



# THE BEAR FACTS

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BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

DECEMBER 2010



## IN SHORT



### Construction update

The superintendent of construction company Zapalac-Reed said he targets July to finish Brentwood Christian's new Center for Science and the Arts. He said he expects to begin erecting the steel frame in mid-December.

Since resuming work in late September, superintendent Patrick Vasquez and his crew of about 13 workers have been working about 56 hours a week, which includes eight hours on Saturdays. Vasquez said their working time will drop off to 40-hour weeks as the weather gets colder.

Zapalac-Reed is the same company that built the Upper Elementary School building in 2003.

### Jog-a-fun prizes

Students who turn in 20 legitimate Jog-a-fun sponsor letters before the Christmas break will be entered in a drawing for a Nintendo Wii, according to Brandon Tatum, Brentwood's new director of development. Students who want a free T-shirt need to submit letters by Jan. 28.

Tatum said awards will be given out to 12 individuals this year: the top three money-raisers in both elementary and secondary, the top male and female lap runners in elementary and junior high, and the top male and female finishers in the 5K. Prizes will include iPod shuffles, video cameras, digital cameras, and Razor scooters.

### Seventh graders win

Seventh-graders Andrew Armstrong and Joshua Sass competed in a Texas Math and Science Coaches Association meet in San Antonio on Dec. 4 and represented BCS well. They took first and second place, respectively, in History; Armstrong also finished first in Mathematics and placed in Number Sense and Calculator. This was the first time BCS students have participated in a TMSCA meet.

## Historic victory for Lady Bears soccer

elena **BATLLE**  
reporter

After the final whistle, there is utter excitement with cheering, high-fiving, and hugging. Girls on the Brentwood Christian soccer team jump up in glee, some body-slaming each other, and others just patting their backs and laughing with joy.

This was the spontaneous reaction to the first-

ever victory by the BCS varsity girls' soccer program. It happened to be their first district game – a 3-2 victory over St. Dominic Savio on Nov. 30 – meaning they were 1-0 in district; 1-1 overall.

Since then, the team picked up a tie on Dec. 3 in Kerrville against district opponent Our Lady of the Hills. Then, at home on Dec. 7, the girls defeated Pharr Oratory 2-1, running their undefeated district record to 2-0-1.

They play at home today against New Braunfels Christian.

Head coach Steven Colwell has been training and working hard with the girls, especially the 12 players who have little or no experience at all with the sport.

“We still have a lot to work on as a team, and as individuals,” he said. “Once we start communicating on the field, it will help fix a lot of the smaller problems that are hanging around.”

The first game in BCS varsity girls' history was on Nov. 4 against SACS in San Antonio. It was an intense game, which was unexpected by most of the girls, who did not think their inexperienced team could compete very well.

“We thought we weren't ready,” freshman Erica DuPond said.

Despite these doubts, Colwell said the girls showed a lot of effort. Although they lost 5-2, the girls left San Antonio with smiles of satisfaction.

“Our team did a lot of learning in the first game,” Colwell said. “Eight of our 11 starters had never played a high school-level soccer

see **COLWELL**, page 6



**First ever** The victorious Lady Bears pose in front of the scoreboard attesting to their 3-2 win over St. Dominic Savio on Nov. 30. It was the first win for the girls' program.

## Students volunteer at Chuy's parade

mike **LEE**  
reporter

Even the freezing weather could not prevent 18 Brentwood high school students from getting out of bed a little earlier than usual on Saturday, Nov. 27. The students, cuddled up with blankets, gathered at the corner of 10th and Congress by 8 a.m. to participate in the 22nd annual Chuy's "Children Giving to Children" Parade, better known among the students simply as Chuy's Parade.

BCS students have assisted with the parade for more than 10 years. According to sponsor Linda Riedesel, the students have assumed various roles in past parades, handling balloons, collecting toys, wearing costumes, and even marching. This year, the volunteers took the role of elves, whose job was to hold the lines during the parade to ensure safety of the children.

The parade started at 11 a.m., so the 18 "elves" spent three hours preparing. Free donuts and hot cocoa were provided as the students tried to cope with the cold, as well as Santa hats and "Santa's helper" T-shirts, which were to be worn during the parade and to be kept by the volunteers.

“At the beginning, it was freezing,” sophomore Jackson Graessle said. “But then after a while, it got pretty warm in the sun.”

Annually held on the Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend, the parade has its mission in collecting toys for the Blue Santa program, which distributes toys for needy children in the holiday season. Children who attend the parade are encouraged to bring gifts, which are collected and loaded on the truck by Santa's helpers toward the end of the parade. The toys are to be distributed right before

see **PARADE**, page 6

## Christmas at BCS is songs, stories, service

kailey **RODDEN**  
reporter

The sound of Christmas music on local radio stations is heard as students race out of their parents' cars to get away from the startling cold. Teachers rushing to enter grades, students scrambling to study for mid-term exams, fathers chopping down trees for the first graders, little children swinging their small gift bags full of knick-knacks from Santa Shop, and Rosedale trips show that it's Christmas time at Brentwood Christian School.

The third annual Barnes & Noble book fair was held Dec. 4-5 at the bookstore in the Arboretum. Secondary students congregated to receive extra credit in their first-period classes, and elementary students gathered to listen to elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed read Christmas stories on Saturday. Encore performed classic holiday songs on Sunday afternoon while students from the junior class wrapped presents to raise money.

Secondary librarian Tere Hager began the book fair in 2007, and BCS receives 40 percent of the profits. They also get a large

see **CHRISTMAS**, page 5



**Large and in charge:** Kia Khadem

# U.S. still leads in freedom, opportunity

America. The land of the free, the home of the brave, and not to mention the great old melting pot. The USA is my home country, even though I am of Iranian descent, and I'm proud to live in it.

Recently our country has come under attack because of our unique western culture, our military decisions, and our foreign relationship skills. Bashing the good ol' stars and stripes has become a popular pastime in many countries around the globe.

Regarding some of the general complaints, in last month's issue of The Bear Facts our country was insulted because of our so-called "obesity issue" and because of our "Big SUVs and pickup trucks that consume a great amount of gas." Or who could forget our tendencies to be "very lazy and wasteful"?

Ignorant fools can insult America all they want, but they don't appreciate the gifts that they've been given. Among these, the greatest is freedom – freedom to express yourself and your views. Some other countries tell you what to think, how to think, and when to think, while in America you have the freedom to live how you want. This is the American Dream – a chance of redemption, and a clean slate without any hindrances.

Take, for example, the Balkans. Shattered by years of war amongst themselves, even little children have been toughened by their turmoil. Dead bodies in the streets, lost family and friends – these are just parts of their normal lives.

A Balkan immigrant who has known nothing in life but violence and death can start an honest life here, raise a family, and live the American Dream. While a good majority of European countries are also free, America beats other countries in that our population is more diverse. We welcome immigrants with open arms and give them opportunity to start a new life. We also take great measures to treat every person equally, as evidenced in such phrases as "innocent until proven guilty" and "constitutional rights."

Many of us take this for granted, simply because we haven't experienced the political turmoil and social injustices of tyrannical countries. But according to a 2006 Freedom House Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties, less than 50 percent of the world has "complete freedom."

We often live our lives not appreciating, or even acknowledging, this great freedom.

In their home country of Iran, my family is shunned and rejected by society. Before they fled to the U.S., they were hunted by the fascist government and Islamic radicals "for the good of the country." In America, my family doesn't have to worry over these trite affairs and can live their daily lives without fear of persecution or rejection.

Our country also allows a great deal of

economic freedom. Unlike other governments, such as in Russia or China, the United States allows a great deal of freedom in capitalism, stepping in only to aid a failing business or enforce justice. In fact, according to 2010 Index of Economic Freedom, we are the eighth most economically free country in the world, with more freedom than The United Kingdom and Germany.

According to the CIA's website, America's annual GDP is more than \$14 trillion, while China and Japan are next with \$8.8 trillion and \$4.1 trillion, respectively. We have had the world's largest economy since World War II; we continue to be the great superpower of this generation.

America is also home to many influential companies such as Microsoft, Dell, and Apple. Countless other companies such as McDonald's, Borders, and even Whole Foods continue to help shape our country and change the world.

The fact is, under our current economic structure, many companies thrive, which opens up new economic opportunities for the average American laborer.

Look at the humble computer. Do you see it existing in its current state without American influence? I imagine a world still using cassettes and Polaroid cameras.

America was a country founded for the people, by the people. That's why it was created. We are a country where all people, regardless of race, gender, religion, or culture, can live together equally under the eyes of the government, and make a name for themselves.

**Bretz knows best:** Gabriel Breternitz

## Holidays: for values and virtues

There is one week until Christmas Break; merely one week stands between us and the freedom and relaxation of the holidays. Just one week until the last day of school in 2010! Just one week! It's going to be the longest week in the history of time and space.

It's about the right time for a break. When the weather starts getting colder, the math-and-science portions of our brains slow down and hibernate for the winter, while the English parts begin to wax poetic about the smallest of things, like the vibrant fall colors of the leaves (in December), the warming steam rising from a cup of hot cocoa, and the single week remaining in the academic school year.

Furthermore, we need a break. At least I do – this past month has been one of the most hectic months of my life. Every day is a deadline: research papers, projects, lab reports, calculus, college applications, essays, and more. When you add everyday responsibilities to the mix, things get even more complicated. Life becomes a race to keep up; it becomes a circus in which we juggle all our activities, trying not to let any fall.

That's why the holidays are terrific. Not only do they provide a much needed relief from all the action, but they also give us a chance to refocus our priorities. Holidays are days set aside specifically for a single idea: Memorial Day is to remember sacrifice, Christmas is about giving gifts (and the Ultimate Gift), Thanksgiving is for football, etc. By setting aside an entire day for one concept, we remember its importance and pay it the proper amount of respect.

It's actually kind of rare to think about the meaning of holidays. "The Reason for the Season" is just another phrase that goes in one ear and out the other this time of year. I'll admit that I tend to use holidays like extra Saturdays – but that's not the way it should be. Holidays should be about remembering what we value and lauding what's important. They are days where we get to forget the minutiae of life and instead revel in our virtues. *That's* a concept worth celebrating with a holiday (Holiday Day?).

In our eagerness for the break, let's not forget why there is a break. Make a goal of remembering, at least for a little bit, why we get to relax and enjoy ourselves. Think about the meaning of Christmas; think about the importance of giving gifts. That should make the anticipation worthwhile.

One week!

## THE BEAR FACTS

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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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The Bear Facts is available online at  
[www.brentwoodchristian.org](http://www.brentwoodchristian.org).



photos: Kay Taylor

**Mic check** Dusty Biscuit of the musical duo "The Biscuit Brothers" interviews one of the Cunningham twins during a concert in the chapel on Nov. 11. The Biscuit Brothers performed as a reward for Brentwood's young authors. See story, page 8.



# Science fair returns to BCS, brings complaints

megan **MONACELLI**  
reporter

“What is your opinion of the science fair project?” was a common topic of conversation in November among BCS high school students, and it was greeted usually with a rolling of the eyes, an exasperated sigh, and then a rant of complaints and arguments against it.

The science fair, scheduled for Jan. 19, was planned at the beginning of the school year and announced at the beginning of November by the BCS science department to give students an opportunity to explore topics of research and practice experimentation, according to committee member Juliana Ewing, who teaches Biology and Environment Science. BCS has not held a science fair since the late 1990s.

The Austin Energy Regional Science Festival, to which more than 100 BCS secondary projects could potentially advance, will be held February 23-26 at the Palmer Events Center. Students could then advance to the state fair and then internationals, held in Los Angeles.

Participation in the science fair is a

requirement for all Brentwood fourth graders, junior highers, and high school honors students; other students can receive extra credit for entering a project. The BCS fair will have a junior division for seventh- and eighth-grade students and a senior division for high school students. The elementary projects will be entered in a separate fair on Jan. 26.

Secondary students submitted research plans in late November, and these plans were then revised by the committee. The committee consists of secondary science department teachers Kristen Berry and Ewing, secondary principal Jared Lee, elementary computer teacher and parent Michelle Mohrmann, and fourth-grade teacher Glenda Morrow. After possible modifications, projects were approved and students began working.

The tight deadline for these projects yielded complaints from students, parents, and teachers.

Some teachers have expressed concern that the project spans all subjects and departments and is having an adverse affect. Had the project been implemented in a timely manner,

teachers could have adjusted their curriculum to accommodate and integrate the project into the course work, voiced one frustrated teacher.

Parents joined in on last month’s grumbling, saying it adds to the honors students already increased workload and leaves little time for commitment to extra-curricular activities. Some parents argued that the project could have been beneficial if it had been announced earlier and if it were more thought out.

Lee admits that the timing of the project and how it was presented to the student body and parents could have gone smoother. However, having a science background with a chemistry degree, Lee said students learn more in science when they “get their hands dirty” and experience hands-on learning through projects and labs. This project, he said, is a valuable opportunity for students to choose, experiment, and report on a specific area of study that interests them.

Lee also said the project is an addition to the science department that will enhance curriculum and is something the entire administration has desired for many years.

“The BCS administration is constantly

looking for concrete ways to enrich our already outstanding curriculum, in every subject,” Lee said. “I am confident that this project will enrich the science curriculum across the board.”

He said the final deadlines for the science fair are placed by Austin Energy, so timing concerns may be unavoidable in the years to follow.

Ewing, a new BCS teacher who has six years of experience organizing and implementing similar fairs, also defends the project and said she wondered why the school didn’t already have one.

“We need to allow students to explore different avenues of science, and this project is that opportunity,” Ewing said.

She said the project is the vehicle for students to research and explore areas of interest. It also teaches the fundamental skill of the scientific method in experimentation and prepares students for college research and writing.

“The benefits far outweigh the costs, and it shouldn’t be viewed in such a negative light,” Ewing said.

 <p><b>Point:</b> <i>“It adds to the honors students already increased workload and leaves little time for commitment to extra-curricular activities.”</i></p>	<p><b>Counterpoint:</b> <i>“Students learn more in science when they get their hands dirty and experience hands-on learning through projects and labs.”</i></p>	
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## Band, choir impress; individuals achieve state recognition

e.j. **SUNG**  
reporter

The annual fall band concert was held on Nov. 11 in the auditorium, led by director Travis Pollard. A week later, Missy Weaver directed all the choirs in their fall concert.

Between the two concerts, several students were named to all-region bands and choirs.

The band concert featured elementary beginning and advanced bands, junior high band, and high school band. As one band left and another went up to the stage to prepare, high school jazz band filled in. During the transitions, they performed three songs: “Dirty Dozen,” “Dr. Rockenstein’s Laboratory,” and “Swing Shot.”

For the last stage, the high school band played three songs: “Festival Celebration” was a light and fast song; “Serenata” was a slow song; and “Denbridge Way” was a lively song with a powerful ending.

“The band performed very well,” Pollard said. “People seemed particularly impressed with the junior high band at this concert.”

Two days later, about 600 students from Brentwood’s region tried out for the Association of Texas Small School Bands junior high all-region band. Four BCS students tried out and qualified: seventh-grader Andrew Armstrong (trombone), and eighth-graders Mia Dedear (flute), Nicole Glenn (trombone), and Jack McGuinness (trumpet).

They tried out for the ATSSB region band on Nov. 13 at Taylor Middle School and performed

with the region band at the Hutto High School Performing Arts Center on Nov. 20.

“I was a bit nervous as I went to try out with hundreds of kids, but I knew I could do it if I did it as I have practiced,” Glenn said.

Armstrong said he was very excited to hear that he made the region band.

“When Mr. Pollard showed my name on the list of the people who made it, I was very happy to see it,” Armstrong added.

The choir concert on Nov. 18 featured elementary, junior high, and high school choirs, with Encore singing between those performances. The concert’s final song was a finale by all choirs singing “You Raise Me Up.”

Director Missy Weaver said some of the students had to come back just in time for the concert because of a basketball tournament in Tyler and a soccer tournament near Dallas. After singing, the athletes had to return to their tournaments that night.

“I really appreciate their commitments to those activities and for giving their best efforts for every single minute during the concert,” Weaver said. “I am very satisfied with how they performed.”

Five out of the eight high school students who auditioned qualified for the Texas Private School Music Educators Association all-region choir: sophomores Travis Clark (tenor), Priscilla Glenn (soprano), and Anthony Milan (bass); junior Kayle Morin (alto); and senior Victoria Stewart (alto). Of those, four have qualified for the TPSMEA all-state choir.

Those included Clark, Milan, Stewart, and Morin, who is a first alternate for the choir.

The region choir will sing in a concert on

Jan. 8, and state choir will sing on Jan. 27-29 at Texas State University.



**Brass bash** Sophomore Steven Bailey plays his cornet at the band concert on Nov. 11. Behind him to the left are eighth-graders Jack McGuinness and Nicole Glenn; to the right is sophomore Matthew Onabajo. All choirs performed a week later.

photos: Bear Tracks



**SENIOR SPOTLIGHT:** Alyssa Legband

Seniors featured in the Bear Facts were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS Class of 2011.

# Singing soccer star enjoys fitting finale

**carter BOYD**  
reporter

It would seem that, this year, all of Brentwood Christian School aims to please Alyssa Legband. She arrived at Brentwood in fifth grade, and for the past seven years has been nothing but a perfect student. At long last, it is Alyssa's final year of high school, and all the changes at BCS lean in her favor.

Alyssa has played soccer avidly for all her life. Her friends describe her as "the best," or occasionally "a beast," but either way, no one can argue her talent or passion for the game. But why would a gifted soccer player spend her years at a school with no girls' soccer team?

"I didn't want to leave the people here," Alyssa explains. "I was too close to this school."

To compensate for Brentwood's lack of a team, she has played for years on a local select team, the Dallas Texans. But now, things are changing in her favor. The 2010 school year welcomed Brentwood's first ever girls' soccer team, on which Alyssa now serves as captain.

Along with soccer, Alyssa is gifted with an aptitude for singing. She lends her talent to Brentwood's elite singing group, Encore, as one of two altos. Besides singing in Encore, she shares her gift with the youth group at Hill Country Bible Church, where she has attended all her life, singing in the youth worship band, accompanied by junior Haley Decker on the guitar and other members of the congregation.

"Leading worship with Lyss is awesome," Haley says. "But so is doing anything with her. She's crazy and a lot of fun. She's just generally a great friend."

If asked, most members of the senior class, and a good portion of the rest of Brentwood Christian, would claim to be a close friend of Alyssa's. She's always cheerful, and always kind. Many describe her as quiet, or even shy, but her close friends see a different side of Alyssa.

"It was an average day of off-campus; (there were) a few juniors and some seniors, including Alyssa and me," friend and fellow senior Caleb Kronke recalls when asked about Alyssa's wild side. "We were eating at Culvers when I noticed some paper ketchup cups sitting on the table. So I looked at Alyssa and said, 'Hey, I dare you to take a shot of ketchup.' Not worrying about her taking me seriously, I told her that if she drank one, I would, too. By the time we were ready to leave, I'd forgotten about it, but she picked up a ketchup cup and just casually emptied it into her mouth."

"I didn't think she would," Caleb adds, "or I wouldn't have told her I'd do it, too. I hate ketchup."

While she has plenty of fun messing around with her friends, Alyssa is also admired for her reliability, her insight, and, when necessary, her seriousness.

"She gives great

advice. She's a great listener and I love that I can go to her for anything," one of Alyssa's closest friends, Tina Grogan, confirms. "She's there for me no matter what, and she always knows how to help. I don't know how sane I would be without her."

Always busy studying, playing, singing, or listening, Alyssa is both an excellent student and an excellent friend. While her time outside of school is divided up between soccer, Encore, homework, and friends, Alyssa also manages to busy herself during school hours, serving as a member of the National Honor Society and esteemed senior class president.

After working hard to keep up good grades throughout high school and volunteering for activities appealing to colleges, Alyssa applied to Texas A&M and hopes to attend there next fall. She is also considering the University of North Texas, as a back-up plan. She says she wants to major in child education.

Wherever she goes and whatever she does after high school, Alyssa Legband will take the place by quiet storm.

Nothing will keep her from singing, even if only for fun. Without a doubt, she will befriend everything that moves.

Wherever she ends up, Alyssa will serve as happily as she did at Brentwood: doing what she loves, helping where she can, smiling the whole time, and maybe drinking ketchup along the way.



## Clubs pop up for writers, needlers

**jenny NGUYEN**  
reporter

Passing through the hallway during lunch, you will see a great number of secondary students gathering in classrooms, talking about something that seems to be quite serious. Worried? Don't be. Your friends are not conspiring to do harm. In fact, they are working on Brentwood's newly created clubs, and they always welcome new members.

Recently, Brentwood teachers and students have initiated at least three clubs: high school and junior high writing clubs, knitting and crocheting club, and math club.

Jessica Love, the proud sponsor of junior high and high school writing clubs that started in September, said she is very content working with the passionate club members. She said the clubs provide great opportunity for those interested in writing to practice more, to share their works, and to get extra help such as on college application essays. The clubs' goals are also to help the 20-25 members prepare pieces for the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards Competition that begins in January.

During the meeting, students share their compositions, evaluate, and discuss the writings. The junior high club meets in Love's room every other week, while high school club meets every week.

"I think the purpose of this club is also to encourage you to share your work confidently," junior Caitlin Messinger said.

Love said the best part about these writing clubs is that students don't have to worry about academic grades or limitations on topics, and since the club is not a normal class, she doesn't have any pressure to grade each work. Instead, she said she really enjoys leading the club because talking with students who enjoy writing is an enormous source of encouragement.

Another club, founded by sophomores Niky McCaffety and Tiffany Truong in November, is the knitting and crocheting club, or "needlers." Everything started when a few students began knitting and crocheting to prepare for the winter. Since then, a lot of students have joined, making a new trend.

Love, who sponsors this club also, said the club exists to help everyone who likes knitting or crocheting to have a place to hang out together and have fun sharing their hobbies and interests, as well as working in a group. The group, for example, is making a sampler quilt by using a collection of small pieces designed by individuals. This club also meets once a week in Love's room.

Some students have started to learn through the club itself.

see **NEW**, page 6

## It's not the Internet: databases aid research

**carlos FRANCO**  
reporter

Trusty research sources for an academic assignment can be tricky to find. Sometimes wrong or outdated information is organized on a webpage very neatly, giving the impression that the information is genuine.

BCS pays for three academic databases in order to give its students different reliable sources for their research. The school pays annually from \$3,000 to \$3,500 to the Proquest Company, for access to the Proquest and SIRS databases, and to Thomson Gale for the Gale Infotrac Database.

"BCS has a budget designated for these learning materials, so we can pay this quantity of money," librarian Tere Hager said.

Hager said databases have several advantages over a common Internet search. They give students access to academic works; they let students search for accurate information that has been professionally reviewed; and they

give students safer and more credible sources.

Sources provided by these databases can really help students get good information for academic research, especially in the areas of literature and history, according to Hager. Jessica Love, who teaches both of those subjects, encourages students to access these sources to get reliable information.

"I encourage my students to use the databases because the information is more reliable than just Googling," Love said.

For example, if a student wants to do research on the context in which the U.S. Constitution was written, he can access these databases and get useful and real information such as newspapers, legal documents, essays, and summaries that have been checked for accuracy by professionals.

But some students never access these databases unless it is a requirement, because it takes more time than doing a normal search on the Internet.

"I think it is too difficult to get into the

databases, because of the passwords and stuff like that," junior Trent George said.

Accessing these databases takes about two more minutes than doing a normal Internet search, but those two minutes are the reason some students prefer normal Web searches.

Hager says the databases are worth the cost because they allow BCS students to have a trustworthy source of information.

"I don't think we could have a good academic program if we don't teach how to use databases," she said. "Colleges use them, and the students need to know how to apply them correctly."

BCS teacher Craig Moore not only encourages the use of databases as sources for research, but he also thinks that applying them is necessary for students to develop critical reasoning. He said students should learn to separate bad sources from good ones.

"Being able to look for good information sources is critical for research," Moore said, "and there is where databases come in."



THE BEAR FACTS DECEMBER 2010

# Missionary math teacher lives strong

*Karen Peyton overcomes cancer, other adversities with a smile*

lanae **HOLLINGSWORTH**  
reporter

Karen Peyton is slender with short brown hair, fun-loving with a quick smile, and an Aggie with pride. She is a committed Christian who was a missionary in the Philippines and is a cancer survivor.

When asked to give one word that describes Peyton, fellow sixth-grade teacher Becky Stewart had to use two.

“Energetic and organized – for her the two go together,” Stewart says.

Peyton grew up in Borger, a small town in the Texas Panhandle, as Karen Maxwell. In high school she ran track for the Borger Bulldogs, and in her senior year she was the bulldog mascot who made ballgames fun for young children. After graduating from high school she attended college at Texas A&M, where she earned a B.S. in agricultural economics.

Her intention was to work in the food industry, but she ended up substitute teaching instead. As the year went on several of the principals for whom she subbed told her that she was a natural teacher and pestered her about going back to school to get her teaching certification. Finally they convinced her. At the end of that year Peyton returned to Aggieland and earned a B.S. in curriculum and instruction with a specialization in mathematics.

Her first teaching job was outside College Station at Normangee, where she taught for three years. During this time she married David Peyton, who is now a P.E. and Bible teacher at BCS. Mrs. Peyton says that when she saw him for the first time she was shocked at how tanned he was from water skiing. In 1990 they made the decision to become missionaries in the Philippines.

They began their mission work in 1991 and spent two years there before returning to the states for three years for Mr. Peyton to get a master’s degree. During this time Somare, now a senior at BCS, was born. The Peytons returned to the Philippines for nine more years. Their two sons, eighth-grader Jacob and fourth-grader Phillip, were born in Davao City in the Philippines.

In 2005 they moved to Austin, and Mrs. Peyton began teaching Brentwood Christian sixth graders. In her six years at BCS, she has

been the varsity and JV volleyball coach and the assistant softball coach. Though she says she loved coaching, it was just too difficult as an elementary teacher to be gone as often as coaching requires.

Peyton says she likes teaching for so many reasons. She enjoys forming relationships with students and helping them learn things.

“I love teaching, because I get the joy of seeing the kids get it,” Peyton says. She

full marathon. She runs three mornings a week with kindergarten teacher Linda Allen and two days a week with freshman Marisol Lawson, one of her former sixth graders.

Peyton and Allen have been running buddies for five years, meeting at 5:30 a.m., at the same place every time. Allen says that by running together they hold each other accountable. They run and chat, motivate and encourage.

While she enjoys the running, Allen also emphasized the great person that Peyton is. Allen said her friend is, “dedicated, upbeat, and fun-loving.” Allen also talked about Peyton’s strong faith in God through difficult times.

This faith was tested when Peyton was diagnosed with breast cancer in January. She had surgery in March and also had to undergo chemotherapy. Although many people consider cancer as horrible and even question God, Peyton says she believes it is a blessing. She says she had the best doctors in the area and knows that God’s hand was on that.

“She is a wonderful daily witness to Jesus Christ,” Dr. Weed says. “She is the kind of teacher I want my children and grandchildren to be around every day.”

Other than running, Peyton enjoys spending time with her family and watching her kids play sports. On Sundays the whole family likes to watch the TV show “Amazing Race.” Peyton says she has often thought that she and her husband would be very good at it because of their experience in foreign travels. In fact, two summers ago they toyed with the idea of trying to get on the show, but they found out how much time they would have to be away and decided it would not work with their jobs.

Someday Peyton would like to return to Asia and visit all of her friends there. She also wants to volunteer this summer at the American Cancer Society or Texas Oncology.

“I would like God to use me to be an encouragement to people going through what I went through,” Peyton says.

For now, however, she will continue to be an example of a godly woman to the students of Brentwood Christian.



photo: Gabriel Breternitz

**Get it?** Karen Peyton helps Rachel Beggs during a test. Peyton earned a degree from Texas A&M in agricultural economics before returning for a teaching degree.

especially loves to help children understand math. Recently the sixth graders were working on dividing fractions when a student told her that this was the third time that this material had been taught him, and he finally got it.

“She knew how to teach us, and she would always help us one-on-one if we needed it,” says junior Megan Gum, who was in Peyton’s first BCS class.

Elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed remembers asking Peyton what her favorite subject was during their phone interview six years ago. Dr. Weed read her response from the interview notes:

“My heart is in teaching math. I love to see the light come on when a student ‘gets it.’ So many students think they don’t like math or think math is too hard. I like to overcome that taboo and bring a joy for math to my students.”

When she is not teaching, Peyton can often be seen running. She has run in many 5Ks and is planning on running Austin’s Capitol 10K in the spring. Eventually she hopes to run a half-marathon and then work her way up to a

## Christmas celebrated by Bears

continued from page 1

discount from Barnes & Noble to buy new books for the library.

“It’s different from the traditional in-school book fair,” Hager said. “We do it the first weekend of December because it’s an easy way to buy Christmas presents.”

Other standard BCS Christmas traditions were continued by the elementary. The first graders went to the Elgin Christmas Tree Farm on Dec. 2 to cut down a tree for each class. The fourth grade also had their annual trip to see “The Nutcracker” ballet. And of course, Dr. Weed once again read different Christmas stories to each elementary class.

Another long-established tradition is Santa Shop, and this year it was held in room C108. Students flocked to the parade of knick-knacks to purchase things like erasers, bouncy balls, and miniature screwdriver sets with “Greatest Dad Ever!” blazoned on them. Seniors and juniors joined forces this year to help out with the fundraiser. The money raised will help fund this year’s Junior/Senior Formal and the Europe trip for the junior class.

The elementary school and a handful of high school girls participated in Angel Tree, a foundation that donates gifts to children who have parents in jail. The mentor group of guidance counselor Rebecca Ellis is donating to two siblings. In elementary, students are giving up their own money to donate and purchase presents, a process called “earning their wings.”

The annual Christmas Program presented by the BCS elementary will be held Thursday, Dec. 16, at 7 p.m. A Brentwood tradition for over 30 years, the program has a part for every student in the elementary. “Gifts from the Heart” is the play sixth-grade teacher Becky Stewart chose this year.

“It’s one out of about eight plays we rotate through,” said Stewart, who always directs the performance. “We have to find plays that can fit our format of everyone participating.”

In the play, a family headed off to celebrate Christmas gets stuck in a snow storm. They end up at an older couple’s house and discuss the true meaning of Christmas.

The fifth- and sixth-grade band performs first, and then they are also integrated into the play with the choir. Along with the six main characters generally played by older elementary students, kindergarten through fourth grade gets to sing and be a part of the show.

“Our goal is not to just tell the story of Christmas, but the whole story of Jesus,” Stewart said.



# After slow start, soccer boys 2-1 in district play

ciro **CASTRO**  
reporter

Even though the Bears lost eight of the eleven games they have played so far, they won two of their three district games, which are the only significant ones.

Through the first 11 games, senior Will You leads the team with five goals, and senior



photo: The Bear Tracks

**Heads up** Senior Will You heads the ball during the Bears' home district game versus San Marcos. Brentwood won 2-1.

## Parade gives toys to needy children

continued from page 1

Christmas, and the program presented toys to over 15,000 needy children last year.

The parade not only included opportunities for sharing, but also for having fun. Containing entertainment both for eyes and ears, the parade featured festive holiday floats, marching bands, giant inflatable balloons, and, of course, Santa. The parade was also televised live on KEYE-42.

Although the volunteers had to keep their eyes on the children throughout the parade, they were still able to have a fun time, according to senior Caleb Kronke.

"There were children pushing the line into the road, but it was fun – all the kids loved it," he said.

The Children Giving to Children Parade was first inspired by Chuy's co-owner Mike Young, who in 1987 helped start an annual toy drive by Chuy's and KLBJ-FM. The parade has since become one of Austin's most cherished holiday traditions.

captain Gabe Breternitz has four. You and senior David Ko have two assists each.

"We need to try to have better chemistry," senior captain Brandon Jones said. "We should try to be a close, more compact team."

Players agreed with Jones, wanting to be closer and not divided into groups. Coach Jesse Jordan has noted another weakness.

"Another area we are having problems with is discipline," Jordan added. "We need to have better discipline in the team."

Following are the team's recent results. (\*denotes district games)

### 11/9: St. Stephen's 2-1 L

The Bears didn't start their second home game very well and conceded a goal very early. But they fought back, and Breternitz tied the game with the team's first goal of the season. Towards the end of the game, the team was "tired and inattentive," according to assistant coach Gifton Noel-Williams, so they conceded another goal, resulting in their third loss of the season.

### 11/16: San Marcos Baptist\* 2-1 W

Exactly one week later, the team had their first district game and played their best game yet. Seniors You and Breternitz each scored a goal to lead the Brentwood Bears over the SM Bears and pick up their first win of the season. After the game, the Bears sang the Brentwood school song to the fans.

### 11/18-20: @ Liberty Tournament L/L/L

The boys played their first game of the tournament at Argyle, near Dallas, with only 10 players, due to a conflict with the choir concert. They lost their first game 5-0 to one of the best teams of the tournament. The missing players arrived on Friday afternoon to play the two games that day. The Bears lost their first game 2-0 to last year's state runner-up. The second game was a 3-0 loss against the

host school.

"We played against very strong teams in this tournament," Jordan said. "That was a good opportunity for us to improve ourselves and be strong for our next district game."

### 11/22: Victoria St. Joseph 4-1 L

The weather for the Bears' eighth game of the season was almost perfect – not too hot, but a little cold and windy. A goal by Breternitz, assisted by senior David Ko, gave the team a lead in the early stages. However, Victoria did not give up and scored two goals in the first half, followed by two more in the second half.

"After each goal Victoria scored, our intensity went down," Noel-Williams said.

### 11/29: @ Pharr Oratory\* 3-1 L

The team's second district game was against a team they had never played before, at a location about 10 miles from Mexico. The weather was very hot during the entire game, which certainly affected the players. In contrast with the Bears' zero shots on goal in the first half, Oratory had 13 shots, but the score was still 0-0. But just as the second half began, the goals started coming. Oratory scored the first goal, and then Breternitz, assisted by You, tied the score. But the opponents scored the final two goals.

"We started playing better in the second half, but the other team wanted to win more than us," said sophomore Ciro Castro, Brentwood's new Brazilian player from Turkey who is not eligible to play until January.

### 12/4: Brazos Christian 2-0 W

The boys picked up their second win of the season thanks to two goals scored by You. Players agreed that the other team was not very talented overall, and Jones saw plenty of room for improvement in the Bears.

"We could have played harder," Jones said. "If we play like that in a district game, we'd

lose."

### 12/7: @ Regents\* 3-1 W

Despite the cold weather and wet field, the Bears' domination continued in this game where they played their best game yet. Regents scored the first goal but Brentwood responded quickly with a goal by You. In the second half, Ko scored on a penalty kick, and You, assisted by Ko, scored his fifth goal of the season.

"We played with very high intensity throughout the whole game," Jordan said. "I am very pleased with the game we played."

## New clubs

continued from page 4

"I learned how to knit like two hours ago. I am so excited, guys!" sophomore Mary Monacelli said with a bright smile when she came back from the club.

The new math club was initiated in October by a group of students, including founder Tipp Umrod, a junior. Kaleen Graessle, sponsor of the club, said that she and the other math teachers are really glad that the students came up with the idea. Even though the teachers could not help as much as they want due to time constraints, they still try their best to support the club with materials and resources.

The club meets once a week during lunch in Graessle's room to work on different math problems, prepare for SAT and Math League, provide tutoring for needy students, and share the students' research about the history of math.

Ginger Huh, a participant, said that the club is very helpful. She said it is an effective source for SAT prep, and the best part is it challenges the students not only with school work, but far beyond.

## Colwell: 'Girls' improvement was huge'

continued from page 1

game before, so getting on the field for the first time was a real learning experience."

The team went without a second game for nearly a month, due in part to the fact that so many soccer players were going to be gone during the weekend of the choir trip to Arkansas, so they had to reschedule some of the games for much later. Yet the girls kept practicing long and hard till the day their second game on Nov. 30 finally came.

"It was neat to be part of the first girls' soccer victory in school history," Colwell said. "The improvement from the first game to the second was huge. Our defense and goal-keeping was what kept us in the game and led us to the win."

With the crowd of parents, basketball players, and the boys' soccer team cheering on and supporting the girls, the team was up 2-0 at halftime. The first goal was an "own goal" by one of the Savio players, and the second goal was scored by junior Schuyler Hagen.

During the second half, Savio scored two goals to tie the score. But soon sophomore Courtney Flores scored Brentwood's third

goal, with the crowd yelling like crazy with excitement.

"I was surprised! We did so much better than I thought we would," senior Alyssa Legband said. "I'm very proud of my team."

The girls left school after lunch last Friday to travel to Kerrville, where they picked up a 3-3 tie against Our Lady of the Hills. After the first half, the girls were tied 1-1. Hagen scored the first goal by taking the ball straight down the middle, and during the second half, Flores and sophomore Mary Monacelli scored two more off corner kicks. The girls said they felt they could have done better, but they quickly shook off the disappointment.

In their most recent game against Pharr Oratory on Dec. 7, the girls took a 2-0 halftime lead on goals by Flores and Hagen. Their Spanish-speaking opponents scored a goal in the second half to make the final 2-1.

The team says they don't know what to expect of the next game, but they agree they will be "ready for anything."

Several of the girls have been playing since they were toddlers. Flores and freshman Marisol Lawson have played for 11 years on select teams, and Legband has played for 13

years on select teams. Sophomore Elena Batlle and Hagen have each played for about three years. Seniors Mariah Robinson and Jennifer Quinn played on separate teams years ago.

But the rest of the team is new to soccer: Dupond; sophomores Monacelli, Niky McCaffety, Masha Heins, and Catherine Amann; juniors Aurora Franco, Megan Monacelli, and Brianna Maguire; and seniors Alison Riedesel and Polly Park.

Between the girls' first and second games, the team gained two new soccer players – the Monacelli sisters – who switched sports after playing basketball since fifth grade.

"Soccer is very different from what I'm used to," Mary Monacelli said. "I mean, I'm using my feet, not my hands, the whole time, so I have to learn how to put my hands down so I don't touch the ball after years of being taught to put my hands up! I'm also running in a much wider range, but I really am liking it."

The Monacellis aren't the only ones who have begun to like soccer and become more comfortable with the sport and team.

"After joining the soccer team, I fell in love with soccer," Franco said. "I had never played before in my life."

# Varsity boys still 'figuring out potential' in basketball

matthew **ONABAJO**  
reporter

The varsity boys' basketball team started district play with a blowout loss to Waco Texas Christian Academy on Dec. 7.

It was Brentwood's first game competing in their new 3A district, and head coach Brandon Tatum said the opponent was very talented.

As the Christmas break approaches, the Bears have a record of 3-8.

The boys are currently playing in the Cypress Community Tournament which started Dec. 9 and will end Dec. 11. The next game is at Round Rock Cedar Ridge on Dec. 13. The next home game is Friday, Dec. 17, against Waldorf;

Brentwood's next district game will be Jan. 4 against Bryan St. Joseph.

"We're learning a lot more about the game and from our mistakes," Tatum said. "We still need to learn how to take better care of the ball, but we are doing well and playing hard in a tough schedule. They're a really good group of boys."

Senior Ryan Brunson, the team's leading scorer, remains optimistic that the Bears can improve.

"The score has never shown how good we are," Brunson said. "We're figuring out our potential; we just need to find it first."

Following are the team's recent results.

**11/9: @ Waco Vanguard 54-34 L**

Vanguard had a strong start and the Bears were unable to keep up against the good defense.

**11/16: @ Leander Rouse 65-27 L**

The Bears found their opponent, a 4A school, to be very quick, with a good post and great outside shooters. Rouse also took advantage of many fast break situations. Brunson and senior Immad Qussad scored eight points each in the game.

**11/18-20: @ Tyler Tourn. L L W**

The first day of the tournament, the short-handed BCS team started out with a 51-28 loss to the tournament hosts, All Saints. The team lacked key starters and bench players due to the conflicting choir concert. During the game, All Saints had a tough defense and forced many turnovers.

After the defeat, the team ate at a nearby Chili's. As they were eating, they spotted Chicago Bulls guard Derrick Rose. Traveling in the team bus for a game the next day in Dallas, Rose was reportedly the only one who went inside the restaurant. Most of the players were hesitant to bother the NBA star during his meal, but freshman Kent Howell walked right up and asked for an autograph. After that, players on Brentwood's boys' and girls' teams took pictures and chatted with Rose.

"It was really cool seeing someone that you see on TV that's the best at your sport," sophomore Matthew Archer said.

The next day, the varsity boys met Rosehill Christian in the losers' bracket for a 51-43 loss. The boys started off with a 16-13 lead in the first quarter, but they were outscored in the

following quarters. Brunson scored 26 points, including three 3-pointers.

On the final day, the Bears picked up their first victory by defeating DeSoto Canterbury in a dramatic 53-52 win. In the final minute, Archer gave BCS the lead with a three-pointer, but Canterbury responded with a layup to re-take the lead. Brunson then grabbed an offensive rebound and made a layup for the winning shot.

**11/23: @ St. Andrews 92-25 L**

It was the "best team we've played all season," according to Tatum.

**11/30: Austin Royals 50-39 W**

The Bears outscored the Royals in the first three quarters and were dominant throughout the game. The JV also won their game, led by Archer's 39 points.

**12/2-4: BCS Invitational W L L**

With a loud crowd of BCS students in the stands, the boys won their opening game in Brentwood's annual tournament. Early points by Qussad put the team on top of San Antonio Sunnybrook, and they ended up winning 57-47.

The next game was a 79-15 loss against St. Andrews. In the two teams' second meeting of the season, the Bears attempted to slow down the pace of the game. The loss put the Bears in a battle for third place against All Saints. Unlike the previous game between the two teams, the Bears started the game with a 10-0 run, but quick fouls took important starters out for a portion of the game. Low on players because of injuries and conflicting schedules, Brentwood lost 62-33.

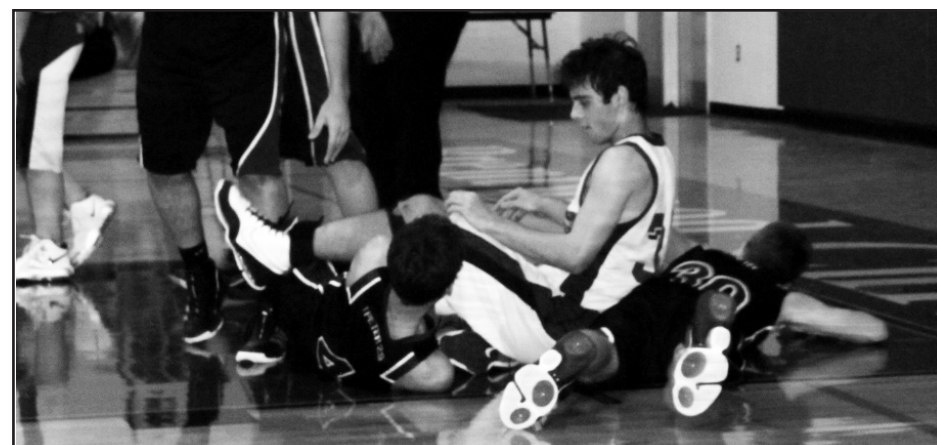


photo: Gabriel Breernitz

**Dog pile** Senior Ryan Brunson finds himself on the floor after being flagrantly fouled by two opponents on the Austin Royals. Brunson sank both of his free throws.

# Lady Bears suffer early losses; open district with win in Waco

matthew **ARCHER**  
reporter

The varsity girls' basketball team began district play on Tuesday with a 49-23 win over Texas Christian Academy in Waco.

"It's been tough," said head coach Devan Loftis, whose team is 5-8 overall. "We're used to having more in the win column, but we've been focusing on getting better rather than on wins and losses, and it might look disappointing, but we've improved. Now comes district, which is what we've really been focusing on."

The team finished fourth in the BCS Invitational last week, in which they narrowly missed playing in the championship game.

Loftis said his team lacks experience, but they are a very dedicated and tight-knit group. They have been led by junior team captain Brittany Brunson, who averages 17 points per game.

"We're doing pretty well," Brunson said. "We've kept up with a bunch of good teams this year. We've gotten better so far and plan to keep improving."

The Lady Bears' next home game will be Friday, Dec. 17. District play resumes with two games in the first week of January.

Following are the team's recent results.

**11/4: San Juan Diego Catholic 47-30 W**

The Lady Bears rolled to an impressive 17-point win, with juniors Brittany Brunson and Megan Gum scoring 16 and 14 points,

respectively. Their tough defense and full-court press led to a lot of easy baskets.

**11/6: Hyde Park Baptist 69-49 L**

Playing against old rivals who are no longer in Brentwood's district, the team started off slow and fell behind in the first quarter. Brunson led the team with 20 points, and sophomore Rachel Orick added 9. Gum set a Brentwood girls' single-game record with 17 rebounds.

**11/9: @ Thorndale 54-39 L**

After being down to this talented and much taller public school 22-10 at halftime, the girls played them close in the second half but eventually fell short. Brunson scored 18 points, and Orick had 13.

**11/16: St. Andrews 45-38 L**

In this non-district game the girls led the entire first half. However, after missing too many layups they gave the game up in the fourth quarter. The team also lost Brunson with a sprained ankle in the final minute of the game. Brunson had 18 points; Orick had 12.

**11/18-20: @ All Saints Tourn. L L W**

Without their leadingscorer, the girls struggled in their first game against Grace Community. They were close until the fourth quarter, when they "ran out of gas" and lost 40-27. They lost their second game to Canterbury Episcopal, 42-23. In their third game, the team pulled out a 38-27 victory over the All-Saints JV squad. According to Loftis, the games probably would have been a lot closer if Brunson were there,

but her absence forced many of the other players to step up and gain a lot of good experience.

**11/30: @ Regents 39-23 L**

With multiple players out, including Brunson, the girls struggled. Regents was athletic and liked to run a lot, so being short on subs was a big disadvantage in this game.

**12/2-4: BCS Invit. W L L**

With Brunson back from her ankle injury, the girls started with a 40-28 win over Bay Area Christian. In their next game against All-Saints, after being down by double digits at halftime, the team came out and played some of the best basketball they have all season, according to Loftis. But they came up just short in a 43-39 loss. In their final game the girls lost to Parish 54-38. Brunson and Gum scored 15 and 10 points, respectively.

**12/7: @ Waco TCA 49-23 W**

In their first district game the girls' defense led to easy baskets, and they had a 10-2 lead at the end of the first quarter. Brunson and Gum each scored 10.



photo: Mark Merkord

**Lift off** Junior Brittany Brunson leads the Lady Bears with 17 points per game. After missing four games with an ankle injury, Brunson is back to lead BCS as they battle with their new TAPPS 3A opponents.



THE BEAR FACTS DECEMBER 2010

# BCS alum known for bear drawing succeeds in Air Force

**Jackson HAGER**  
reporter

Standing proud and always watching players battle it out on the court, The Bear has been a part of the gym for what seems like forever. But how often does one stop and ask where it came from? Does anyone wonder what impact the artist is having in the world?

Nearly nine years ago, a senior girl named Choi Williams presented the school with the drawing of the bear as a gift from her class. Now Choi Messer is currently serving this country in Afghanistan, as a captain of intelligence in the Air Force.

Messer's early life was centered much on the military. When she was in second grade, her family was stationed at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. Falling in love with it, she told her parents she was set on going to a service academy. She chose the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo. Attending any of the prestigious military academies comes with a five-year commitment after graduation.

"The first year was pretty rough, but looking back on it she says it was worth it," Messer's mother Myra Williams wrote in an email. "She had many unique opportunities that she wouldn't have had anywhere else!"

At the start of her second year, she met her soon-to-be husband Adam Messer. They were

married after they both graduated on May 31, 2006. Choi Messer continued her education at the Air Force Officer Training School to

become an intelligence officer. After four years, she rose to her current rank as captain in May 2010. Messer was first assigned to

the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, as a Behavioral Influences Analyst in the Global Threats Group. Just recently, she was deployed to the 655th Air Expeditionary Squadron as a Document and Media Exploitation Analyst. She was deployed last August and is currently at Forward Operating Base Salerno, near the Pakistan border.

Messer usually works 12-14 hours, seven days a week. But all of this hard work leads to several awards. While being an expert marksman with both the rifle and the pistol, she has earned the Air Force commendation medal and the Global War on Terrorism medal, among many others.

Known by her BCS classmates for her artistic abilities, Messer began the bear drawing back in 2002 under the guidance of art teacher Lori Morin. When she and the rest of the class graduated, they had the bear emblazoned on the gym wall as their senior gift. Messer also presented all the rights to the school. To BCS president Marquita Moss, this was exactly what she was looking for.

"I had been seeking a bear drawing for years – not a bear that had devoured its quarry with blood dripping from its mouth or a cute little harmless cub, but that exemplified the qualities of 'power under control,'" said Moss. "Choi did what no one else had done – she captured this idea in her drawing."



**Cool under fire** Choi (Williams) Messer (center) poses with her friend (left) and her translator (right). Messer, a 2002 BCS grad, has been in Afghanistan since August.

## Thanksgiving thrives at Brentwood

**kailey RODDEN**  
reporter

Last-minute tests, visiting alums, holiday festivities, and a food drive had Brentwood Christian bustling during the two-day week of Nov. 22. The third-grade classes performed the annual play "The First Thanksgiving," and the kindergarten classes had a small Thanksgiving "feast."

After the plentiful donations of the student body and careful counting of cans by StuCo, BCS brought in 4,311 cans of food, which averaged out to 6.6 cans per student. The elementary class with the most cans was Glenda Morrow's fourth grade, with 13.7 cans per student. Missy Weaver's ninth-grade girls' Bible class had the most cans among secondary classes, with 10.5 cans per student.

The mass of cans was displayed for all to see along the walls outside the auditorium during all-school chapel on Nov. 23. The fruit was used for the dinner for the homeless held by Brentwood Oaks and Westover Hills churches. The rest of the food was donated to the Capital Area Food Bank.

"Given the number of students and tough economic times, we did very well," elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed said.

The two weeks leading up to Thanksgiving were normal for a Texas November: Fluctuating temperatures from 40 to 80 degrees and the occasional amber-leaved tree signaled that the holidays were drawing near. Families were racing to the store to buy their Butterball turkeys and pumpkin pies, and relatives were driving

in for a cozy meal. At BCS, the elementary has some traditions of their own.

For the third graders, a lot of work was put into their annual play. "The First Thanksgiving" has a part for every student and is also filled with little chunks of history: Some of the main characters are Squanto the Indian and pilgrims William Bradford and Miles Standish. In the play, grandparents tell their grandkids about the first Thanksgiving. It switches between modern day and 1621.

Under the guidance of teachers Carolyn B'Smith and Evelyn Ellis, the third graders received their parts the first week of November and had a little more than two weeks to memorize their lines and get ready.

About a week before Nov. 23, the kindergarten classes started learning about the first Thanksgiving in preparation for their annual "feast." The children chose between "Indian" or "pilgrim" and made hats accordingly. Before the children ate, they gathered around in a prayer circle with each student giving thanks for something in his or her life.

The feast itself was not really a feast, but a small selection of snacks like cheese and grapes that parents had brought for the kids. While the little ones munched, the teacher read the story of the pilgrims and the Indians. For dessert, there was a turkey made of Oreos and candy corn, and pumpkin-shaped cookies.

Kindergarten teacher Diane Troutman thought it was a great experience.

"The feast was just a fun way to celebrate all the wonderful things God has blessed us with," Troutman said.

## Biscuit brothers bless BCS

**mike LEE**  
reporter

Kindergarten and elementary students who submitted books for the Young Authors Contest gathered in the chapel at 1 p.m. on Nov. 11 to enjoy a live concert of the television stars the Biscuit Brothers.

The 132 young writers were undoubtedly excited to see the celebrities brought into their school, and as they patiently waited in line to be seated, one could hear their excited whispers like, "Oh wow, we get to actually see the Biscuit Brothers!" However, when the famous duo was introduced and the concert started, the whispers suddenly became cheers and laughter.

The small room was soon heated with the Biscuit Brothers' rhythmic guitars, drum, and double bass harmonized with 132 enthusiastic children singing songs including "Ol' MacDonald" and "You Are My Sunshine." At this concert, the audience was active participants, and they learned to sing using their entire bodies, as they clapped hands, patted knees, and used sign language. The Biscuit Brothers even hosted a singing and dancing competition between the students and teachers, in which the children secured a narrow victory with a tie-breaker after singing at the top of their lungs.

The concert lasted only about 40 minutes, but it was a big 40 minutes for students, whose excitement carried on until after the concert, so that the teachers had to keep "hushing" them in the hallway.

The students were not the only ones who enjoyed the concert, according to Jerome

Scholar (Dusty Biscuit), who said that singing with children is their "favorite part of the job."

"When we're making the TV show, it's pretty much 'us' right here – that's all you can see," he said. "As fun as it is, there is no interaction. But when we get here, you heard all the sound, laughter, and music. It's so great to be in front of the crowd doing that."

As fun as the concert was, however, Allen Robertson (Buford Biscuit) said it is not only about having a good time.

"Our whole thing is about kids making music, not just buying it on iTunes or at the store, but being creator – not just consumers – of the music," he said. "So that's why we like to do this, and hopefully we spark their imaginations to say, 'I can go out there and make my own music; I don't have to just listen to radios.'"

Along with Robertson and Scholar, the band includes Jill Leberknight (Buttermilk Biscuit), Damon Brown (Tiny Scarecrow), and Ian Scott (Old MacDonald). The Biscuit Brothers is a children's musical TV program broadcasted by KLRU, a PBS member station in Austin. Since its beginning in 2004 in Austin, the show became successful and airs in several states including New York and California.

The school was able to host the band of such prominence thanks to new guidance counselor Rebecca Ellis, whose brother is Robertson of the Biscuit Brothers.

"I am thrilled that I was able to play a part in bringing the Biscuit Brothers to Brentwood," she said. "The Biscuit Brothers is such a fun and exciting show, and I am so happy that Brentwood students and teachers got to experience it!"