



THE BEAR FACTS

VOL. XXII NO. 6

BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

APRIL 2010



see pg. 7

IN SHORT

Sinclair in state bee

Seventh-grader Charlie Sinclair got to compete in the state level of the National Geographic Bee on April 9 in Bedford. After winning the school Bee in January, he took a written test and scored high enough to be among the 100 state bee competitors.

The competition was tough, according to Sinclair, who did not advance beyond the prelims. Winners of state bees qualify to advance to the national competition at Washington, D.C., May 25-26.

Book fair raises funds

The annual Brentwood Christian spring Scholastic Book Fair was held in the FLC from March 29 to April 1, offering books for all ages, computer games, and even posters. While this year's profit fell short of the goal, chairperson Anita Chambers said that the money raised is still very helpful to the BCS library program.

According to secondary librarian Tere Hager, the money raised by the fair will be used on software like the Accelerated Reader programs that many of the younger students use. Also more books for classrooms are purchased.

Teacher has surgery

Secondary teacher Brenda Lippincott underwent knee replacement surgery last month to repair her arthritis-ravaged joint. Her first week back at school, she used a wheelchair in the afternoons after resting at home in the mornings. Soon she graduated to a walker, and she now walks without assistance. On Fridays, she works with a physical therapist at her home to regain full movement.

Originally Lippincott received fluid injections to temporarily replace the lost cartilage and ease the pain. But the injections quickly lost their effectiveness.

TCSIT shortcoming

Gardner shines; high school takes 2nd

mike **LEE**
reporter

Brentwood Christian's high school team finished second in TCSIT last weekend, failing to acquire their fourth consecutive sweepstakes championship. Their total of 396 points was 12 points behind first-place Fort Worth Christian and 182.5 points ahead of third-place Northland Christian.

It is the fourth time BCS did not take first place in TCSIT since 1994, the year when the school won the first place for the first time.

The junior high team placed fourth with 141 points, 45 points behind Dallas Christian.

However, the students excelled in several

events. BCS was named the Grand Champion in One-Act Play, while Brentwood's yearbook, *The Bear Tracks*, finished second.

The Bear Facts took first for the 14th time. However, since only three newspapers were entered, BCS was not awarded any points – points which would have been enough to give Brentwood the sweepstakes title.

Individually, senior Matthew Gardner won first place in all five of his events: Physics, Comprehensive Science, Number Sense, Team Math, and Comprehensive Math, which he won with a perfect score. Math events coach Kaleen Graessle said she could not recall seeing a per-

see **TCSIT**, page 2

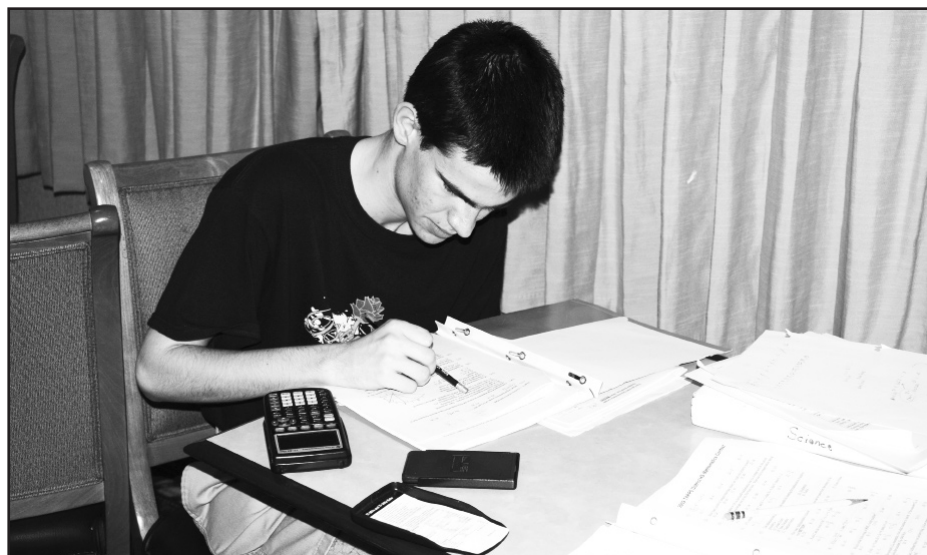


photo: Kaleen Graessle

Preparing to conquer Senior Matthew Gardner won all five TCSIT events in which he competed last weekend. A week earlier, he won all four of his events in TAPPS state.

Gardner leads BCS to second in TAPPS state

megan **MONACELLI**
sports editor

BCS finished second in the TAPPS 4A state academic meet held Friday and Saturday, April 9-10, on the campus of Concordia University in Austin. Incarnate Word Academy of Corpus Christi won by a narrow margin, 86 to 79.

Senior Matthew Gardner was named grand champion for the second year in a row by earning more points than any other student in division 4A. He placed first in all four of his events: number sense, science, advanced math, and computer science.

"His winning first is just a part of the story, as he took first decisively," Geometry and AP Calculus teacher Kaleen Graessle said.

Senior Adam Cammack placed second behind Gardner in computer science and also took second in social studies.

"If it weren't for Gardner..." Cammack joked about falling short twice to his friend.

Junior Polly Park took fourth in number sense and sixth in advanced math, while senior Stephen Yu finished fifth in mathematics. Juniors Gabe Breternitz and Caleb Kronke took fourth in duet acting.

The school newspaper, *The Bear Facts*, also took first at state for the second year in a row. As newspaper adviser Jonathan Weed is quick to give credit to senior editor, Skylar Haws, Haws said it was more of a team effort and victory.

"It takes multiple people to make each is-

see **BCS**, page 4

Varsity girls' soccer, boys' golf added

Grades 5-8 to compete in Austin Inter-Parochial League

jacob **CARDENAS**
reporter

Brentwood Christian is expanding its athletic department next school year with the addition of varsity girls' soccer and varsity boys' golf, as well as flag football and co-ed soccer for grades 5-8.

Along with the new opportunities in sports, both elementary and junior high will compete in the Austin Interparochial League (A IPL).

Athletic director Joseph Walker said he has pursued girls' soccer for "a long time now." However, because Brentwood has resolved to provide an equal number of sports for girls

and boys, girls' soccer could not be added until the addition of another boys' sport. To solve the problem, the school decided to add boys' golf, which according to Walker is the most requested sport besides football.

Some girls, such as junior Alyssa Legband, sophomore Schuyler Hagen, and freshman Courtney Flores, are eagerly anticipating the chance to finally play soccer for Brentwood.

"I'm really excited," Legband said. "I didn't play (select soccer) this year, but I've played select for a few years."

Other students, such as senior Michael Sansom, are disappointed that the new opportunities are coming one year too late.

"I definitely would've played golf. They would bring it in the year after I leave," Sansom said with a shake of the head.

The athletic expansion is expected to help with the attraction of new students and the retention of current ones. According to Walker, the goal is to provide as many opportunities as the school's size will allow. The more opportunities, the greater the chances the school will grow.

"We think that having sports like these is a reasonable expectation for a school our size," Walker said. "We do think we can do this

see **Flag football**, page 5

From the mind of Skylar Haws

So, what has my private education been worth?

After spending my entire life in private school educational facilities, and most of my high school career at Brentwood, the time has come to finally render a verdict as to whether or not the benefits of my private education were worth the sacrifices. In reflection, I will attempt to examine some of the largest hurdles and greatest advantages in an attempt to weigh whether I think it desirable to give my own children a similar private education in the future.

Perhaps the most obvious and distinguishing difference between Brentwood and public schools lies in the size. Upon first examination, Brentwood may seem to be at quite a disadvantage compared to public schools. After all, no one can deny that public schools offer a greater variety and higher competitive level of sports, numerous and diverse clubs and activities, many more Advanced Placement classes, and the International Baccalaureate program.

I believe, however, that it would be an egregious fault to say that bigger is always better. Two things in which Brentwood has undoubtedly surpassed the public schools in are quality

of education and quality of environment.

By quality of education, I mean the academic philosophy with which the teachers approach their subjects. In my personal experience, I can say without a doubt that all of my classes have been taught in a manner venerable to the spirit of academia. Although my initial concern with enrolling in Brentwood was the lack of AP (Brentwood has four AP classes) and absence of IB classes, this has had absolutely no limiting affect on my pursuit of a top education, and I am thoroughly convinced that enrolling in a public school would not have offered me any appreciable academic advantages. I say this with confidence because I scored highly on the SAT, ACT, AP Tests, and Subject Tests, and have been admitted to my first choice college: Vanderbilt University. Brentwood amply prepared me for all of these obstacles.

The quality of environment at Brentwood is in my opinion what makes the school so valuable to me. The low student-to-teacher ratio provides an environment where the teachers have the ability to develop a personal relationship with students and offer assistance outside of the classroom. I cannot count the number of

times that a Brentwood teacher has given up sleep, lunch, or family time to meet with me outside of regular school hours when I was having trouble understanding the course work.

Even more impressive than the faculty commitment is the condition of the student body. Brentwood is undoubtedly free from any violence and gang problems. There is no need for law enforcement officers on campus because no such problems exist. There is little use of alcohol by the student body outside of the campus (which is pretty amazing for high school students). Drugs are not prevalent either. I have never seen any drugs at school (that's pretty amazing, too) and to be honest, there are probably only a handful of people who experiment with drugs in the entire high school. As far as promiscuity goes, Brentwood minimizes the problems of immodesty with the uniform policy (for which I am personally glad to sacrifice some of my individuality). Overall, I would describe Brentwood as a safe and healthy environment conducive to learning and promotional of productive life behaviors.

The last major point of consideration is the cost of tuition. Is a Brentwood education really

worth the financial sacrifice? Public schools receive funds and resources from the government, but must play by government rules – which include the acceptance of all world views, denial of absolute truth, and explicit exclusion of God from the curriculum. By paying tuition, Brentwood students purchase the opportunity to learn from a God-centered perspective, pray, study the Bible, and be a part of an academic institution that acknowledges they must answer to a higher authority.

As a senior looking back on twelve years of private education, I can honestly say that I would not have it any other way. I have no doubt that one can be a successful scholar or devout Christian in the public school system, but I cannot imagine what I might be like if I had not been placed in the Christian environment. Not only was I allowed the freedom to develop my character in Christ and be tutored in the knowledge of the faith, but I learned something beyond the curriculum. The most important lessons that I learned at Brentwood were not those communicated through the curriculum, but through the actions of my peers and teachers – honesty, humility, empathy.

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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TCSIT a mixed bag of stars, some slackers

continued from page 1

fect score in that event in 25 years.

Gardner, who participated in TAPPS one week prior to TCSIT, entered nine academic contests in a one-week period and took first place in every single one. He has earned a total of 27 medals in TCSIT, all of which are gold except for two silvers.

Unfortunately, Gardner and some others had

to miss the awards ceremony so they could compete in the state band competition in Belton.

"I am excited about doing so well," he said. "I thank God for the talents he has entrusted to me and anticipate opportunities to use them to bring glory to his name."

Eighth-grader Aaron Ho was a big standout in junior high, placing first in Number Sense, Comprehensive Math, Team Math, and Algebra I, which is a high school event.

Junior Honney Khang placed in four events: first in Computer-aided Design, third in Art Portfolio, fifth in On-Site Drawing, and sixth in Photography. Senior Adam Cammack won golds in Bible Knowledge and Social Studies and a silver in Physics.

Other high school champions include sophomore Min Shin in Algebra II, Aracely Mora in Spanish Bible Reading, and the Team Math team of Gardner, his sophomore brother Daniel, junior Polly Park, and junior Mike Lee.

Sixth-graders Tiara Allen and Andrew Armstrong placed in junior high events: Armstrong second in Number Sense and Calculator, and Allen second in Spelling.

TCSIT coordinator Dr. Libby Weed said the students did well, but BCS could have and should have done even better. She said several students participated in TCSIT merely to be with friends or just to have fun, and those students did not make a strong contribution to the team.

"I discovered several who had done virtually no preparation," she said. "Some didn't even bring their study materials or manuscripts. We need to make sure this does not happen again in the future. If just two of those students had been replaced by someone who was really motivated and had prepared well, we would have won sweepstakes in high school."

Dr. Weed, who has been overseeing the BCS participation in TCSIT since 1989, also expressed her regrets in being unable to motivate and bring the best out of the junior high team.

"One of my greatest regrets is that we have never been as successful as I'd like to be in motivating junior high students and enabling them to grasp what an outstanding opportunity this tournament is," she said.



photo: Randy Yarbrough

5K crew Led by teacher Chloe Campbell (kneeling at left), BCS employees and their families have been participating in the Vern's No Frills 5Ks at Berry Springs Park in Georgetown, which take place on the third Saturday of every month and cost \$1.

European diary: See it for yourself

charles **KIM**
reporter

“Ladies and Gentlemen: Soon, we will be landing at Leonardo da Vinci airport. Welcome to Italy and have a nice trip. Grazie!”

As we listened to the captain, every one of us was looking down through tiny airplane windows with our eyes glimmering like the Italian coast and our faces bright as the sunlight in Rome. We could not describe how excited we were. The trip we had dreamed of for years was about to come true.

Over spring break, 31 seniors, 10 sponsors, and several parents embarked on the class trip to Europe. Our dream journey started as we landed in Rome.

Day 1: After we got off of the plane, the bus to the hotel swung by several famous spots in Rome. We took a short break and then started walking down the streets and visited several historical places such as the Roman Forum and the Trevi Fountain. There were so many things I wanted to capture in photos; it seemed like the entire city itself was a historical landmark.

Day 2: As the sun rose up, we headed to Vatican City. There we saw the famous Michelangelo’s masterpieces, such as the paintings in the Sistine chapel and St. Peter’s Basilica. After taking a tour through the smallest country in the world, we went to the famous Coliseum, standing in the center of Rome for nearly 2,000 years. Then we split into smaller groups and had free time. Many of us visited the famous shopping district by the Trevi Fountain, and others had few more of those famous Italian gelatos or visited the Spanish Steps or the Pantheon. In the evening, we went to the Trevi Fountain again. Even though we had a hard time getting there through the subway, it was worth it to see such different view of the fountain at night.

Day 3: We left the hotel early and headed to Florence. After the three hours of driving through the countryside of Italy, the tour guide

took us to the Accademia Gallery. There we saw the original statue of David and other famous works of Michelangelo that we had previously seen in books. On a walking tour, we saw the Florence Cathedral with its famous dome. Later we saw the Basilica of Santa Croce in which famous Italians such as Galileo and Michelangelo were buried. As we walked back along the Arno River, we saw the sunset – probably the most beautiful sunset I have ever seen. It seemed to be reminding us again to “carpe diem.”

Day 4: We started the day by taking a bus to Pisa early in the morning. Having the leaning tower of Pisa in front my eyes was another different experience. Unfortunately, the girls had to put up with ill-mannered behavior of Italian guys, to say the least. After coming back from Pisa, the group majorly focused on shopping in Florence. Many of us purchased fine Italian leather jackets for good prices. The good moments in Italy were about to end; in the evening, we had to say “ciao” to Italy to catch an overnight train to Paris.

Day 5: After an uncomfortable trip, we finally reached Paris in the morning. As soon as we got off the compacted train ride, the bus took us on a tour by several renowned landmarks. After a short break at the hotel, we visited famous Notre Dame Cathedral. (No, there was no hunchback, though there were several gypsy ladies.) After a great supper at a local restaurant near the cathedral, we headed to the Eiffel tower. At the top, we met a cold breeze, huge crowd, and beautiful view of Paris.

Day 6: We headed to the Arc de Triomphe right after breakfast. Then we spent the morning walking through the famous Champs-Élysées shopping street. For most girls, this place was a paradise. For guys, it was not so much. Then, our guide took us to the Louvre, the biggest museum in the world. People say it takes at least three days to get a full impression. However, it took us about an hour to fully get what we wanted; we saw the Mona Lisa and

came out. Eventually we hopped on the Eurostar to get to London, our next destination. It took us about two hours, traveling 180 miles per hour under the English Channel. Most of us were disappointed that we could not spend more time in Paris. It felt like there were still so many things to experience.

Day 7: We hit the busy streets of London early and saw the famous Royal Albert Hall, a “dream stage” for every string player. We drove into Trafalgar Square and then hopped out of the bus to see inside St. Paul’s Cathedral, one of the top-three “must see” things in London besides Big Ben and the London Bridge. Then we drove to Buckingham Palace and Covent Garden. Most of us either walked around the garden or went to Piccadilly Circus to grab jerseys of our favorite soccer players in the English League. Later we went back to Piccadilly Circus to watch “Les Miserables,” the longest-running musical in London. Some of us who don’t often enjoy musicals were shocked at how great it was.

Day 8: The next day started at the Tower of London. It was full of amazement. We saw the actual treasures of the Royal Family of Britain and the Bloody Tower. Lastly, everyone again split up into smaller groups to visit their own favorite places. Many of us visited Westminster Abbey, Parliament building, Big Ben, and the huge Ferris wheel called the Eye of London. Most of us used every minute until midnight. Many saw either “Stomp” or “Lion King.”

Our dreamlike journey ended here. But the fascinating memories, feelings, and friendships we gained from this trip will remain in our hearts forever. To my beloved underclassmen, I highly recommend this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity because it is amazing, probably more than they possibly could imagine.

There is an old Korean phrase that says, “Even when one hears or reads about something a hundred times, it cannot be better than seeing it once in front of one’s eyes.”

Kindergarten has fun on farm

kia **KHADEM**
reporter

Kindergartners experienced a bountiful yet informational adventure with beautiful skies at Crowe’s Nest Farm on April 8.

All three classes went to the popular farm in Manor to learn about Texas agriculture and wildlife in a 10 a.m.-to-12:30 p.m. tour. The trip consisted of all 54 students, accompanied by teachers Diane Troutman, Karla Smith, and Linda Allen, as well as some parents and grandparents who chauffeured them.

Crowe’s Nest Farm is owned by the Williams family, which includes three Brentwood students. The farm is a non-profit organization that was started in 1976 by Diane Williams to teach children about native Texan wildlife, farm animals, and agriculture.

At the farm the kindergartners saw peacocks, snakes, donkeys, buffaloes, bobcats, and all sorts of unique animals. They also saw a demonstration of how to milk a cow, and they experienced a hay ride, a trip to the butterfly house, a walk through the children’s gardens, and much more – all complemented by great weather. The kids even got sprayed with milk from a cow’s udder.

“My favorite part was seeing the underwater salamanders,” Ryan Birnesser said.

First graders visit Waco zoo

elena **BATLLE**
reporter

The first graders turn their heads as a mighty roar slips from the lions’ throats. An otter does somersaults and jumps in front of first-grader Amanda Petrik while she stands on the ledge of the otters’ exhibit.

Both of Brentwood’s first-grade classes traveled to Cameron Park Zoo in Waco on April 7. After studying about zoo animals and their habitats, they planned to see those animals and how they live, according to first-grade teacher Sylvia Burcham.

But they went for one other reason as well. “Mostly because it’s fun!” Burcham said. “It’s a great zoo and it highlights our study of zoo animals.”

Leaving BCS at about 8 a.m., more than 30 parents were in charge of taking the kids to the zoo in their own vehicles. Students ordered chicken nugget meals there and ate lunch on the zoo’s Gibbons Deck while watching the monkeys and fish.

“My favorite part was when we ate lunch and when we saw the beavers,” Taryn Cole said.

This is the fourth year first-graders have gone on a zoo trip, although past classes have gone to the Austin Zoo. But that zoo recently raised its fees and, according to Burcham and fellow first-grade teacher Geri Archer, the Cameron Park Zoo in Waco has a lot more to offer.



photos: Renee Haws

Roman holiday Thirty-one seniors pose in front of the Victor Emmanuel II monument in Rome, located near the Forum and the Coliseum. After Rome, Florence, and a side trip to Pisa, the group toured Paris and London.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: *Katie Miertschin*

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

Optimistic, outgoing athlete simply loves sports

kailey RODDEN
reporter

No matter what sporting event one attends at Brentwood, the sweet face of senior Katie Miertschin seems to always be there. Either in the stands or on the field, Katie's is a very familiar – and tan – face. (It is not fake, by the way; Katie just spends hours outside.)

Katie has always played every available girls' sport Brentwood offers. Even as a little tot, Katie was playing sports competitively. She started to play soccer, her favorite sport, when she was four years old. In the fifth grade, she began volleyball, basketball, softball, and track. She continued to play soccer outside of Brentwood because it was not offered.

Girls basketball coach Devan Loftis has a lot to say about Katie as a teammate and "super dedicated" athlete.

"Katie is also super dependable – she doesn't miss a game with everything she has going on," Loftis says. "Katie plays hurt and always

pushes through the pain. She encourages her teammates all the time. I can trust Katie will do what's right."

It is clear that Katie is a good athlete – just look at her letter jacket. In her freshman year alone she lettered in volleyball, basketball, softball, and track. By her junior year, her trophy shelf really began to expand: In basketball she was named second-team all-district and Brentwood's Defensive Player of the Year. In softball she was second-team all-district and won the Bear Spirit award.

Katie also has a

good academic record. She was in National Junior Honor Society in grades seven to nine, and she has been in National Honor Society since tenth grade.

Katie came to Brentwood in kindergarten, where she met current BCS seniors Ashley Clement and Megan Montgomery. Some of her favorite memories at Brentwood are of playing kickball and attending extended care in elementary school. She really loved the fifth grade.

"It was awesome having our sports teams own at everything!" Katie says.

It seems as though Katie lives on the Brentwood campus; she is almost al-

ways around after school for a sport. Sometimes she even divides practices in two so she can play two sports at a time. When she is not playing sports, Katie likes to

be with her friends at her house, usually watching television.

Katie also is a big hunter. She goes on hunting

trips to a ranch between Burnet and Leander with her dad frequently in the winter and early spring.

"I have a stuffed buck head in my room," Katie says. "It's the best one I've shot!"

But there is more to Katie than her incredible athleticism, amazing tan, and brilliant blue eyes.

"Katie is such a good friend," Ashley says. "She is always willing to help me with anything I need."

According to her friends, Katie is a wonderful, light-hearted person. She is happy, outgoing, and easy to laugh with.

"Katie is so encouraging. She really listens to you," Megan says. "She is so much fun to be with – she's always optimistic and positive. Katie's the most supportive person I know."

Katie is also loyal and will help her friends with anything. Her laughter is a popular feel-good medicine.

"I remember our freshman year we kept a journal that we traded and wrote encouraging verses and stuff in," Megan says. "I was blown away by what she wrote."

Megan also says Katie tries to help others be the best they can be.

"She truly makes me a better person. She is such a blessing to me," she says.

Katie plans to attend Abilene Christian University in the fall and major in exercise science, but she has not decided on a career.

One thing is for sure, however: Katie will continue to play her beloved sports in intramurals.



BCS seven points from repeat title at TAPPS academic meet

continued from page 1

sue, and we wouldn't have won if the stories were written poorly," Haws said.

The school yearbook, The Bear Tracks, did much better than expected, taking fifth place.

Yearbook adviser Jessica Love said winning third in district and fifth in state was not anticipated at all and is actually "an insult" to the other schools' yearbooks. However, Love has higher expectations for next year's competition.

"I am confident that this year's yearbook will get first in both district and state," Love said.

Ten BCS students advanced to the state meet from district competition a month earlier. In comparison to other schools, Brentwood's participation is significantly less, according to Dr. Libby Weed, who coordinates Brentwood's academic meets. Although the small numbers

have brought big success, Dr. Weed said she hopes to have more participation in years to come, particularly in the oral events.

Many coaches have helped in preparing the students who participated in TAPPS. Weed mentioned Don and Sharon Gardner (parents of senior Matthew and sophomore Daniel) as two who are dedicated to helping students who participate, especially in math events. Matthew also took on the role of coaching number sense this year.

"I just can't say enough about what they mean to the meets," Dr. Weed said.

BCS first competed in the TAPPS academic meet in '08, taking second overall, before winning first overall in '09.

"I enjoy seeing students use their God-given talents, growing, and shining," Dr. Weed said. "It is gratifying to see the students succeed."

Math League: BCS 12th in state

joseph KANG
reporter

After taking their sixth and final Math League contest on March 23, BCS high school students finished 12th place in the state, and the highest scoring BCS student took seventh place in the personal rankings.

In Math League, students compete for the personal highest scores, while schools compete for the highest team score. There are six contests each year, and there are six questions per contest. A school's score for a contest is the sum of its top five students' scores.

After the fifth test, BCS was 12th out of 58 schools in the state, and senior Matthew Gardner was 14th in personal rankings. After the sixth and final test, BCS kept its rank, while Gardner improved seven spots.

According to math teacher Kaleen Graessle, who is in charge of Math League at Brentwood, Gardner got the best score in BCS history. He got 33 out of 36 questions correct,

and he is one of 12 people throughout the state who had a perfect score on sixth test.

"God gave me a good brain," Gardner said.

BCS scored a 19 on the sixth test, for a total of 145. Austin Peace Academy, which took first place in state, got 27 problems on the sixth test and a total of 174.

"I am pleased with how the students performed this year," Graessle said. "Many students looked forward to it and after each test were excited to know how they had done. I was particularly pleased that so many different students contributed to our team scores throughout the year."

There are also math leagues for grades 6-8. Brentwood finished 18th out of 70 schools in sixth grade, led by Andrew Armstrong and Brendan Holloway. They were fourth and 14th, respectively, in personal rankings.

Brentwood took 21st out of 66 schools in seventh grade, and 16th out of 60 schools in eighth grade. For grades 6-8 overall, BCS finished fourth in a six-county region.

Cuban janitor has remarkable history

gabe **BRETERNITZ**
reporter

The swarthy, stoic face of Armando Chuy Zarate is a familiar one to many at BCS, yet a majority of those who have seen it do not recognize his name. He is one of the janitors in charge of maintaining cleanliness in the halls and classrooms. Thanks to the hours of work he and the other cleaning staff put in, the school environment is fresh and sanitary every morning for the students and faculty. His job is important but mundane and often overlooked.

There is a tendency to overlook the man behind the job as well. But by stopping and looking closer, one discovers an admirable man with a fascinating life story.

Zarate was born in 1937 and raised in Matanzas, Cuba, a port city on the northern coast about 40 miles east of Havana. He grew up under a democratic Cuban government that he describes as being “just like America’s democracy.” So when Fidel Castro took power in 1959, Zarate joined the Federacion Nacional Democratica. The FND was a counter-revolutionary group that attempted to sabotage the communist government by attacking and bombing government buildings.

“We were always careful not to hit the popu-

lace,” Zarate is quick to say. “Only the government, because the people had done no wrong.”

Although he understands English fairly well, Zarate can only speak in Spanish. Having a conversation with him requires a translator.

In 1972, Zarate was arrested and thrown in prison by the communist government for his affiliation with the FND. He does not know how the government found him out; he suspects there may have been a mole in the FND. When he spoke about his time in prison, his brows furrowed and his face maintained a perturbed expression.

“I’m sorry,” Zarate said. “When I think about it, I get overwhelmed with emotion.”

Prison was total isolation from everyone he knew and loved. No family, no friends, no familiar faces for six long years. When he was released in 1978, Zarate returned to his work as an electrician and air-conditioning/refrigerator technician. He remained in Cuba working for 16 years until, in July of 1994, he and his dependents were granted refugee status by the American government. He left the majority of his family behind in Cuba, including two sisters and a brother. He has not seen any of them since he left, although he calls his brother Gerardo whenever he can.

“I usually can only call once a month,”

Zarate says. “Long distance calls are very expensive.”

Zarate’s life in the states has improved dramatically. He met and married his wife Gloria in 1998; his immediate family consists of a son, Armando Jr., and two daughters, Neris and Daysee. He has worked as a janitor at BCS for five years. During the day, Zarate spends his time relaxing at his house with his pet chickens, dogs, and birds. He also enjoys baseball; his favorite team is the Texas Rangers.

Overall, Zarate says he is happy with his life. He still hopes for a free Cuba, although he has fears that Raul Castro is just as bad a dictator as his brother Fidel. Should Cuba embrace democracy, he would like to re-visit his homeland to see his family. But Zarate says that visiting the country now would be out of the question – they would not allow him to leave again.

So next time you think about casually dropping your trash on the floor, consider the remarkable Cuban pushing a trash can down the halls, wearing his signature yellow cap, large round glasses, and Mac Williams’ old lanyard draped around his neck. Maybe that image will motivate you to make Armando Zarate’s job a little easier by cleaning your messes and taking the three extra steps to a trash can.



photo: Skylar Haws

Fine arts perform well at state

Choir third and band sixth; Khang leads art to seventh place

lanae **HOLLINGSWORTH**
reporter

In a wild weekend of travel and conflicts, the BCS choir placed third and band placed sixth in their respective TAPPS 4A state competitions.

Two weeks earlier, Brentwood Christian art students took seventh place in state.

Choir competed at First Baptist Church in Belton on Friday, April 16. The band competition was also in Belton at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor on Saturday, April 17.

All of the choir entries in districts advanced to state. At state every group except three received “one” rankings. Eleven of the 21 solos also received ones.

The band took a combination of groups and two solos to state. Two groups received ones, the flute trio and the jazz combo. Band teacher Travis Pollard said the students did great.

“All the kids that went were fantastic,” he said.

This year TCSIT fell on the same weekend as TAPPS band and choir. Choir students were forced to choose between competing in TCSIT or TAPPS state. Choir teacher Missy Weaver thought that this likely had some effect on the outcome of the competitions.

On the other hand, band students were able to compete in both, though doing so involved

some crazy schedules. Seniors Josh Porter and Marisol Hernandez made finals in Dramatic Duet and therefore had to perform Saturday morning. After finishing their duet they left Abilene at 9:40 a.m. and made it to Belton just before 1 p.m.

“Never go (very fast) in the rain from Abilene to Belton,” Porter said about their trip.

They were a little early and, thankfully, completely intact.

Junior Honney Khang placed in five different events at the TAPPS 4A state art competition on March 26 and 27 at Concordia Lutheran University in Cedar Park. Her major achievement of the day was winning first in computer rendered art.

This year the competition was similar to last year, with 21 schools competing at the state level. Brentwood was only three points out of sixth; they placed fifth last year.

Half of the BCS on-site entries placed in their events. Notably freshman Jackson Graessle placed second in on-site photography 2D and junior Jennifer Quinn placed third in on-site photography. In addition to the on-site events, BCS also advanced 16 pieces from district to

state. Six of these received awards.

Khang also placed third in unaltered photography, fourth in on-site photography, fifth in seek and sketch, and fifth in on-site drawing. When art teacher Lori Morin told her what she had won, Khang was surprised.

“I thought that has to be a lie,” Khang said.

This was her first year competing in TAPPS art. She said that she really enjoyed it and is definitely going to do it next year.

Though it may seem that this was a lower placement than expected, Morin said Brentwood’s performance was affected by a change in the scoring of the on-site events. Winners of these events were given five points

instead of the 10 that they had received in past years.

The scoring change was a surprise to everyone, Morin said. No one found out until the on-site events were being scored. Since BCS is one of the stronger schools in on-site events, Morin said that if the old scoring had been used, BCS would probably have placed fourth.

“I was really proud of the kids,” Morin said. “Not only did they perform well and do good work, but they behaved above the bar.”

“Not only did they perform well and do good work, but they behaved above the bar.”

Flag football, co-ed soccer added to slate

continued from page 1

well.”

Admissions director Deborah Hicks agrees.

“I think it will affect parents’ decisions for their kids to come here when they see more opportunity,” Hicks said.

Since co-ed soccer is played in the spring, this left an opening to bring back flag football in the fall. According to Walker, a co-ed soccer team in elementary and junior high will prepare and develop the girls for high school and will provide the backbone for a solid varsity program.

BCS has played flag football and co-ed soccer for many years since the 1980s.

Walker said the transition from the Austin Christian Athletic Association to the more competitive AIPL will provide greater opportunity for growth as both an athlete and a person.

“It enables us to fulfill our mission more,” Walker said. “Students will be placed in more intense situations and will learn to handle them.”

No decisions on practice arrangements or on coaches for the new sports have been made yet.

BCS alum takes varsity job after college coaching stint

ryan **BRUNSON**
reporter

Passing through the athletic center and casually glancing into the gym during eighth period, a visitor may be amused to see player after player hurl himself to the basketball court at top speed, penguin-style, only to glide a lengthy ways across the floor.

What has happened at Brentwood Christian to result in such a ridiculous looking ritual?

A talented coach with college experience has now taken on the responsibility of the varsity boys' basketball team as well as one of the school's newest jobs.

Brentwood alum and former head coach of the York College men's basketball program, Brandon Tatum ('03), has returned home. As a consequence of reorganizing Brentwood's development department, the special events office was replaced with a development office, and Tatum was hired for the newly created job of development director.

Tatum's self-expressed love of Brentwood's atmosphere, faculty, and students has proved too irresistible for him to deny. Last month, York offered him a raise in salary and a development director job of their own for him to stay another year and coach, but he turned it down to return to his high school alma mater. Not only has Tatum had great experiences at Brentwood, but he also says he loves working with high school kids and really believes in the BCS mission.

"Not a lot has changed; people are still loving and friendly," Tatum said. "There are still teachers here that mean a lot to me."

He entered BCS as a freshman in 1999 and developed an accomplished high school résumé with his outgoing and humorous personality, in addition to his athletic achievements. Devan Loftis, who had Tatum in class and coached him in soccer, described him as friendly and light-hearted in class, adding that no one in school disliked him.

Linda Pimentel spoke highly of her former English student, recalling he was very well-behaved in class and well-known for his Christian values.

"He was well-respected, and everybody just loved him," she said.

Tatum split his time between two main sports, soccer and basketball. Athletic director and varsity soccer coach Joseph Walker considered him the best defensive player on the soccer team at the time. Walker also coached him in basketball, where he said Tatum was the best point guard he has ever coached. He was named BCS Athlete of the Year for his senior year.

After graduating, Tatum attended Abilene Christian University, playing on the basketball team his freshman year. He quickly became a student-assistant coach after he realized that he

"had no long-term future" in playing the game. Soon, he applied and was accepted as the head varsity coach for Abilene Christian High School while finishing a degree in Biblical texts.

After two other coaching jobs, he was hired as head coach for York College in 2008, becoming one of the youngest head coaches in college basketball. Tatum said he recruited 36 players, since only four were returning from the year before. In the two previous seasons, the York team had a combined seven wins. Tatum's team topped that mark in the first 12 games last fall. York College, an NAIA Division II school in the Midland Collegiate Athletic Conference, had by the end of the season achieved its first-ever national ranking and lost to two NAIA Final Four teams by single digits.

At that point, only one thing could stand in the way of his possibly becoming a dominant college basketball coach: family plans. Calling his resignation a "life-style decision," Tatum turned over his coaching position to his assistant. Brentwood, he decided, would be a better environment in which to build a family and career. On June 26, he plans to marry Megan Blalock, whom he met at ACU.

Tatum said he wants to bring more excitement to the basketball program and make basketball something the younger kids eagerly anticipate. Rather than recruiting, he says he simply wants to encourage the younger students to play.

Since arriving on campus April 5, Tatum has motivated the players both through his skillful

coaching and with his inspirational talks about being the start of something great. He has said that he will work harder and do more than

any other coach in the district, and he expects the same determination and effort to be given by each individual player.

As development director, Tatum is to organize and oversee fundraising programs to support the BCS mission and maintain an affordable tuition for families. School president Marquita Moss said the development office has an expanded responsibility from the replaced special events office, as Tatum and other office members will work to raise funds and widen the circle of donors. Notably he will head the launch of a new annual fundraiser next fall.

"We are excited about Mr. Tatum because he believes deeply in Christian education and in Brentwood Christian School and has the kind of character traits that are needed for the position – a love of people, a strong work ethic, creativity, and initiative, in addition to his strong Christian faith," Moss said.

Tatum's wry sense of humor, work ethic, and strong faith in Christ have distinguished him as a beloved friend and excellent role model. Now his former coaches and teachers can grow accustomed to having him around again.

"I can see myself being here for a long time," Tatum said.

Girls need two more wins to earn playoff berth

rachel **ORICK**
reporter

The varsity softball team is still hanging on to their hopes of making playoffs. With a 3-6 district record, they are currently in fifth place and need to win their next two games to make the playoffs.

They play John Paul II in Corpus Christi today, and then play the same team at home on April 26, which is Senior Night.

Sophomore Haley Decker struck out 14 Hyde Park batters in Monday's game, but the Lady Bears lost 3-0.

"The talent and skill are there; we just need to come out and take it to teams ..."

On Tuesday, Decker struck out nine batters in a 17-7 victory over San Marcos Baptist.

Coach Paul Sladek said the most difficult games have been against the first-place and undefeated Victoria St. Joseph – games BCS lost 10-0 and 10-1.

Sladek said the Lady Bears are very close to doing something special. They just have to "put it all together": hitting, defense, and staying focused for an entire game.

"The talent and skill are there; we just have to come out and take it to teams instead of hoping the other team doesn't take it to the Lady Bears," he said.

Sladek says next year should be better, and the girls could "possibly win district."

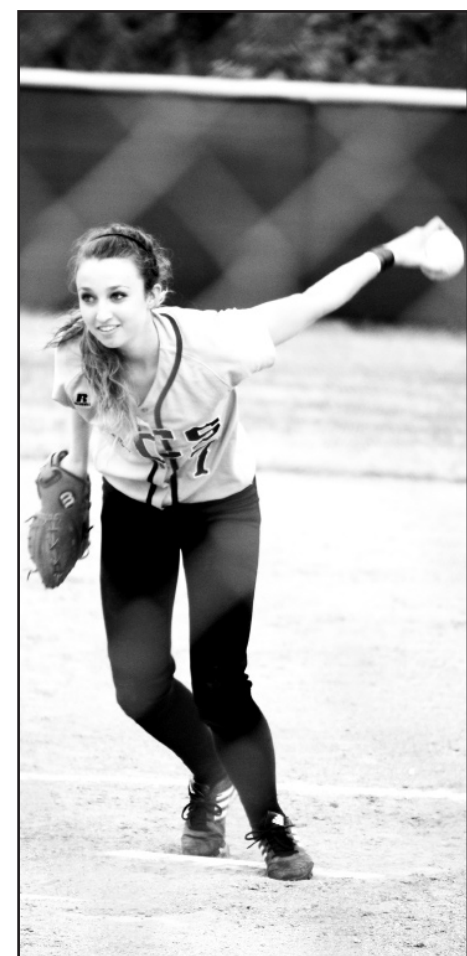


photo: Zach Ellis

Lean into it Sophomore Haley Decker delivers a pitch to a Hyde Park batter in their game April 6.

One-man tennis team

Brunson third in district, qualifies for state

matthew **ARCHER**
reporter

Brentwood Christian's tennis season began last week as the team's only member, junior Ryan Brunson, took third in the district meet in Corpus Christi on April 12-13.

The tennis season is not over, however, because Brunson's top-five finish qualifies him for the state meet on April 23-24 in Waco.

Things started off well at district for the second-seeded Brunson as he cruised through his first two matches, winning them both with scores of 6-0, 6-0. In his third match, nerves and a shortened match format combined to form a "perfect storm," resulting in an upset against the third seed from San Antonio Christian.

"I was really disappointed," Brunson said. "I think I was too overconfident coming into the match, and then nerves really hit me. I feel like I lost the match rather than the other guy won."

Due to the rain, many of the games had to be brought inside, where there were only three courts. So tournament officials decided to shorten the matches by substituting a 10-point tie-breaker for the third set.

"One of my strategies is to lengthen matches and really run my opponents, so by the third set I can really take control," Brunson said. "So I feel the tie-breaker really played to my opponent's advantage rather than mine."

After the disappointing loss, Brunson re-focused and ended up winning the third-place match in two sets, 6-4, 6-2.

Last year Brunson finished second in district and then lost in the second round of the state tournament. He said he hopes to improve his results in state this year.

"I think I really have a good chance of going deep into the tournament," Brunson said, "and I'd really like to come out of it with a medal."

"Also, I could always use some Brentwood fans to come support me in Waco," he added.

Track heads to district

megan **MONACELLI**
sports editor

The BCS varsity track teams have competed in two meets since spring break, setting five school records in the process.

In the Ro-Hawk Relays held at Randolph High School in San Antonio on March 27, sophomore Brittany Brunson shaved 25 seconds off her previous school record in the 3200 meters, coming in first place with a time of 12:34.

Head track coach Joseph Walker said freshman Morgan Vandygriff and senior Tyla Wells had strong showings in the triple jump and shot put, respectively, and freshman Priscilla Glenn did well in the 300 hurdles, and Matthew Welter had a good showing in the pole vault.

Four more school records were set at the Lion Invitational at San Antonio Christian School on Saturday, April 10.

Junior Ashley Gardner placed first and set school records in both the 100 meters (13.53) and the long jump (15-6). Walker's excitement over Gardner's success at her first meet contrasted sharply with the entire team's disap-

pointment at learning that Gardner suffered a broken ankle the following Monday while trying to score in a district softball game.

"It's heart-breaking to all of us that she got injured, but she gave us all a taste of ... how she can help us next year," he said.

The 4x100 relay team of Gardner, senior Ashley Clement, Wells, and Vandygriff took second place and set a school record at 52.97 seconds. The 4x200 relay team of Gardner, Wells, freshman Serena George, and junior Alyssa Legband also set a school record at 1:55.09.

Brunson won the girls' mile in 5:38, just four seconds off her school record set last year. Walker added that Vandygriff and Wells had strong showings in the 400 meters and shot put, respectively. The Lady Bears finished second overall to the host team.

For the boys, senior Jamie Furrer set a personal mark in the triple jump, while Welter bettered his personal best in the pole vault.

The high school district meet is today and tomorrow, also at SACS. Regionals are April 30 at Awty International in Houston, and the state meet is May 7-8 at Baylor University in Waco.



photo: Kay Taylor

High hurdle Senior Allen Taylor competes in the 300-meter hurdles on April 10.



photo: Jeff Glenn

Giant leap Seventh-grader Nicole Glenn jumps at the April 10 meet in San Antonio.

Track teams travel to TSD

Elementary team loaded with runners

morgan **VANDYGRIFF**
reporter

BCS junior high track and field teams have participated in two meets this season and have two remaining. The season started off with a meet in San Antonio on April 1. Coaches Jesse Jordan and Patrick Bradford took the 32 elementary and 13 junior high students to San Antonio Christian in buses to get to the meet that started at 2 p.m.

Eighth-grader Marisol Lawson placed second in the 2400 meter run, and seventh-grader Nicole Glenn placed second in the long jump. Due to inefficient scoring by meet officials, the meet ran behind schedule and BCS teams had to return to Austin before it ended.

On April 10 the track teams went to the FEAST Patriot Invitational at Randolph High School in San Antonio. The elementary boys took sixth place while the junior high boys took

14th place. Elementary girls finished the meet in fifth place, and junior high girls placed 12th.

Eighth-grader Kent Howell placed first in the high jump. Organized by the Feast Home School Association, the meet consisted of teams such as San Antonio Christian, St. Mary's Hall, San Marcos Baptist, and Cornerstone.

To prepare for this meet and the others that are to come, the elementary practices on Monday and Thursday while junior high practices on Tuesday and Friday. With a large elementary team, athletic director Joseph Walker said that this will help in future years.

"I love a big group for elementary," Walker said. "We know not all of them will continue in track, but we love how much we'll get kids interested and prepared for track at the junior high and high school levels."

With two meets down, there are two to go: a TSD meet on April 26 and the district championship meet on May 4 in Florence.

Disappointing baseball "season" brings frustration, life lessons

taylor **SHAW**
reporter

Without doubt, Brentwood baseball has endured its worst year ever, having been stripped of varsity status before spring break and then finally giving up any hope of even playing JV games. Practices will likely continue through the end of the month.

But the coaches and players remain optimistic about the future of Brentwood's baseball program.

"I think the team is still learning and improv-

ing even though we haven't been able to play," baseball coach Efrain Contreras said.

The main problem that the team faced this year was ineligibility. Many of the players, including some of the seniors and leaders on the team, had trouble staying eligible for grade checks.

"We've tried a lot of different things, from having study halls to making them run," Contreras said. "I'm frustrated right now, but it's motivating me to work harder and help the players get better and also work on their grades."

During their weeks of practicing without playing any games, Contreras said the team worked in the weight room a lot, trying to get stronger. They also worked on developing pitchers, as that's an area he said the team could stand to improve in.

Contreras said he is optimistic about next year, as the team will be moving down to 3A and as a result will be up against smaller schools. He said he is confident Brentwood will be able to field a team next year.

"What will really help is students playing in junior high and elementary so they already

know some stuff when they get here," Contreras said, referring to the team Brentwood has playing at Balcones that is made up of seventh and eighth graders.

The high school players are disappointed with the lack of a season this year but are trying to make the best of things.

"I'm sad that I'm not going to get to play my senior year, and it's really frustrating, but it's been a learning experience and I'm just trying to practice and help the younger guys and be an example," senior Brady Johnson said last week.

Brentwood sweeps PSIA district meet

megan **MONACELLI**
sports editor

BCS students took first place in both the middle school and elementary categories for the first time ever at the Private Schools Interscholastic Association (PSIA) district academic competition held March 27 at Regents School in Austin.

Seventeen BCS students, competing in 23 events, will advance to the state competition held April 24 in Fort Worth.

"To win district in both elementary and middle school categories is quite a victory – especially in our very competitive and very high quality district," said Dr. Libby Weed, Brentwood's elementary principal and coordinator for the PSIA competition.

Sixth-grader Andrew Armstrong took first place in four events: Calculator Applications 6, Number Sense 6, Mathematics 6, and Music Memory 6/7. In Number Sense 6-8 Brentwood took four of the top five places. Eighth-grader Aaron Ho took first, Armstrong was second, and eighth graders Co Ho and Michael Lam were fourth and fifth.

The elementary category includes students in grades 1-5; middle school is grades 6-8.

BCS parents and teachers played an active role by coaching the students in their events after school since last October. PSIA's wide range of events allows and encourages student participation in areas of study that range from science and math to English and speaking events, and much more. Brentwood proved to be especially strong in the math events – mathematics, calculator applications, and number sense – having nine students advance to state.

Dr. Weed said she is proud of the success shown by the students who participated.

"I was immensely pleased by the outstanding participation of our students and the great coaching that got them to the district meet," she said.

Last year, BCS took first in elementary and second in middle school, falling short to Redeemer Lutheran in district. This year Brentwood's cumulative score of 616 points was 161 better than second place.

In order to advance to state, students generally had to place first or second in their events.

Brentwood entered 51 out of approximately 80 events, and of the 51, BCS won 22.

Ten of the 17 students advancing to state have participated at the state level in previous years. Dr. Weed has high expectations for students advancing to show the academic quality of BCS.

"I expect them to demonstrate again what great students they are and how academically strong Brentwood Christian School is," she said.



photo: Alyssa Collins

Exact change appreciated For two weeks, Student Council members and other volunteers gave up their lunch to help count and group coins for the annual fundraiser. Pictured are seniors Skylar Haws, Allen Taylor, Lindsey Bernard, and Reagan Smith.

Students bring \$11,000 for Zambians

matthew **ONABAJO**
reporter

Participating in Money for Medicines for the sixth time, students at Brentwood Christian School raised a total of \$11,115.31 in the fundraiser which lasted from April 5-16.

"One hundred percent of this money will be used to buy medicine for the needy people in Zambia who are unable to get medicines on their own," secondary teacher Michele Broadway said. "God will multiply this money and make it go further than we could ever imagine."

The class that brought the most money per student was Carrie Hunter's fifth-grade class. One fifth-grade parent who works at Dell made a donation that Dell agreed to match, turning the total donation into more than \$3,000.

In the lower elementary, the winning class was Diane Troutman's kindergarten, and along with Hunter's class in upper elementary, Carolyn B'Smith's third grade was recognized. All three classes won ice cream parties.

Broadway's first-period class brought the most money per student in junior high, earning a "jeans day."

In high school, Dr. Brooke Hollingsworth's first-period class brought the most money per student and received an extended off-campus lunch as their prize.

The teacher of each winning class won a \$15 gift card for their "enthusiastic encouragement to their students."

Secondary librarian Tere Hager kicked off the fundraiser by speaking in an all-school chapel on April 1. She and her son, eighth-grader Jackson, and coach Kellsey Smith went to Africa last summer to participate in the Zambia Medical Mission. Hager presented the pricing and types of medicine bought with donations, which include vitamins, a cure for worms, and a cure for malaria.

Students were grouped together by their first-period class in the secondary and by homeroom teacher in elementary. On April 1, students received bags of M&Ms, ate them, and were

encouraged to replace the candy with money. Every day during lunch StuCo and Spiritual Life Committee would count and recount the money brought in that day. Broadway then took the money to the bank to transfer it into a bank note. She would then send the bank notes to pharmacy director Star Ferguson, who manages the money for medicines, in Abilene.

Many BCS students already helped to package the vitamins the money pays for, which have been sent on the mission in Zambia.

Every summer, 120 American doctors, dentists, nurses, and other volunteers help Zambians who have little or no health care. They set up a clinic in rural areas and provide free medical, dental, and spiritual care for the Zambians.

Over a period of six to seven days, Broadway says the Zambia Medical Mission provides medicine for as many as 16,000 Zambians.

"We do all this in the name of Jesus, and many people are helped free of charge, so they can experience the love of Jesus in his church," Broadway said.

Spaghetti bridges falling down, falling down

travis **CLARK**
reporter

As BCS secondary students walked through the halls in late March, they may have noticed several sleepy students from Geometry class. If asked why they were so tired, they would have most likely muttered "bridge project" before slouching toward their next class.

Those who have been in Kaleen Graessle's class in past years understand this mysterious two-word phrase, along with the difficulties and thrills it implies.

First- and seventh-period Geometry students used most of March to build spaghetti bridges and turned in these feats or flops of architecture to Graessle on March 29.

The bridges were then tested in the weight

room to see how much weight each one could hold, beginning on April 5. While some bridges broke at five pounds, several made it past the 50-pound mark.

In the end, two bridges stood out from the others. The I-beam built by first-period freshman Matthew Archer has held 375 pounds and remains unbroken. In the seventh-period class, sophomore Kaleb Chambers built a sturdy truss bridge that broke at 350 pounds.

Besides being tested in strength, one bridge from each class received the "Most Beautiful" award. Freshman Travis Clark earned the award in first period, and sophomore Bridgette Beck won in seventh. Both students got an automatic 100 on their projects, with the only requirement being that they each hold five pounds.

There were all kinds of structures, from truss

bridges to arch bridges and I-beams, and anything in between. Some were painted white, silver, brown, or red, while many others chose to stick with the natural "spaghetti yellow" color.

Though the bridges are always admired by many, this year's projects even involved people out of the continent. Office assistant Linda Riedesel sent pictures of some of the bridges to soldiers in Iraq and is running a competition between them. They are voting on which bridge will break quickest and which bridge will hold the most. The prize for guessing correctly is Double Stuff Oreos.

The bridge project has been around for 18 years, starting in 1992. Rules stipulate that the bridges must be at least seven inches long, no longer than 10 inches, and weigh no more than 20 ounces.