



# THE BEAR FACTS



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VOL. XXI NO. 4

BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

DECEMBER 2008

see pg. 4

## IN SHORT

### Jog-a-fun makeover

This year's Jog-a-fun will feature major changes for older students. According to BCS special events coordinator Donna Valdes, the March 10 event will remain the same for students through the eighth grade, but high school students will no longer run in circles on the soccer field. Instead, they will run a five-kilometer course. Valdes said she hopes this will increase participation and encourage every student to earn a day off of school. Students will still be required to mail out 20 sponsor letters by Jan. 30. Details about prizes and sponsoring for the 5K are still in the works.

### Math League success

Junior Matthew Gardner and senior Andrew McClellan posted perfect sixes on the most recent Texas State Math League test, leading BCS to a score of 26. Before this test Brentwood ranked first in Travis County, one point ahead of St. Stephen's, and seventh in state. Updated rankings are not yet available.

### Musicians recognized

Four junior high students auditioned for the Association of Texas Small School Bands on Nov. 15 at Taylor Middle School. Eighth-grader Wyatt Allee made the 2nd band, 3rd chair on tenor saxophone; seventh-grader Nathan Dedear made the 1st band, 5th chair on trombone; and eighth-grader Hannah Witcher made 2nd band, 2nd chair on horn. Eighth-grader Steven Bailey did not receive a score due to an error in judging or in tabulation, band director Travis Pollard said.

"This is the best we've done in three years and I'm proud of how hard the kids have worked," Pollard said.

The honor bands performed on Nov. 22 at the Hutto Performing Arts Center.

## New playground on the way

*Construction set to begin over break; area will feature amphitheater*

charles **KIM**  
reporter

Starting in the winter break, Brentwood Christian will begin construction on a new playground on the south edge of the campus, beside the entrance from Knollpark. The new playground will be used mostly by upper elementary students because of its location and the suitability of its equipment for older children.

Rather than having a slide and swings, the new playground will feature an amphitheater, four-square courts, a climbing dome, boulders for sitting, a tetherball pole, and a small athletic field.

A playground committee was formed by the PTF and a few generous parents who agreed to

help build it. PTF and a few additional parents have all played various roles making the new playground a reality. Elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed will oversee the project, and parents John Martin and Lynn Petrik will manage construction.

The playground committee was formed in October, including the fifth-grade teachers and several parents. Their purpose was to develop a plan for the playground, which included analyzing the limitation of the area, forming a budget, and negotiating with the neighborhood.

Martin, father of two BCS elementary students, will contribute his and his workers' labor. He will place water pipes under the playground and will remove the ditch that goes across the ground. After placing the pipe, Martin

and his workers will level the ground so that it will be stable and flat for the playground.

PTF has been raising money for this new playground for approximately five years, and they have enough to cover the entire budget. They will be donating a total of \$10,000; \$7,000 from savings and \$3,000 from collecting box tops and labels, selling their own cookbooks, and by encouraging attendance at Restaurant Nights.

The construction was finally approved by the City of Austin on Dec. 3. Brentwood has waited for the city to approve their engineering plans for the construction almost a year and half. According to Dr. Weed, the city has been "picky" about drainage; they were afraid that

see **Playground**, page 3

## Chief Justice speaks at annual dinner

jay **WILES**  
reporter

Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court Wallace B. Jefferson spoke at Brentwood Christian's annual Partnership Dinner held at the Hilton Austin Hotel on Thursday, Dec. 4.

Jefferson, the first African-American Justice on the Texas Supreme Court, was appointed by Gov. Rick Perry in 2001.

A new element was added to the Partnership Dinner this year: a silent auction. Before the night of the dinner, parents and guests could view a constantly updated list of items to be auctioned off by going to the school website.

The committee that organized the auction first assembled in October, when co-chairmen Kristi Jackson and Stephanie Griffith assigned each member a "territory to cover."

The auction began at 6 p.m. with items including a 32-inch HDTV and DVD player, Round Rock Express Owner's Experience package, a football signed by University of Texas football coach Mack Brown, the 2008 Ryder Cup 18th-hole flag signed by Kenny Perry, and gift certificates to many area restaurants such as Carino's, Chili's, Chuy's, and the Cheesecake Factory.

Brentwood's special events coordinator Donna Valdes said final figures are not in, but the auction raised about \$10,000, all of which will go into the school's general fund.

Before the dinner began, Encore sang Christmas songs in the entry area as guests arrived, and the Jazz Combo performed inside the ballroom before the program began. The emcee for the night was Sean Adams,



photo: Sonia Browder

**HIGH CLASS** The BCS Jazz Combo entertains guests in the Hilton ballroom before dinner on Dec. 4. Members of the group, from left to right, are Mel Witcher, Peter Johannigman, Travis Pollard, Chris Williams, Adam Cammack, and Allen Taylor.

an Abilene Christian University graduate and track athlete who now covers sports on 1530 ESPN Radio in Austin. After dinner, he introduced BCS president Marquita Moss, who explained the purpose of the evening.

A video was then played which relayed to the audience the faith of students being nurtured at BCS. The video was dedicated to the memory of BCS parent and board member Ron Riedesel.

After being introduced by BCS parent Jeff Boyd, the keynote speaker took the podium. Jefferson shared that in 1987, while he was still a law student, he visited with his late grandmother about his family history and did not know much about her great-grandfather, Cedric Willis. He was intrigued by this and visited the Texas state archives.

see **Dinner**, page 8



STORYTIME WITH LAURA PETERSON

# The adventures of Johnny Norwood

*This is the fourth chapter in a fictional series written by the editor-in-chief.*

It seemed that the teachers of Hundred Acre High had missed the memo about showing holiday spirit. Rather than dishing out figgy pudding and candy canes, they were cramming projects and tests down students' throats. And as if Johnny's load wasn't stressful enough with school work alone, he had another problem pressing on his mind. What do you buy an angel for Christmas?

Mrs. Gromley's class had organized a Secret Santa gift exchange, and Johnny, by a great stroke of luck, had drawn the little red-head's name. However, his initial excitement had quickly turned in to dread as he realized that he hadn't the slightest idea of what to get her, and the day of the exchange was quickly approaching. It had to be something that said "friend," yet left open the possibility of something more ... and he wasn't aware of any hobbies she had. Or any music she liked. Or her favorite color. Johnny *had* to stop Christmas from coming! But how?

Johnny Norwood sank exhaustedly into the same desk he had occupied to copy lines from 3:45-5:10 every day for the last two-and-a-half weeks. His near-death experience in the lunchroom was unfortunately the direct cause of an epic food fight, and he was quickly sold out by Ivan and his cronies as the instigator.

Johnny didn't quite understand how *he* could be the one condemned to three weeks of detention when he had had his face smashed into a stack of pizza and pineapple dumped down his shirt, but nevertheless he was very grateful for his stint in the slammer, for he had been presented with the opportunity to meet the smartest man on the face of the earth. And Mr. Filmore was just the person to help him with his little predicament.

"Hey there, Johnny! What would you like, "The Book of Virtues" or some Chaucer?" asked Mr. Filmore, combing his meticulously maintained mustache. "Or would you rather just clean my blackboard today?"

Johnny grinned as he snatched up the grubby chalk rag and began methodically wiping away the scholarly discussions of the day. It was nice to have finally found a teacher who liked him.

"Mr. Filmore, can I ask you something?" ventured Johnny after several minutes of erasing. "What do you get a girl for Christmas?"

Johnny left detention that day with his heart brimming over with the Christmas spirit. He knew *exactly* what to get her.

The next morning, Johnny placed his carefully wrapped gift under the artificial

tree in Mrs. Gromley's room along with the other presents and sat down in his desk, waiting with nervous anticipation. The rest of the class gathered around the pile of presents, and in alphabetical order each person selected the gift they had brought and presented it to the recipient. Johnny felt a

flutter in his stomach as Mrs. Gromley called out "McCrary, Myles" – he would be next. Johnny watched Myles pick up his little neatly wrapped package and

walk right up to ... *the little red-headed girl.* Johnny's mouth dropped open in astonishment and confusion. Myles had stolen his golden opportunity! How had two of them drawn her name? Johnny was still standing there dumbstruck when Mrs. Gromley called out his name.

"Mrs. Gromley," Johnny whispered, "um, I don't really know who my present is for. I think Myles and I drew the same person." Mrs. Gromley simply told him to wait until everyone else had given their presents and then to give it to the leftover person.

Johnny ended up presenting his gift to none other than Cassandra. He was furious. She carelessly tore off the wrapping paper and opened up the dainty little bracelet he had so carefully picked out with a much worthier wrist in mind. He glanced across the room at the red-head, who was cheerfully thanking Myles for the teddy bear he had given her.

Johnny sighed, thinking to himself that at least one good thing had come out of all of this. He had received a pound of homemade fudge.

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*Johnny had to stop Christmas from coming! But how?*

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## 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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photo: Kay Taylor

**HARVEST TIME** Sophomore StuCo member Mariah Robinson helps sort and pack the 4,616 food items students brought for the annual food drive on Nov. 25. Students met the school's challenge of bringing more than five items each. See story, pg. 3.

AN EDDIE-TORIAL: Eddie Carlin

## NaNoWriMo: novel idea of 50K in 30 days

What sounds like a school assignment from hell to most people is almost like Christmas morning to me – well, until a week has passed and I wonder what drove me to attempt such madness yet a third time. This November, I once again participated in National Novel Writing Month: a painful, glorious thirty days of the year when thousands of people around the world set off on a quest to write a novel of 50,000 words before midnight on Dec. 1.

The event is not so much a contest against others, but a challenge to oneself. It began in 1999 as a dare between a few friends led by Chris Baty, founder of the program, and has since blossomed into an international sensation with 119,301 writers participating this year. The only rules are that you cannot begin writing the story itself before midnight on Nov. 1 (although you are allowed as much planning as you like), and you must begin a new novel instead of continuing on an earlier project.

The philosophy behind the madness encourages people to complete a rough draft by setting a (seemingly) impossible deadline. Too often, people are paralyzed by fear of failure or the feeling that they must get every word just right, but although the rapid pace of the month reduces quality, it is all about quantity. By setting a goal, it is possible to produce a finished rough draft that can then be edited later. There is an adage among writers that "you can always edit rubbish, but you can't edit a blank page."

"What would drive you to attempt such a crazy challenge?" you wonder. Ever since I could read, I've loved immersing myself into other worlds and hearing great stories told, and I have always wanted to be able to provide the same experience for other people. About two years ago, I finally stopped saying, "One day, I'd like to write a novel," and I joined the NaNo frenzy on a whim – three days late, no less.

To give you some idea of the length of a 50,000 word novel, when I first achieved that goal in 2006, set at 12 pt. Times New Roman, one-inch margins, and double spaced, it came out to roughly 160 pages. However, most books you find in a bookstore contain somewhere between 80,000 and 120,000 words. You can imagine that school essays don't seem quite as daunting after churning out that stack of pages for a third time this year.

But by no means is that to say that the process is effortless now. Writing is hard work, but there is something about the creative process that fulfills me. One way I could describe it is by comparing it to the work done by athletes who suffer through the pain of practices and workout sessions to reach the top of their game. It is painful, much of the time; creating words where

see **My odyssey**, page 8



# The most wonderful time of the year

kaalah **MANONGDO**  
reporter

Christmas lights add color to various classrooms, and trees and cookies are being carefully decorated. A group of girls is walking and singing Jingle Bells together, and the smell of Mrs. Campbell's cinnamon candles wafts down the hallway. Next week, finals will be taken and then students will leave for a well-earned, two-week break. This is Christmas at Brentwood Christian.

Many events and fundraisers are performed in the Christmas spirit during the month of December. Elementary classes host holiday parties and secondary students raise money for class trips and the Junior/Senior Formal. Students also give money and time for those less fortunate.

Brentwood elementary students donate money to Angel Tree, which is an organization that purchases Christmas gifts for children with parents in prison. Students are encouraged to earn the money by doing chores around the

house rather than just accepting money from their parents. Volunteers contact families to receive wish lists from the children, buy and wrap presents, deliver the gifts, and share the gospel with the children. Parent Shannon Mokry coordinated Angel Tree this year.

"It felt good to help people," recalled seventh-grader Malcolm McIver, who participated in Angel Tree in elementary.

The National Honor Society will travel to Rosedale today to help host a Christmas party for the students there. The Brentwood students

will decorate and bring cookies, sing Christmas songs with the students, paint faces, and play Christmas bingo.

"They love for students to come and to just be normal and hang out with them," NHS sponsor Lynda Pierce said. "The kids always laugh and smile. Some Rosedale teachers say they've never seen some of the students smile before the party."

The National Junior Honor Society took a trip, as their fall service project, to Pflugerville Care Center on Wednesday, Dec. 3. They sang Christmas songs for the elderly and gave them miniature Christmas trees that they decorated during lunch meetings. This is the sixth year Brentwood has sent students to the nursing home.

First-graders went on their annual journey to Elgin Christmas Tree Farm on Dec 1. They learned about the life cycle of the Christmas tree and selected class trees. They will also continue the tradition of

see 'Tis the season, page 8



photo: Olivia Brinson

**I LOVE A PARADE** As an "elf," senior Catherine Marler helped out at the Nov. 29 Chuy's Parade by holding a ribbon to keep the children back from the route. For more on the parade, see pg. 4.

## Fourth graders head to ballet all grown up

*Students see "Nutcracker," display etiquette skills afterward*

ashley **HARPER**  
reporter

Brentwood Christian's fourth-grade classes went to see "The Nutcracker" on Wednesday, Dec. 10, at the Long Performing Arts Center. A dinner followed at the University Avenue Church of Christ, where the students put their recent etiquette training to practice.

Dressed in formal Sunday clothes, the fourth graders left school at about 8:30 and saw the first act of the ballet. As scheduled, they then left for a formal lunch where they had the chance to demonstrate what they had learned during their etiquette training.

Seated with parents and BCS staff members, the students showed their manners by holding eating utensils correctly and keeping a lively conversation. By the end of the dinner the adults – who included Marquita Moss, Kay

Taylor, and Sandra Morrow – announced which student had the best manners and handed out the silver spoon award.

In preparation for this highly anticipated trip the fourth grade spent time for two weeks during their science class learning etiquette. Their lessons included tests on where certain forks, knives, and spoons are placed around the plate.

They were also taught how to pass a plate around the table and how to ask for a certain dish. At one point they were asked to eat half of an apple using only a fork and a knife.

In addition to the dinner etiquette, students also studied ballet etiquette and the story around "The Nutcracker." Each year a docent from Ballet Austin comes to the classes and gives a lesson on the ballet. This person usually talks about ballet history and proper behavior, and she shows them a few dance steps. This year

the docent was a cousin of BCS staff member Linda Riedesel.

BCS parents and staff played a major role in the fourth grade's trip. Parents served as cooks, waiters, and waitresses, and they provided transportation. BCS staff was there to talk with the students and hand out the silver spoon award.

This trip is very exciting for the fourth graders and is one of the most popular out of all of the field trips the students take this year. The fourth grade has been going on this field trip for close to 20 years, and the dinner was added about 15 years ago, according to teacher Jodie Coyle. She said the dinner was held in the church parlor for the first few years until the classes became too big.

Coyle called the trip "a delightful time, an unforgettable time."

## Food drive goal is met

taylor **SHAW**  
reporter

Students brought bags of food items to their first-period classes as part of the annual Thanksgiving food drive at BCS, from Nov. 3-25. The food drive was organized by the Student Council along with sponsor Linda Riedesel.

"I think the food drive is a great opportunity for Brentwood to reach out into the community and show the generosity of the students and the love of Christ," junior Lindsey Bernard said.

Students could bring any non-perishable food items to their classes. The items were contributed to the Capital Area Food Bank, which provides hundreds of families in need with food and other necessary items.

A letter was sent to families before the food drive establishing that the goal of the drive was to collect five to seven food items per student. The students rose to the challenge with a total of 4,616 items collected.

With 639 students enrolled in grades K-12, the goal was accomplished, with just over seven cans per student. Three classes had double-digit averages per student: Mrs. Smith's kindergarten, Mrs. Morrow's fourth grade, and Miss Hunter's fifth grade.

Megan Kite's juniors won the secondary school competition. They will be rewarded with a surprise feast at lunch on Dec. 12.

The Student Council members, along with executive assistant Kay Taylor, packed the food items into boxes on the last day of the food drive. The food was then picked up by trucks from the Capital Area Food Bank.

## Playground

continued from page 1

the ditch and underground water would cause problems, insisting on good engineering plans which could take care of them.

Brentwood has needed a new playground for long time, since the current playgrounds are overpopulated. Current facilities are accommodating 350 students from kindergarten through sixth grade, as well as students from extended care, and the administration thinks that these numbers are too high for the size of the playgrounds. Also, these playgrounds are not considered suitable for the upper elementary students who want more challenging equipment and open areas.

"Play and recreation are important for children," Dr. Weed said. "They need a suitable setting for recess that will provide for refreshment and activity during the day, so that they can concentrate better and learn more in school."



**SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: Nick Sterling**

Seniors featured in *The Bear Facts* were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS Class of 2009.

# Sterling silver with heart of gold

*Humble, humorous athlete known for kindness, Christian character*

mark **NESSLAGE**  
reporter

A person as unique as Nick Sterling is not easy to describe. It's hard to categorize someone who is quiet and reserved, incredibly funny, and is possibly the nicest guy in the world. It's hard to find the right words for someone who excels at three sports but still remains the most humble guy on the team. Nick Sterling is all these things and much more.

Nick was born in Austin on Sep. 5, 1990. He spent his first few years of schooling at Graham Elementary before arriving at Brentwood in third grade. Nick decided to come to Brentwood because his older brother, David (Class of '05), attended also. However, it took little time for Nick to bond with his classmates, and he has become one of the most beloved people in the Class of 2009.

"I like the smaller classes where I've gotten to know most of my classmates," Nick says.

It's little wonder that Nick is such a likable character. He is known for being the quintessential "nice guy," always looking out for others' interests and always having something positive to say.

"He is always really nice to everyone and willing to help or give someone a ride somewhere," says basketball and soccer teammate Jimmy Lidgey, a freshman.

Despite his usually quiet and unassuming demeanor, Sterling is also known for his sense of humor.

"He always makes me laugh and brightens everyone's day," senior Rebekah Singleton says.

It's hard to put a finger on what exactly

makes Nick so funny. For some people, it's his comically startled answers to questions they ask that make them laugh, while for others, it's his well known phrase: "Eh! Cut that out!" While his style of comedy is almost impossible to define, Nick may draw from his favorite comedian, Chris Farley.

Sometimes Nick makes people laugh by accident. Several classmates fondly look back on the time during Nick's freshman year that Nick tried to dunk a basketball by running up a skating ramp and jumping. In his effort to dunk, Nick lost his balance in midair and ended up landing on his hip.

When reminded of this event, Nick broke into a grin and replied, "That is something I'll probably remember for a long time."

Nick is known for his faith as well and firmly believes in the importance of living his life for the Lord.

"The most important thing is to put God first in whatever I'm going to do," Nick says.

Nick celebrated his spiritual birthday, as well as his ninth physical

birthday, on Sep. 5, 1999, when he was baptized at Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ. Since then, he has become a person with Christ-like attitude and actions. Nick is an active member of the Brentwood Oaks youth group and has attended Camp Blue Haven, a Christian summer camp in New Mexico, for eight years. His Christian attitude extends beyond church and into the sports he plays.

"Not only is he a leader on the court, he is also a leader in his teammates' spiritual lives," says senior Seth Cole, a basketball teammate.

Nick's humble attitude has garnered great respect from his teammates, who elected him team captain on both the soccer and basketball teams.

Physically, Nick has also made quite an impact in the BCS athletic program. His soccer and basketball careers at Brentwood both began in fifth grade. He has played every year since then and is now a key player in both sports. Nick is known for the effort and hustle he puts forth in every game he plays.

"He might make a mistake, but you sure can't question his integrity or effort on the field," says BCS athletic director and soccer coach Joseph Walker. "He's just always been a steady presence for us at defense."

At the beginning of his junior year, Nick decided to give cross country a try. This turned out to be a great idea, as Nick quickly experienced success, finishing 14th at the TAPPS state cross country meet. This year, Nick had even more success, finishing high in every race he ran. He improved his times drastically throughout the season and bettered his previous state finish with 13th place, even though division changes left TAPPS 4A much more competitive.

Nick's plans for college have been narrowed down to ACU or Harding. While he hasn't decided on a major, he has looked at exercise science and kinesiology.

One thing is for sure, though. As amiable and kind-hearted as Nick is, he'll fit right in wherever he goes.

## Parade goers endure cold, get free food

jacob **CARDENAS**  
reporter

On a cold Saturday morning when most people were in bed, cuddled under blankets, 30 BCS high school students helped out in the 20th annual Children Giving to Children Parade, also known as the Chuy's Parade.

The students met in front of the Austin Museum of Art on Congress Avenue at 8:30 a.m. on Nov. 29 to receive their parade T-shirts and Santa hats. While waiting for further instruction, many enjoyed taking pictures and huddling in the cold, windy weather. Junior Brady Johnson brought many laughs with his knack for catching funny facial expressions on his camera.

As "elves," the students' job was straightforward: put a jolly smile on and keep the kids safe, which was sometimes a difficult task.

"They would not listen to me," junior Jillian Wilson said. "They just kept creeping closer and closer to the edge and ignored me when I said anything. It was kind of amusing, though."

The highlight of the parade for many Longhorn fans came when legendary football coach Darrell Royal drove by with the "Hook 'em" sign raised high. As he passed by, many fans gave a big shout and flashed the sign right back.

The parade as a whole had many entertaining aspects. There were cheerleaders, dance teams, musicians, classical cars and trucks, Disney characters, and even a black-suited Spiderman who shot children with silly string. And of course, there was Santa.

The parade had a new route this year, starting at the State Capitol at 11th and Congress, moving south on Congress all the way to Cesar Chavez, ending just north of the bridge.

Besides entertaining, the parade's main purpose is to benefit Operation Blue Santa, which provides toys for needy children during the holidays. Spectators were encouraged to bring gifts and support the cause.

"It was a very exciting event and so much fun to see the Austin community come together for such a wonderful cause," sponsor Megan Kite said.

After the parade, students got to enjoy the after-party in a small alley next to an Irish pub on Fourth Street, where Rudy's barbecue was served for free. This was a sweet reward for many students who were hungry and looking for a place to warm up.

"It felt so good to finally be warm after standing in the cold for a few hours," junior Trevor Atherton said. "Plus it's free food, man."





**TEACHER FEATURE:** *Lori Morin*

# Rule-focused artist exposed as caring comedian

**ben LANCASTER**  
reporter

Lori Morin is known around Brentwood as “the art teacher,” and she also has a reputation for keeping a close eye out for rule breakers, but there is a lot more to her than just art and rules.

Morin has been an artist her whole life. She started picking up crayons and scribbling on papers, and by 18 months she was already drawing people, houses, and other easily identifiable shapes. Her parents recognized her gift and always encouraged her to pursue art, which, Morin says, was a big part of why she

did so in high school and college.

Her greatest artistic talent lies in rendering, or drawing, as well as in her understanding of how colors work together and when and where they can best be used in a painting, weaving, or other work of art. Her favorite hobbies are almost all artistic ones and include mostly crocheting and knitting. She has periodically sold her artwork, including one weaving which she sold for \$4,800.

Morin attended Mark Twain High School in Center, Missouri. While in high school, she not only continued to excel as an artist, but was also quite the athlete. Among her accomplishments is a state record in the triple jump, as she won

the gold medal at the state track meet. Morin also ran in relays and did several different field events. In addition to track, she played basketball and volleyball.

Morin coached high school girls’ basketball in the past, but, other than that, she says the only involvement she’s had with sports after high school is to occasionally play bowling and cow racing on the Nintendo Wii with her kids.

After Morin completed high school, she attended both Southwest Missouri State University and Eastern Illinois University. She earned a bachelor’s of fine arts in weaving and surface design from the former and an education degree from the latter.

She went on to teach art from 1985 to 1993 at various elementary schools in the Austin area, with the majority of that time spent at Pleasant Hill Elementary. She taught until the birth of Kayle, now a BCS freshman, and after that she was a stay-at-home mom for more than seven years. That’s when she came to teach art at Brentwood Christian.

Morin is known as being a stickler for rules, but she says she doesn’t get onto people because she thinks it’s fun or laughable. Students who have spent time with Morin outside of class know she can actually be pretty laid back.

“A lot of people think she’s really strict, but she’s really nice and really, really, really, really funny, once you get to know her,” senior Meghan Quinn says.

Alexis Gardner, who is her student aide, also said Morin is a funny person and spoke of times when Morin called her weird names and would pretend to be mad to scare her. The senior also describes her teacher as “random and pretty sarcastic.”

Morin says she feels that rules are essential to students coming to understand part of who God is – that he is not only compassionate, but is also just. She says that rules help students learn

to be humble as well as come to understand those God has placed in authority over them.

“I really, really care about the kids, more than they know, and the harshness is because I care,” Morin says.

Morin loves to see students who are proud of their work, especially when at first they thought their work would be bad.

“I love being able to see inside the students, see how they respond to successes and failures, and seeing kids mature throughout their time here,” she says.

Morin says she has experienced four defining moments in life. The first was the day she decided to be baptized, and the second was her decision to actively pursue God in college despite her more “anti-God” degree choice. The fine arts, she pointed out, are notorious for being areas of study in which students are encouraged to reject everything except their own prerogatives and to embrace whatever they feel is right.

The third defining experience, she says, was becoming a mother, especially the mother of a child with serious health risks, Bryce, who is now a seventh grader at BCS.

“With Bryce, I learned to trust that God would provide us with whatever we needed to deal with his health risks,” Morin says.

The fourth key event was the loss of her husband, Juan, who died of a stroke in 2002, her second year at BCS, on the first day of school. In this experience, Morin says she has grown to learn that, “God is our source of refuge and strength, not the people around us.”

Morin loves BCS and says that it has been a gift to her family, especially in the time following the loss of her husband. She says that the school functions as a family, and she is grateful that she and her children can be a part of it.

“You can’t find a finer group of kids,” Morin says.



photo: archives

**MENTORING** Most students know art teacher Lori Morin, here helping junior Joelle Vargas, as a stickler for rules. Those who have never had her in class may not know about her sense of humor. Fewer still know she was a state champion triple jumper.

## Wildlife, children find refuge at Crowe’s Nest Farm

**lizzy DUPOND**  
reporter

Nestled in the open countryside of Manor, a hundred-acre farm has been fostering animals and educating children for over 25 years. Run by Brentwood parents David and Lola Williams, Crowe’s Nest Farm is a non-profit organization dedicated to animal conservation.

Ever since its founding in 1976, Crowe’s Nest has been a wildlife refuge, and it has always been centered on children. The mission of the farm is to educate children and parents about the appreciation and conservation of Texas wildlife.

Crowe’s Nest is a growing attraction in Central Texas. The hundred acres of sanctuary now harbor more than 250 animals and welcome about 35,000 visitors per year. Young students come in field trips from Monday to Friday. On

weekends, parents can make reservations for birthday parties. Both events are treated with “structured educational tours” featuring many different animals including llamas, bobcats, emus, owls, reptiles, and regular farm animals.

The Williams family has been running Crowe’s Nest since its founding by Mr. Williams’ mother, Diane Crowe. The family – which includes junior Chris, freshman Bryan, and fifth-grader Natalie – lives on a separate territory near the farm.

“We have a lot more freedom out there,” Natalie says.

Bryan, Mr. Williams, Crowe, and another helper are in charge of the feeding and maintenance of all the animals. It may sound unbelievable that four people take care of 250 animals, but they have a routine: Mr. Williams and Crowe feed some of the animals in the morning, and Bryan and the helper feed the

nocturnal animals at night.

Ensuring safety for the animals is not an issue, because the Williamses cleverly quartered some “protector” animals with the vulnerable ones. They put llamas with the emus and donkeys with the sheep to protect them from coyotes. The Williamses make Crowe’s Nest a hospitable and secure environment.

The Williams kids have fond memories from the farm. They used to ride horses, but today there are only small breeds. Now the family mainly plays with the “coaties,” or coatimundi. These are playful little creatures that resemble raccoons with elongated noses and tails. According to the children, the coaties like to climb up on their heads and comb through their hair, looking for lice, and they even try to warm their owners when they are cold. The animals are very important to the Williams family.

Animals that come to Crowe’s Nest are either

victims of abuse or could not be supported elsewhere. Most of the birds were gunshot victims from hunters. Pet goats were donated by owners who had to move away and could not take them along. One bobcat was found by hunters after they killed its mother. They tried but failed to make it tame, so the bobcat was sent to the farm.

Crowe’s Nest fosters these various animals and provides professional care for them. The farm’s organization is licensed and approved by several environmentalist organizations, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Williams family, being the founders, owners, and caretakers of the farm, have made it their mission on Crowe’s Nest to educate children and parents about the proper stewardship of the wildlife in Texas.

“I wouldn’t want to live anywhere else,” Bryan says.



# Off to fast start, soccer team begins district play

**gabe BRETERNITZ**  
reporter

The varsity soccer team, for the first time ever, went undefeated for the first 10 games of the season. They have won every home game and lost only twice, for an overall record of 7-2-4.

The team's only two seniors, Nick Sterling and Ben Lancaster, are also the team captains.

"I'm glad we haven't lost much, but that's not the important thing," Lancaster said. "The

important thing is to go out there and improve every game we play."

For the first time ever, there are enough players to field a junior varsity team. The extra playing time from the junior varsity games has given "floaters" – players who play both JV and varsity – more game experience and has increased the depth of the team's bench.

The Bears' spectacular season also has a sour note: They lost their district opener on Tuesday against Victoria St. Joseph, 1-0.

"The record isn't as rosy as it seems," coach

Joseph Walker said. "Our record against teams that have actually challenged us is 0-2-4."

Walker said his goals for the season include making the playoffs and not losing any home games. He said the team will "watch a lot of film to see how they can improve."

Brentwood has scored a total of 47 goals in their 13 games, allowing only 15.

The team's leading scorer is sophomore David Ko, with 11 goals, followed by freshman Andrew Seung, with eight. Fifteen different players have scored.

Leading in assists are juniors Alex Georgulas and Caleb Geer, each with eight.

The district playoffs are Feb. 7. Regionals are Feb. 14, and the state championship is Feb. 20-21.

Following is a summary of each game:

## **BCS @ St. Stephen's, Nov. 7**

The Bears pulled out a 1-1 tie against one of the toughest teams they will play. Sophomore Gabe Breternitz scored the season's first goal, assisted by classmate David Ko.

## **BCS @ Awty International, Nov. 8**

The team traveled to Houston and arrived at midnight the night before the game to play in the early morning hours. The game also ended a tie, with freshman Jimmy Lidgey and Georgulas each scoring unassisted. Awty handily defeated the Brentwood varsity last year.

## **BCS @ Bryan St. Joseph, Nov. 18**

The Bears demolished St. Joseph 10-3 as seven different players scored. Georgulas was responsible for four assists, and Ko led the way with three goals, the season's first hat trick.

## **Tomball Rosehill @ BCS, Nov. 20**

The Bears continued their streak, defeating Rosehill 7-0 at the first home game. Ko and junior Tommy McCaffety each had two goals.

## **St. Michael's @ BCS, Nov. 21**

The boys pulled off another blowout win at home, 5-0. Each goal was scored by a different player, and all of them were assisted. It was supposed to be a true test of the team's ability, but the opponents failed to meet expectations.

## **Temple Holy Trinity @ BCS, Nov. 24**

The winning streak went unchecked when the Bears rolled over Temple Holy Trinity 6-0. Seung had two goals.

## **Bryan St. Joseph @ BCS, Nov. 25**

After drilling this opponent the last time the two teams faced off, BCS settled for a mediocre 3-0 victory at home. Ko led the team with two goals, and junior Brian Lam put in the third.

## **Victoria Tournament, Dec. 5-6**

The Bears played five games, winning two, losing one, and tying two. They finished third in the tournament.

Highlights included another hat trick from Ko, and an emotional victory in a penalty kick shootout, thanks to a spectacular save by sophomore goalkeeper Brandon Jones. The boys also experienced a historic first by tying San Antonio Christian – the first time BCS has ever not lost to SACS.

Making all-tournament were Breternitz, Geer, Ko, and junior Carlos Zaragoza.

## **BCS @ Victoria St. Joseph**

The Bears lost their first district game 1-0. They allowed a "fluke goal," according to Walker, in the first half, and tried to salvage the game by renewing their pressure in the second half, but they failed to score.

"You guys went out and played your hearts out in the second half, and I'm proud of you," Walker told the team afterward. "Unfortunately, our soccer wasn't good enough to put one in, but it wasn't from lack of effort."

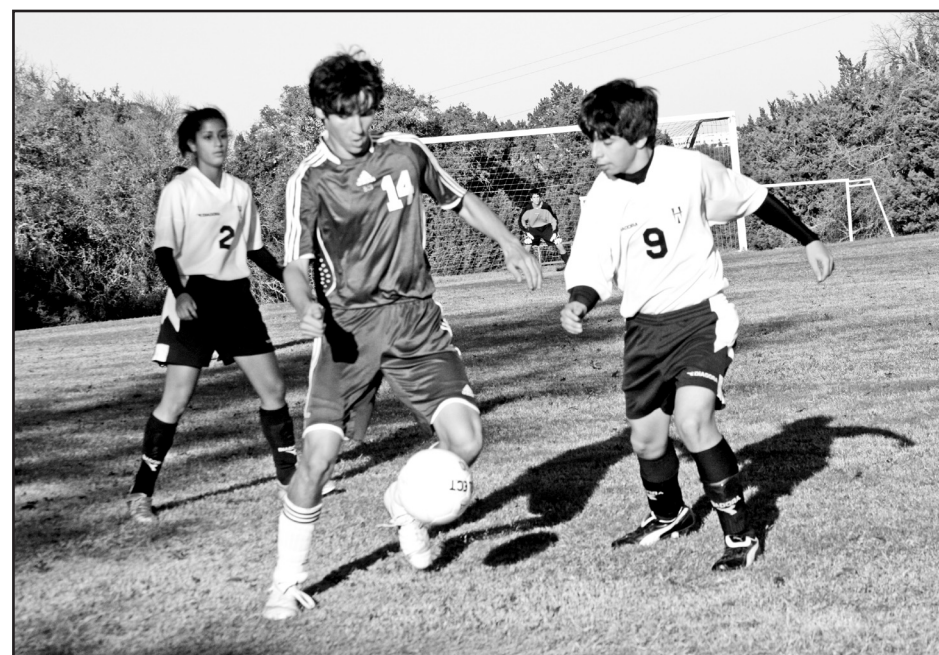


photo: Olivia Brinson

**WATCH THIS** Junior Caleb Geer dribbles his way through defenders during an easy 6-0 victory over Temple Holy Trinity on Nov. 24.

# Some get extra practice as hoops seasons begin

**katie LEGBAND**  
sports editor

Eat, sleep, homework, practice. This is all a few eighth graders had time to do for awhile.

Four eighth-grade girls and three eighth-grade boys practiced with the high school JV teams until TAPPS denied them the ability to play in high school games.

Playing both junior high and JV basketball for the girls were Brooklyn Merkord, Mary Monacelli, Rachel Orick, and Morgan Vandygriff.

The three eighth-grade boys playing junior high and JV basketball were Jon Brinson, DD Harris, and Amos Mallett.

The junior high girls' AA team, coached by Kaylee Loftis, lost to Immanuel Giddings by nine in their first game Dec. 2. They lost their second game on Dec. 8 against San Marcos Home School, by one point.

Coach Katie Smith of the junior high girls' A team said they have been focusing on learning their offense and presses.

The junior high boys' AA team beat Immanuel Giddings 54-30 in their first game Dec. 2. The

four high scorers were Harris with 23 points, Lopez-Roeper with nine points, and Brinson and Mallett both with eight.

Coach Greg Sansom said the team is working on basic fundamentals and offenses and defenses to prepare the boys for the high school team. He said he is very optimistic about his team's prospects this season, since they have four key players returning from last year's team that only lost three games.

Sansom said he has three goals for this team. The first one is to develop a team that plays solid, disciplined, fundamental basketball. Second is, by the end of the season, to have players ready to play at the high school level. Finally, and "most importantly," he wants to develop players that honor God both in the way they play and in how they handle themselves off the court.

"I expect us to have a very good season and I think we have a good shot at going undefeated this year," he said. "We only lost three games last year, and I think we have a good chance to do even better this year."

The junior high boys' A team lost to San Marcos Home School on Monday and to TSD

on Tuesday. Since last year's sixth-grade starters have jumped to AA this year, coach Jonathan Weed said his team is having to adjust.

"We won't measure our success in number of wins. I want the boys to develop some basic skills so that they can grow more comfortable on the court," Weed said. "I'm also hoping to help shape a strong work ethic."

All elementary girls had their tryouts Dec. 1 and 2 and were divided into two teams. The AA team lost their first game Dec. 5 against Immanuel Giddings. They are coached by teacher Mark Broadway.

The A team, coached by parent Paul Browder, played their first game against TSD yesterday. Browder said he will be working on the fundamentals and basic basketball principles with the girls. He will also start teaching them the basic offense and defense that the high school teams play. A focus of the team is learning about God through basketball.

"Most of all, we will try to help them understand life lessons that can be taught through basketball, particularly how our walk with Christ is the important part of whatever we do," Browder said.

The elementary boys' AA team lost their first game Dec. 5 against Immanuel Giddings. Coach Jeff Orick, a BCS parent, said they have been focusing on being aggressive, rebounding, defense, and supporting each other. Some of his goals for the team are that the boys will have fun, improve, and know more about leading and loving as a man of God. Orick is not worried about the team's record, but rather their attitude and how they improve.

"I expect the boys to have the attitude that is detailed for us in Philippians 2. I hope we improve every time we are on the court," Orick said.

Coach Nathan Smith of the elementary boys' A team said the team will set out this year to learn the fundamentals of the game of basketball.

Smith said two of his goals are to teach each player what it means to be competitive in a Christ-like setting, and to help each player to find and develop his skills for future years at BCS.

"I expect to be the Cinderella story of the year," Smith said.



# With full tank of wins, Lady Bears rev into district

trevor **ATHERTON**  
reporter

The Lady Bears' varsity basketball team is off to a great start with an outstanding 13-3 record. They showed their talent to the whole school by winning the BCS Invitational last month, in addition to blowing teams out and coasting to easy victories.

Their defense has been a key to their success with the girls averaging more than seven steals a game.

"We play really hard and work really well together," junior Katie Miertschin said.

After winning the first three games, the girls' first loss came from the first game in the Mustang Classic Tournament in Houston on Nov. 13. The Lady Bears lost 38-29 to the host team, Houston Christian. However, they went on to win the silver bracket in that tournament by winning their remaining two games by large margins.

The Lady Bears went on to beat St. Andrew's 56-30 the following week. Junior Ashley Clement led the team with 12 points, followed by classmate Joelle Vargas with 10 points.

Two days later, the girls began their stunning performance at the BCS Invitational. The Lady Bears dominated their two games leading up to the championship game with steals and sharp shooting. In the final against Carrollton Prince of Peace, BCS was ahead the entire game until their opponents came back in the fourth quarter and tied the score at 53-53 with 15 seconds left.

In overtime the Bears scored the first basket and never trailed again, winning 62-61. Senior Laura Peterson hit six three-pointers throughout the game to finish with 18 points, and Clement added 13 points and nine rebounds.

"Even though it was tied in the fourth quarter, I knew we would win, because Coach says we always find a way to pull through," senior Olivia Brinson said.

The Lady Bears continued their winning streak by beating San Antonio Lutheran 53-24 in San Antonio on Nov. 24. Clement led the way with 15 points, and junior Tyla Wells had 12.

After Thanksgiving break, Brentwood traveled to San Marcos for their first district game and had a great night on the defensive end with more than 10 steals. With eight points apiece from Vargas and her sister Wells, the girls got most of their points from layups on fast break opportunities.

"It was a fun game and we all played well," Vargas said.

Last weekend, the Lady Bears went to the Scurry Rosser tournament southeast of Dallas and played hard against big schools. They won the first game against Dallas Christian 40-38. The next couple of games were difficult, as they lost to Dallas Life and Winnoma on Friday.

Some of the girls had been staying up late working on assignments and projects for school and did not get a full night of rest, which showed in the way they played the following day.

"We were exhausted, but we shouldn't make

excuses for our losses," said Clement, who leads the team with 10.2 points per game.

On Saturday the girls beat Palmer 49-22, playing hard after a good night's rest. Clement led the team with 12 points while Vargas came out with eight points. The girls didn't place because of their two losses but gained more experience in preparation for district games.

"We played sporadically, but ultimately this tournament helped us a lot in how we handle close-game situations," head coach Devan Loftis said.

The girls will host Hyde Park tonight at 8 p.m. and then enjoy a break before the Rosehill tournament Dec. 29-31.



photo: Ken Brinson

**CHAMPS** From left to right, seniors Hannah Sinclair, Olivia Brinson, Laura Peterson, Katie Legband, and Rebekah Singleton pose with the first-place trophy after winning the BCS Invitational Nov. 22. The Lady Bears defeated Carrollton Prince of Peace in the final.

# Boys jump out to 2-0 district start after early struggles

ben **INGRAM**  
reporter

The varsity boys' basketball team started off district well with two convincing wins, a 70-51 win against San Marcos Baptist on Dec. 2 and a

victory over Giddings School on Dec. 9.

As the Christmas break nears, Brentwood has a 4-10 overall record but is slowly improving and has a 2-0 record in district.

Last weekend, Brentwood headed north to play in the Scurry Rosser tournament, where

they opened up well with a 46-40 win over Eustace. Junior John Alan Archer led the way with 19 points. After losses in their next two games, the Bears ended on a high note with a 59-56 victory over Allen, led by Archer's 17 points.

The Bears opened up district when they traveled to San Marcos Baptist. It was a very low scoring, defensive first half as Brentwood took an 18-14 lead to the break. They came out hot in the third quarter, getting up by as much as 15 points. Shooting remained

strong and the defense solid, as BCS won 54-26. Cardenas led the team with 10 points.

Archer leads the team in scoring with 9.8 points per game, while classmate Jacob Cardenas averages 9.3.

On Nov. 25, Brentwood faced a tough opponent in St. Michael's. The Crusaders are ranked in the top 20 of TAPPS 5A, so Brentwood knew it was going to be a difficult game. Slowly but surely, St. Michael's developed a 46-12 lead over Brentwood. The Bears didn't have any answer and were blown out 24-2 in the third to make the score 70-14 going into the final quarter.

Brentwood didn't give up though; they kept fighting and their shots finally started falling. They outscored St. Michael's 21-19 in the final quarter to make the final score 89-35.

"I'm extremely proud of the way you guys played, except for the third quarter," Peyton told his team afterward. "This was a top 20 team in state, and you guys never gave up."

On Nov. 21-23, Brentwood hosted the ninth annual BCS Invitational. The boys opened with a hard-fought loss to Waco Vanguard, 51-44, sending them to the losers' bracket. In their next game against Regents, Brentwood came out strong and played their new offense well to get out to a 38-26 halftime lead. They continued

to play well and their defense held off a rally by Regents to pull off their first win of the season. Senior Nate Shackelford and Archer led the team scoring with 13 points each.

"We finally have the monkey off our back," Peyton said.

On Saturday, Nov. 23, Brentwood faced off against San Marcos Home School for the consolation trophy. The Bears came out slowly, getting down 17-8 early. They improved in the second quarter, but San Marcos went on an 8-0 run to end the half, making it 30-19. This was a huge improvement, however, because when BCS played SMHS in the season opener, they were down 44-13 at half.

Midway through the fourth quarter Brentwood pulled within seven, but they couldn't keep the comeback going, and they eventually lost 67-52. Cardenas led BCS with 11 points.

"We are 100 times better than what we were at the beginning of the season," Peyton said.

The previous Tuesday, the Bears were overpowered by St. Andrew's 82-28.

"It was a hard lesson learned for our team. It showed us a lot of things we need to work on," Shackelford said.

Next up for Brentwood is Hyde Park, tonight at 7:30 p.m. at the Quarries. After that is a Monday home game with St. Stephen's.



photo: Olivia Brinson

**TOUGH CHALLENGE** Junior Jacob Cardenas looks to make something happen against St. Michael's on Nov. 25.



## 'Tis the season: Christmas at BCS

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making gingerbread houses, which they will decorate the last week before Christmas. The gingerbread house tradition started when the Class of 2008 was in first grade.

Students have conducted a number of fundraisers during the Christmas season. Poinsettia sales concluded on Nov. 24, and the plants were delivered last week. Each senior made about \$5 from each poinsettia sold, and the class raised a total of nearly \$900. The money will go toward their spring break trip to Europe.

Seniors also host Breakfast with Santa, which will be on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 8-10 a.m., at the Applebee's in Cedar Park. The cost is \$6 per person, and everyone receives an all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast.

"The kids sit in Santa's lap and take their picture with him. We have the same Santa every year," said sponsor Mark Broadway, referring to Brentwood church member Dan Merrell, who is blessed with a Santa-like beard.

The junior class ran the Santa Shop, where students bought items to give as gifts to parents, siblings, teachers, and friends. The shop was in A129-130 on Dec. 9 and 10. Items available included ornaments, pens, figurines, puzzles, jewelry, toys, and other trinkets. The Santa Shop is most popular with elementary students, and every class has a scheduled time to visit. Secondary students may come on their own time to purchase items.

"It's nice because everything is so cheap," freshman Aaron Messina said. "It's a great way for the younger students to buy gifts."

Juniors also wrapped gifts at Barnes & Noble on Dec 6 and 7. They accepted donations and wrapped books and other gifts customers purchased. Money raised wrapping and in Santa Shop will go toward the Junior/Senior.

This year, the freshman class performed a Letters from Santa fundraiser. Letters were sent out to elementary parents that asked them to pay a \$5 fee for Santa to send their child a personal letter.

Dr. Libby Weed, the elementary principal, continues to carry on her tradition of reading Christmas stories to the students. Throughout December, she will visit every classroom and read them one or two stories. These include "The Gift of the Magi" and "The Tale of Three Trees."

The elementary Christmas pageant was canceled this year, due to Brentwood Oaks Church replacing all pews and carpeting in the sanctuary, which will be ongoing through the month of December.

Instead, small Christmas concerts have been arranged, where parents of elementary students can come and hear their children sing. Each grade will have its own 10- to 15-minute concert. On Wednesday, Dec. 17, parents of kindergartners through second graders may hear them in the chapel, and the following day, third- and fourth-grade parents can attend their child's concert. Refreshments will be provided, and the children are encouraged to attend school in festive clothing.

## "For the least of these people..."

*Participation in pill-packing parties to aid Zambia Medical Mission*

leah **UNGLAUB-BROWN**  
reporter

The smell of cherry vitamins filled Mark Broadway's classroom last month. Kids got right down to business, packing over 500,000

children's vitamins for Zambia in the span of about two weeks.

Mr. Broadway's classroom became quite the hot spot. NHS and NJHS held a "pill packing" there after school on Tuesday, Nov. 18. When the dust cleared they accomplished packing a

total of 332 bags of vitamins.

"I feel like I'm being useful. I am so happy to help," sophomore Diem Ho said. "I think it is a good thing to do, and we should do things like this more."

The vitamins will eventually be shipped to a mission base in Zambia, where they will be held till members of the Abilene-based Zambia Medical Mission distribute them in July. The pill-packing craze started just this year. In previous years various schools and churches in Abilene would pack the pills, but due to an earlier shipping date than in previous years, Michele Broadway graciously offered to lend a helping hand.

The pill-packing process went relatively fast, starting Nov. 5 and ending Nov. 21. The speedy process was all thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication of BCS students and even some teachers. Students came to various rooms such as Mr. Broadway's and Miss Lippincott's classrooms during study halls, after school, or during band, and even some elementary grades devoted whole class periods to pill packing.

"It felt good, because I was helping people," fifth-grader Dane Foster said.

The pills students have packed are actually the pills they will be raising money for in April, in the fundraiser Money for Medicines. According to Michele Broadway, one penny buys one vitamin for a child in Zambia. The Zambia Medical Mission will be billed for the vitamins, and then in April they hope to raise enough money to pay for all or most of the vitamins. The medication needed for Zambia ranges from children/adult vitamins to medication for epilepsy.

"Every penny given and every pill counted helps a person in Zambia. I just appreciate anything that is done, from even a little to a lot," Mr. Broadway said.



photo: Olivia Brinson

**PACKIN' PILLS** Science teacher Mark Broadway welcomed some younger children into his classroom last month as students of all ages worked together to count and pack more than half a million vitamins. The pills will be given to Zambians in July.

## My odyssey: a novel in 30 days

continued from page 2

previously there were none is extremely tiring mentally, and it is even harder to keep going when working all alone. Fortunately, National Novel Writing Month provides an excellent window of opportunity to take encouragement from fellow writers; it is much easier to keep slogging on when you know that thousands of other people around the world are sharing in all the tears and the triumphs.

If there is one thing I have learned from this whole insane endeavor, it is to pursue your passion and to celebrate every aspect of it, all the mistakes and the victories, for life is too short to waste chasing something that does not inspire you. It is very difficult to keep up with writing much of the time, but if I don't, something within me is missing.

This quote by the late Martha Graham, sometimes called the Picasso of modern dance,

inspired me this year:

"There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is nor how valuable nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open."

I encourage you, despite the travails of life, to do whatever it is that inspires you with the talents you have been given. Stay open to the Author of life, and may everything you do be *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, to the greater glory of God.

\*As of Nov. 29, Carlin reached 50,711 words.

## Dinner

continued from page 1

He later found out that his great-great-great-grandfather, Willis, had served on the Waco City Council in the 1870s after being owned by a county judge in the years leading up to abolition.

In 2004, Jefferson was appointed by Gov. Perry to become Chief Justice. He was reelected on Nov. 4 to another six-year term.

Since Jefferson became Chief Justice, the Supreme Court now archives permanently on its website every argument that goes on in the Court that the public may view for free.

Jefferson's wife, Rhonda, is a former public school teacher. They have three sons.

To show Brentwood's appreciation, Moss presented Jefferson a certificate for a weekend stay at the Great Wolf Lodge in Grapevine.

Tickets to the Partnership Dinner were \$75 for an individual, \$1,500 for a Silver Patron, and \$3,000 for Gold Patron.