible to practice and forced the cancella-

tion of a rematch with St. Andrew's.

The inaugural BCS tournament gave the varsity team their first positive result of the season: They steamrolled a team called Cornerstone 7-0. Ellis and sophomore Jimmy Lidgely each scored two goals, and the other three were scored by Geer, Ko, and senior Stephane Montgomery.

"It felt kind of bad running up the score like that," senior Brian Lam acknowledged, "but it feels good to finally beat someone!"

The second game ended in a 1-1 tie versus San Antonian JV, with the only goal coming from Geer again. Since the San Antonian Apaches had defeated Cornerstone 8-0, they won the tie-breaker and advanced to the championship while Brentwood played for third place. In this game, a goal by Lee gave the Bears a 1-0 win over Houston Second Baptist.

"We're an undefeated third-place team!" joked seniors Tommy McCaffety and captain Carlos Zaragoza.

The two team captains, Geer and Zaragoza, received all-tournament plaques. District rivals Victoria St. Joseph won first place. Coincidentally, this was the team Brentwood was scheduled to open district with three days later.



On the Ball Junior David Ko wins the ball in a game against St. Michael's last month while trying to remain unobtrusive in his mismatched shorts. The teams were tied 1-1 at halftime before the Bears' goalie decided to take the second half off.

photo: Bear Tracks

Snow

continued from page 2

of a game, pounding the ball energetically in the midst of the white flecks. Nearby the fourth graders had just finished their recess, and they could be heard chattering excitedly about the winter surprise as they filed off in lines. Finally, the kindergarten through second-grade teachers decided to capture the rare moment by having class pictures in the courtyard. All the boys and girls were running and shouting in joy.

"I can't believe it!" one of the children shouted. "After 25 years, it's snowing!"

Austin has, in fact, had a few recorded snowfalls since the "big" snow of 1985, but in all probability, this occasion will not return for several years.

Dinner

continued from page 2

dinner, said many teachers found the orator to be quite humorous at the conference.

School president Marquita Moss said she has heard him speak twice before.

"He is one of those who can make you laugh until your sides split," Moss said.

To end the evening, a live auction was hosted by BCS parents Jason and Lisa Rzepniewski. Items up for bidding included gift certificates, camps and classes, and even a football signed by Colt McCoy and Jordan Shipley.

For the past three years the dinner has been held at the Austin Hilton Hotel, but Valdes said returning the event to the Arboretum was much more convenient for parking.

Along with Jog-a-Fun, the Partnership Dinner is one of the two major fundraisers for the school. Valdes said it covers the expenses not paid for with tuition, therefore keeping student payments lower than at most other schools.

"The dinner is always a festive affair," said Valdes. "It is fun and entertaining, and it's nice to see everyone all dressed up for a holiday party."

Marriage heroes share stories, tips

kailey **RODDEN**
reporter

"Hello, door, who is this?"

Secondary registrar Nancy Tindel's pleasant voice is so often heard answering Brentwood's door system whenever you walk to and from school buildings. But many people don't know much about this wonderfully sweet and patient lady, especially the fact that she has the longest marriage among Brentwood employees. Forty-five years, to be exact.

BCS has 10 faculty members who have been married 30 or more years. The Bear Facts recently spoke with four of these: Tindel, fourth-grade teacher Jodie Coyle (43 years), English II and humanities teacher Craig Moore (38 years), and elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed (44 years).

BF: What is your favorite time that you've had with your spouse?

Tindel: There are many wonderful times I've had, but I would have to say the births of my children. It was such a highlight of my marriage – children are so precious. You'll never forget the births of your children. The weddings of my three children are also some of my favorite times.

Coyle: Being with our Christian friends and church, first and foremost. Being with our three children and traveling with my husband are close runners-up.

Moore: Our absolute favorite thing to do is have picnics. We love them! We also love going on vacations and visiting our families.

Weed: My husband and I love to bike together. Sometimes on a weekend we put our bicycles in his truck, drive to the Hyde Park area, and bike from there to the UT campus, downtown, or to Lady Bird Lake. Occasionally we take a "middle of the night" bike ride. On a warm weeknight with a full moon, we ride our bikes at 3 a.m. down Congress Avenue, up the Drag through the UT campus, and all around the neighborhood where Michael grew up and where I used to teach school.

BF: How has having kids affected your marriage?

Tindel: It certainly changes your lifestyle. It helped me and my husband mature. We started thinking more about our spiritual life and

what we would teach our children about God. Our main goal became teaching them the right things so that they will go to Heaven.

Coyle: It brought me and my husband a lot of joy. Raising our children was one of the most joyful things I have shared with my husband.

Moore: For us, having kids is wonderful. My wife and I planned on having kids from the very beginning. It's such fun because so much of our marriage was spent going to their games and events.

Weed: In every possible way. Probably the majority of our disagreements have been about how to handle different aspects of rearing children, so having children brings complications. But having children builds a family and makes you love your spouse in new ways, also. Your love for your children is so great, and your children are a part of both of you; so having children draws you together again even more strongly. Then when grandchildren come along – oh, what a blessing that is!

BF: What is your favorite thing about your spouse?

Tindel: I think his optimism and spontaneity. He'll just take me to do things on the spur of the moment. It's really romantic! I also really appreciate his sense of humor with me and my children. A really funny thing is that he guessed the gender of all three of our children correctly!

Coyle: His love of God and his humor. We have had a lot of laughs and love together.

Moore: My wife is very good at planning things, especially picnics. She's also conscientious and very spiritual. She is such great fun to be around.

Weed: I fell in love with his sense of humor. He sent me a letter out of nowhere one summer and I found myself laughing out loud and wanting to spend more time with him. He still makes me laugh.

BF: What are some tips on keeping a long-lasting relationship healthy? How do you keep it from getting old?

Tindel: I would say to be constant in prayer together, and to have good communication with each other.

Coyle: Well, just make the most of the good and bad times. Work together through those times and appreciate how forgiving the other

is. You have to remember you made a commitment to each other and God.

Moore: You have to recognize your spouse is a full-fledged human being with thoughts of their own. My wife wasn't made just for me, she is her own person. We look out for each other, too.

Weed: Start with the understanding that you have made a sacred promise – to God and to your spouse – that you will never break. Then, when difficult times come, you don't think, "Do we want to make this work?" You know that you will, because you have given your word. You talk and pray about your problems, knowing that God will help you work them out. I think it's important to tell your spouse "I love you" every day.



photo: submitted

Commitment Secondary registrar Nancy Tindel married her husband Jerry on Nov. 14, 1964. Three children (and two BCS grads) later, they are still in love.

Peppy pet parrot provides peripheral pleasure

erica **SHULTZ**
reporter

"Whoa, is that a bird?"

Why yes, Captain Obvious, that is a bird perched upon music teacher Sandra Strietelmeier's shoulder. His name is Finney, and he is a parrot with attitude.

Strietelmeier bought Finney on impulse early this year. She had wandered into Tomlinson's pet supplies store in search of a ferret worthy of the name "Finnegan the Ferret" and met a sociable bird instead. She asked to hold him, and it was love at first peck. Wanting to hold on to at least one part of her original plan, she kept

the name, minus the ferret part, of course.

In the beginning of each school day, the medium-sized, green and red bird can be found chilling in Strietelmeier's room, either in his cage or walking around having some fun. He likes to knock things off tables and then peer down sideways to see where they landed. He doesn't seem to like interviews with the pa-

parazzi (aka Bear Facts reporters), but he does seem to enjoy how they taste. This reporter suffered no serious injuries but did need a couple

Band-aids. The bites were probably deserved though, since the reporter didn't even introduce herself and paid more attention to Strietelmeier than to him.

"He is learning some new words and phrases... such as 'you my baby.'"

Every afternoon, Finney can be found taking a break from the students and spending some quality time with the nice ladies in the elementary office. They don't seem to mind his presence, as he is a quiet bird that rarely makes a fuss.

That's all very nice, but some people have

wondered why he comes to school in the first place. Well, nobody wants to be left home alone with nobody to talk to all day. After leaving him home while they went on vacation, the Strietelmeier family realized that it was best for Finney not to be left alone. Prior to the vacation, he was able to say "Finney Boy," but afterward he forgot. He is learning some new words and phrases, though, such as "you my baby." He is also re-learning "Finney."

"He's got a lot of character," Strietelmeier says.

And she doesn't just say that because he's her bird. Everyone who knows him will agree.