



IN SHORT

Baby Lee

Avery Emerson Lee was born to Stephanie Lee and her husband, BCS secondary principal Jared Lee, at 6:45 p.m. on Feb. 25 at St. David's. She weighed 5 pounds and 7 ounces and was 17½ inches long. The Lees request prayers for Avery, who was born five weeks early but is very healthy, and for Stephanie, who continues to experience high blood pressure.

Competition schedule

It is the season of competitions, and in the coming weeks BCS students will attempt to defend their titles in TCSIT and choir, and to glorify God with their talents in a wide variety of subjects.

For grades 1-8:

PSIA district/state: March 7/April 25

For junior high/high school:

TCSIT (academics): March 26-28

For high school:

TAPPS district, band/choir: March 3

TAPPS dist., academics/art: March 6-7

TAPPS state, band/choir: April 17/18

TAPPS state, academics/art: April 3-4

Spring break trips

On Wednesday, March 11, the senior class will depart on the long-awaited Europe trip. A group of 18 girls, 10 boys, five parents, and four sponsors will visit Rome, Florence, Paris, and London. After viewing such famous sites as the Colosseum, St. Peter's Basilica, the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, Big Ben, and Buckingham Palace, they will return on March 20.

A group of 17 girls and seven boys will fly out on March 14 to enjoy the annual eighth-grade Washington, D.C., trip. Joined by three sponsors and one parent, they will take in all the must-sees: Presidential and war memorials, Smithsonian museums, the Capitol, the National Archives, Mt. Vernon, and much more. They return March 18.

New jog, old Mark

Next week's jog features first-ever 5K, final run by perennial champ

ben **LANCASTER**
reporter

As Jog-a-fun draws nearer, all eyes are drawn to its Golden Boy: senior Mark Nesslage, who has one last chance to shine.

Nesslage's Jog-a-fun career began in the first grade when he arrived at Brentwood as an extremely energetic boy. That year he did not have the most laps in his class, with a "measly" 28. But for Mark, that simply wouldn't do, and from second grade on, no classmate beat him.

Nesslage vaulted into the spotlight in the third grade when he ran 43 laps, tying for first in the entire school. After that he won two more times in his elementary years, once in his junior high, and all three high school years so far. In all, Nesslage has averaged almost 40 laps per year, and *no one* would expect him not to win this year, his final year to compete in Jog-a-fun.

This year the high school students, including Nesslage, will not be running laps on the soccer field as they have done for the last 24 years. In fact, they won't even be running on the same day as the rest of the students. On Monday, March 9, they will be running a 5K, approximately 3.1 miles, which will be two laps around the whole campus. The rest of the school will run laps on March 10. The students have an hour to complete the 5K course, and the faster the students finish, the more points

they and their team will be awarded.

Last year Nesslage ran double the average laps per student, running 46 laps to the average of about 23. He also runs a 5K in about 18 minutes, which means the average student can probably expect to complete the course in about 36 minutes.

The 5K isn't the only new aspect of Jog-a-fun. Students and teams, which this year are simply the classes, are awarded points for letters, sponsors, laps, and money raised, in addition to winning the scavenger hunt and other new Jog-a-fun challenges. These points will be used after the jog is over to determine individual winners as well as the team winner.

According to special events coordinator Donna Valdes, the 5K and other changes to the usual Jog-a-fun setup are intended to increase the level of competitiveness among the classes. With the increased competitiveness, the Jog-a-fun coordinators hope, will come an increased level of

seriousness toward the event.

"We want the students to take it more seriously because this year it's gonna be a real race," said Valdes, who has been in charge of Jog-a-fun preparations every year since 2001.

Another big part of making it like a real race is the main sponsor Run Far. They will set up a

see **Jog-a-fun**, page 8



GOLDEN BOY Nesslage has run 436 laps in 11 Jog-a-funs. photo: archives

Ross' a BCS tradition

gabe **BRETERNITZ**
reporter

If you are an average, hungry, jobless, and driving-impaired Brentwood student like myself, your options for off-campus eateries are limited to a select group of restaurants that fit two important requirements: They must be cheap and nearby. Little things like quality of food and atmosphere enjoyability are usually sacrificed to fit those two categories.

Luckily, one restaurant manages to break the mold, offering all four desirable qualities.

Ross' Old Austin Cafe has been serving the community and Brentwood students since 1993. After you've walked up the stairs of Ross' front porch (or taken the handy, wheel-chair-friendly ramp) and opened rustic wooden door, you'll find yourself in an amiable, countrified cafeteria of sorts. To your left, you'll see a glass counter showcasing several CDs and bumper stickers,

and to your right there are two important fridges: one holding your beverage options and one holding the famous Ross' pies.

The menu offers several food choices, ranging from gravy-drenched chicken-fried steak to hand-made, high quality chopped sirloin; and from a classic American hamburger to the always-tasty Reuben Classico. And that's just some of the entrees; the appetizers have a serious fan base as well. Fried okra, onion rings, home-cut fries, and stuffed baked potatoes are just a few of your rapid choices.

When you're ready to make a financial commitment to your food, you'll likely find yourself face to face with a grizzled man wearing an OU football shirt. This man is Ross Sterzing, the owner and namesake of the restaurant. He often mans the cash register.

On your way to your table, take a moment

see **The Cozy**, page 8

JH boys win long-awaited championship

Bear Facts staff

For the first time this century and perhaps much longer than that, BCS is the champion of junior high boys' basketball.

In a rematch of last year's championship that ended in triple overtime, the Bears defeated Hill Country 46-36 Tuesday night in the ACAA tournament at Brentwood. After a back-and-forth battle in the first half, the Bears opened up a lead in the third quarter, led by a high-pressure defense and the scoring of DD Harris, who led all players with 26 points.

Coach Greg Sansom said the post-game

see **Tournaments**, page 6

STORYTIME WITH LAURA PETERSON

The adventures of Johnny Norwood

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

Ever since the Valentine's Day fiasco, Johnny's social life had become incredibly awkward. He had become acutely aware that Myles was his only friend, as Myles had not spoken to him since that fateful February day. The only other person who had spoken to Johnny was Ivan, who stopped to comment on his too-short haircut. As for the little redhead, on the other hand, she went out of her way to greet Johnny in the hallway multiple times a day and laughed hysterically at every word he said, whether he was joking or not. But he could not enjoy the attention, for every time he so much as looked her way, a vivid image of Myles came to mind, accompanied by a load of guilt. Suffice it to say, Johnny was looking forward to spring break.

At last a break from the awkwardness presented itself. A group of students, including the redhead, had been selected to attend a leadership conference during school one day.

When Larry Reynolds caught whooping cough the day before, she brought Johnny's name to the table to fill the spot. Johnny was thrilled to attend, not because he aspired to be a great leader, but rather because a day out of school meant a day away from Myles, with the redhead all to himself.

And that is how Johnny found himself sitting in a fold-out metal chair in a state of unclouded bliss, munching a complimentary pastry next to his image of perfection one Tuesday morning. Before long, a young man with a premature receding hairline and a heavy West Texas accent proceeded to the front of the room, tapped the microphone, and called the group to order with an "AIYaaAIYaaaAYEEEEEE!!!!" in the Indian war-call style. Johnny quickly learned that the Young Leaders of Central Texas like to get pumped up. The man, who introduced himself as "The Fan Man," led the group in a series of "leadership cheers." Johnny had to work pretty hard to look cool while pumping his fist in the air as he half-heartedly yelled along to:

"What time is it?"

"Game time!"

"How smart are you?"

"Too smart!"

After some more yelling and some calisthenics, it was time to get started. The tables were organized by different issues that a high school might run into. Upon entering, Johnny had spotted a "Cafeteria menus and portions" table, a "Uniforms and dress code" table, and a "Contents in vending machines" table. Johnny had always wondered what student politics are all about. On the count of three, Johnny and his lovely partner got up along with the rest of the crowd to pick a table in an "orderly fashion" as directed.

"What are you most interested in, Johnny?" she asked.

Johnny surveyed his options, but before he could answer, she grabbed his hand and yanked him over to a table in the corner.

"The color of hallway walls is so important to the school environment, don't you think?" she asked.

Johnny laughed, but upon seeing her expression he quickly took a leaf out of Larry's book and turned his chuckles into a hacking cough. Johnny looked around at their new group, comprised of only three other people, all of whom looked like they had ended up at the "Hallway appearance" table because everything else was full.

The little redhead was the only one who seemed to think it was "game time." She began to rattle off the differences between tope and tan, and the influence that coat racks had on the student body. At first, Johnny was quite interested to hear what she had to say, but when he listened, he realized that every word which left her mouth for the rest of the day would have made a very good blonde joke. 'Twas a pity she was a carrot top.

Johnny sat on the bus staring out of the window in a state of perplexity. He just didn't understand how the beautiful girl next to him – the girl who earns a sticker on all of her math tests, the girl with so many friends, the girl who had carried on many perfectly normal, even witty conversations with him – could come up with so many insipid comments in a discussion.

Johnny supposed he was making a mountain out of a molehill. Perhaps she was short on sleep. And there was nothing wrong with being passionate about important school issues. *Someone* had to decide the color of the walls. Johnny laughed to himself in relief, reassured that there was no way that this girl, whom he had spent so many hours thinking about, could be shallow.

"Johnny, what color are your walls at home?" she asked.

Johnny allowed that perhaps even angels have off days.



photo: Jordan Cleveland

THE THINKING TREE A gathering of pensive seniors noted for their academic gifts and leadership potential recently gathered to ponder the feng shui of the courtyard.

KRAZY KOREAN: Charles Kim

How well do you really know our Koreans?

As you read this title, some of you will probably say sarcastically, "Oh great, here comes another one. Wow." Since the last issue, I have heard of many complaints about my article. Some said it was a little offensive and a few Korean students commented that they didn't want to be looked upon as mean, critical, or maybe even offensive as I might have put them to be in the paper. So, while I was feeling like I had made a horrible mistake, some of the American students came up to me and cheered me up; they said that they agreed with my article and appreciated me bringing honest thoughts from foreigners looking into Americans.

So, I decided to write another editorial to defend those whom I might have hurt and to clarify my real purpose of these editorials, which is to bring Koreans and other students much closer than before. I hope this will be entertaining rather than controversial and critical.

As I began asking American students at BCS how they feel about the Koreans generally, surprisingly, they were excited to answer my questions. When I asked them what they like about the Korean students in our school, most of them said that the Koreans are friendly, humorous, cheerful, and teasing.

"The Koreans are the funniest people I have ever known," sophomore Caleb Kronke said excitedly. "The way they phrase things and their comebacks to my jokes entertain me and make me laugh."

The students also told me they enjoy learning new words from Koreans. Moreover, it seems like Koreans are also highly acknowledged by their teachers. English teacher Craig Moore complimented his Korean students as the best English students he has ever had; he told me that they usually do a great job on vocabulary and bring their best thoughts to their essays by taking greater pains with thinking than most American students do.

"I'm very pleased with my Korean students because overall, they serve as an example of logical thinking and scholarly industry in my classes," Moore said.

However, the Koreans are not considered to be friendly and good students at all times. The same students who praised them also told me that they think the way the Korean students isolate themselves is very strange. Some teachers also mentioned that some of them nap too much during their classes.

While being interviewed, several Americans requested that I ask the Koreans some questions they have wondered. So I went up to Koreans and asked them what the other students wanted to know.

First, I asked them what they like most in America, and they gave me several different

see **Korean**, page 7

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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JH performs one-act; HS waits for TCSIT

kaalah **MANONGDO**
reporter

“Once upon a time, in a far off kingdom, lived a young maiden, a sad young lad, and a childless baker with his wife...”

High school students are preparing “Into the Woods,” by James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim, for the TCSIT one-act play competition later this month. The play is about a baker and his wife who have been cursed by a witch. In order to reverse this curse, they have to travel “into the woods” and retrieve four items. Along the way, they encounter Jack and the Beanstalk, Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, and Rapunzel.

“It’s taking famous fairytales and mixing them into a blender,” director Lindsey Pierson said. “It’s just a fun show!”

Meanwhile, the junior high drama department performed two one-act plays on Feb. 20 and 21: “Freak the Mighty” by Rodman Philbrick, and “Readin’, ’Ritin’, and ’Rithmetic” by Millard Crosby.

“I like having two different plays. It’s more interesting for the audience,” director Chloe

Campbell said.

In “Freak the Mighty,” Kevin is an intelligent seventh-grade boy, played by seventh-grader Jamie Messinger, with a physical affliction. He befriends a learning-disabled and extremely strong boy named Maxwell, played by Travis Clark, and together they share Kevin’s fantasy world and combine their strengths to overcome their weaknesses. In the end Kevin passes away and Maxwell carries on what Kevin left behind.

“Readin’, ’Ritin’, and ’Rithmetic” is written by the author of the “The Little Red Schoolhouse,” a well-known one-act play. It is a comedy about a teacher and her students in a typical day in the classroom, which consists of many stereotypical students. They are all anxiously awaiting the results of an essay contest, and in the end a television producer recruits a boy who was seen as an underdog because of his tendency to cry frequently.

“The script to our play was so random – which made it fun!” said eighth-grader Courtney Flores, who played a student named Norine. “We made a lot of new friends.”

“Readin’, ’Ritin’, and ’Rithmetic” will be performed for the junior high one-act

competition at TCSIT on March 26-28.

“Before the first performance, everyone was full of energy. That was my favorite part,” said eighth-grader Taylor Allnut, who played the movie producer.

Auditions for the high school play were held on Jan. 7 and 8. Students who earned roles include freshmen Kayle Morin and Kailey Rodden, sophomores Gabe Breternitz, Olivea Fernandes, Mariah Robinson, and Victoria Stewart, and juniors Jamie Furrer and Alex Georgulas. Due to TCSIT one-act rules, Pierson could cast a limited amount of on-stage and backstage roles. Therefore some students are playing two roles in the play, and the backstage members serve as understudies.

Rehearsals are being held frequently, and the TCSIT competition is March 13-14. To get a feel for the play, the cast traveled to Temple High School to see a production of “Into the Woods” on Jan. 16. The cast will perform at BCS for Grandparents’ Day in May.

“I normally choose drama. This one is a comedy, so it’s totally different,” said Pierson. “There’s not a day I don’t love coming to rehearsals.”

Employees of BCS set fitness goals

jacob **CARDENAS**
reporter

As Brentwood Christian students enjoyed the days off on Feb. 16-17, secondary librarian Tere Hager and teacher Jonathan Weed presented ideas to fellow faculty and staff aimed to encourage healthier living.

The movement for improved health at BCS began when Hager and Weed joined representatives from other Austin businesses and groups at the Active Texas Summit downtown in January. The event was put together by the Mayor’s Fitness Council, which was formed in 2004 with the goal of helping Austin become the fittest city in the U.S. by 2010.

“We may or may not care about making Austin the fittest city in the nation, but we hope to create a climate of good health here that will benefit ourselves, our families, and our students,” Weed told the faculty.

The purpose of the January meeting was to encourage leadership in the area of physical health and to provide information on how businesses can become MFC certified. The first step was administering the Austin Fitness Index to all the employees at BCS. This brief survey asked questions regarding personal nutrition, exercise, and smoking habits. An index number was then given based on the answers. Over the next 18 months the school’s objective is to improve in all areas. At the end of this time frame, the Index will be administered a second time.

Most teachers took an optimistic approach, agreeing that putting in the effort to live healthier is beneficial and is time well spent.

“I thought it was thoroughly worthwhile and workable in our daily practices,” English teacher Craig Moore said. “It’s a good goal with practical payoffs.”

Hager and Weed are coming up with ideas to encourage progress, such as occasionally walking during faculty meetings instead of sitting. Other proposals include placing “choose water” signs on the coke machines and providing fresh fruit in the workroom on a regular basis. The aim is to adequately hit all of the certification areas, which include access, social support, rewards, decisions, information outreach, and actual policy changes.

One possible benefit of becoming MFC certified is lower insurance premiums for all BCS employees. According to Hager, whether the rates are lowered or not, encouraging each other to be more healthy falls into the school mission.

“The real goal is to make BCS an environment that encourages better health,” Hager said. “Our mission emphasizes excellence. Part of that is making an effort to treat our bodies as a temple as we are called to do.”

Fabulous Friday fun, food-filled

cely **MORA**
reporter

As a tortilla was set on the bench to be warmed by the heat of the sun, the eighth graders began to discuss how glad they were not to be in class.

According to one mom, Fabulous Freaky Friday was a given to the seventh and eighth graders on Friday, Feb. 13, because they were not included in the Back to School Bash last fall. Some seventh and eighth graders’ parents got together and spoke to secondary principal Jared Lee, and they arranged a fun field day.

“I am really appreciative that the parents made this happen for us because we could hang with our friends,” eighth-grader Anthony Milan said.

Eighth graders began the day passing out treats for Valentine’s Day. After attending their first four classes, students got together at the soccer field and ate lunch provided by Donn’s Bar-B-Que. Other things such as T-shirts were provided by other sponsors.

After they ate they were split into different teams with adult captains. Some, such as Karen Withem and Tere Hager, were BCS staff members; others were parents: Mack Bartos,



photo: Kelly Guthrie

REACHING HIGH Eighth-grader Bevin Koyikalathu attempts to keep the other team from bursting a water balloon on his side of the net.

Anh Ho, Susan McKinney, Cindy Robichaux, Helen Simpson, and Tina Treut-Shaffer.

They began with a blindfolded version of musical chairs. The chairs were actually trash cans, which were pulled out from underneath the players when they were about to sit down.

Then came “spelling body scrabble,” in which the whole team had to be involved. A word was called out and each team had to spell it correctly lying on the floor of the gym.

After each challenge the winning team earned points, which led them closer to a prize at the end of the day. In between the games the junior highers had time to rest.

After a game combining math and basketball came the mystery food challenge, in which each team selected one member brave enough to eat sour crow, pig feet, and sardines. Contestants had to put their hands behind their back and eat as fast as they could while their face was pressed against the plate. The winner was seventh-grader Bryce Morin, who earned points for his team and got \$15 for iTunes.

The next-to-last event was the most amusing game, according to the seventh- and eighth-grade boys. Twelve water balloons were divided into two groups and then thrown across the net to the other team. The side that kept the balloons from popping the longest won.

After a tug-o-war came the award ceremony, where each member of the blue team received a bag of candy as their prize.

“The day was much better than being in class. I liked it,” eighth-grader Taylor Allnut said.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: Ben Lancaster

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

Ben comes back – again – for final year

Christ-like class clown leads peers on field, in classroom

mark **NESSLAGE**
reporter

If someone leaves a school, he usually doesn't come back. Just don't tell Ben Lancaster that; he's come back to Brentwood Christian *twice*.

Ben started attending Brentwood Christian in developmental preschool. He attended until halfway through first grade, when his dad's job led his family to Taiwan.

Ben encountered many new experiences there, ranging from "stinky" tofu vendors to working as a children's swimwear model. He even managed to set several track and field records at his school there, foreshadowing his future in athletics.

After living in the Far East for the next three and a half years, the Lancasters returned to Texas in 2001, in time for Ben to start fifth grade at BCS. The family stayed until after Ben's sophomore year, when his dad's job led them away from BCS once again, this time to Greensboro, N.C. Despite spending his junior year near much of his extended family in North Carolina, Ben missed his classmates.

"Although last year I was living with my parents, I felt like the rest of my family was missing," he says.

After some discussion with his family, Ben decided to return to Austin and live with a family from the church they formerly attended in Austin. Although he still misses his family, Ben says he feels like he made the right decision.

Many of Ben's

classmates know him for his athleticism. While the sport he excels at and enjoys the most is soccer, Ben's physical abilities have helped him branch out to many other sports. His sophomore year,

Ben started playing basketball for the first time since seventh grade, and he became a starter at his school in North Carolina and back at

was given first-team all-district honors for his efforts. Prior to that, he was a top runner on the cross country team.

Somehow, Ben manages to succeed

"I am very glad he returned to BCS. He adds a unique energy to his class." –Kaleen Graessle

academically at least as much as he does athletically. Having scored a 2280 out of a possible 2400 on the SAT, Ben is known as a "go-to guy" for Calculus and Physics help.

"Ben is a gifted mathematician. He is both intuitive and precise," says AP Calculus teacher Kaleen Graessle. "I am very glad that he returned to Brentwood for his senior year. He adds a unique form of energy to his class."

Despite being one of the smartest and most athletic guys in the school, Ben remains humble and personable. He is known among friends for his all-around friendly personality and great sense of humor.

Brentwood his senior year. Ben also tried two sports for the first time this year: cross country and baseball.

"Ben is the type of player every coach would want on their team," says teammate Seth Cole. "He works harder than everyone else all of the time."

This was evidenced by him playing both soccer and basketball this winter. Playing two sports meant he wasn't able to play in some of the soccer games. Despite only playing 10 games at goalie, Ben posted seven shutouts and

Ben always lightens the mood in Calculus, while most of us are stressing about Calculus tests," classmate Olivia Brinson says.

Ben has become a model citizen in his class, and is often looked to as a leader. This might come as a surprise to some, as Ben was quite a class clown during his junior high days and earned his share of detentions and referrals.

"May it be said that Ben's model behavior as a senior was not as evident during his junior high years," art teacher Lori Morin says.

Ben's college plans include going to Texas A&M and getting a master's degree in industrial engineering. He says he might take Chinese classes there, since he is considering one day moving to

China or Taiwan to work as both an engineer and a missionary there, much like his parents did.

No matter where he goes or what he decides to do, Ben's likeability, competitive nature, modeling

and perhaps even skills will bring him success.

Encore: take a look behind the music

brian **PETERSON**
reporter

At 7:15 a.m. the average BCS student is just leaving the house, or perhaps even waking up to an alarm, blissfully unaware of 13 students who are already beginning their first "class" of the day.

These few students enter the choir room, sign in their time of arrival, and then wait until the BCS choir director, Missy Weaver, begins their morning activities. Sometimes they go to the chapel outside the auditorium. Other times they stay in the choir room, singing along to the piano. But always, music fills the morning.

Known as Encore, the BCS honors choir has been around for quite a while, though it has changed a great deal over the years. It was started in 1988 by former teacher Shannon Thompson, who also started another group called Arise, one that Weaver now sings in outside of her classroom activities. Weaver has been directing Encore for approximately 10 years, starting in her second semester as the BCS choir director. Under her direction, the group has been transformed into a traveling choir whose main activity is to visit Churches of Christ in and around Austin. They have sung at congregations in Bastrop, Lake Travis, Elgin, and even as far as Lubbock, which they visited last month.

"We hope that those who hear our music are encouraged and uplifted in their walk with Christ, and that they go away blessed from the words and harmonies we sing," Weaver said. "That really is the mission of Encore."

When Weaver first took on the job of directing Encore, it was an elective just like any other fine arts class. This meant that her best singers were not participating in the full choir and she was only able to see them every other day. She went to the school board to ask for a change, and ever since, Encore has met before school every day.

To get the best group possible, there are tryouts every year in the spring. According to Weaver, about 30 students audition every year, making her decision very difficult – so difficult, in fact, that she has never attempted to choose them by herself. Weaver and one consultant, a position filled by several different people, listen to different combinations of the returning members and those who hope to join. For several hours, combinations are heard, until finally a decision is made, and the next group of Encore meets in her room for the first time. These groups have ranged in number from eight members to 13.

Life for Encore members can be very stressful due to the amount of music that must be learned, most of it very quickly. They are required to learn not only the

see **Encore**, page 8

TEACHER FEATURE: *Travis Pollard*

Upbeat band leader an instrument for Christ

katie LEGBAND
sports editor

Christian. Football addict. Science fiction reader. Chess club sponsor. Member of the National Guard band. BCS band director.

Born April 10, 1980, Travis Pollard is a man of many talents and passions. He was born in Nashville, but he moved around to many places from Florida to Arizona as a child. In third grade, his family settled down close to Nashville in Smyrna, Tenn. In high school, church and music – he played the saxophone – were his priorities, in addition to academics.

“Looking back, I wish I had sung in choir, too,” Pollard says.

He then went on to Tennessee Tech and majored in music education. Pollard says this is where he experienced the most spiritual growth. He went to two churches during this time, which is “when my faith became more my own.”

Pollard worked for two years in McMinnville, Tenn., as a band director. After that, he was ready for a change. He packed up and moved to Austin to attend UT for his master’s degree in music education. Soon he found his

way to Brentwood Oaks, and there he met Mel Witcher during his time as the acting secondary principal at BCS, and when Brentwood was in need of a band director. After a little wait, Pollard was called for an interview in the spring of 2006. The following school year, Pollard was leading the band, while he was still finishing classes at UT.

“It was perfect. I knew it was where God wanted me because everything just fell into

place,” Pollard says.

His faith has shone through to everyone who has come to know him at Brentwood. Witcher saw his Christian attributes the first time they met at church and saw even more as he got to know him.

“I was impressed immediately by his sincerity and his positive attitude. Later I discovered he was also an excellent musician and, most importantly, a committed disciple of Christ,” Witcher says. “The upbeat attitude and the love for people is not something he ‘puts on’ as he comes to school...it is who he is. His love for and devotion to God flows into his relationships with his students and his peers.”

Three years ago, Pollard met his future wife Amanda at a Bible study at the home of the Boyds, who have three children currently attending Brentwood Christian School. The two were married July 28 of 2007, and Pollard says she is his best friend. He named going to new restaurants with his wife as one of his favorite hobbies.

Another major part of his life is being in the 36th Infantry Division Band at Camp Mabry. He initially

joined the National Guard because they would pay for school, but it has become much more.

“It is a phenomenal thing. It is a great musical experience playing the sax in that band, but it’s also the people,” Pollard says. “It is a privilege. They have great characters and a good influence on me.”

In his wide array of interests, he is also a huge football fan. During football season, he says he turns ESPN on every morning. His favorite teams are the Longhorns and the Tennessee Titans. While he loves movies, he says he would rather be reading. His favorite authors are John Steinbeck and Neil Stevenson.

Right now, his wife is working on getting her Ph.D. in chemistry, which she will earn in December. One day the two hope to have kids, and have no plans to leave Austin.

“I would be happy in Austin the rest of my life,” Pollard says. “If I had to leave, I would want to live in Nashville. They are actually very similar towns. I love Tennessee, though. There are no frontage roads. I hate frontage roads.”

Having already led BCS to a second-place finish in state two years ago, Pollard has goals for his band classes to continue to grow in size and skill. Considering his popularity among students, this seems to be a safe bet.

“Mr. Pollard is actually very well rounded, he has great people skills and is great with students,” teacher Lori Morin says. “He has a strong Christian faith and is a great mentor. He is willing to build relationships so that when he shares his faith they know it is something he really believes.”

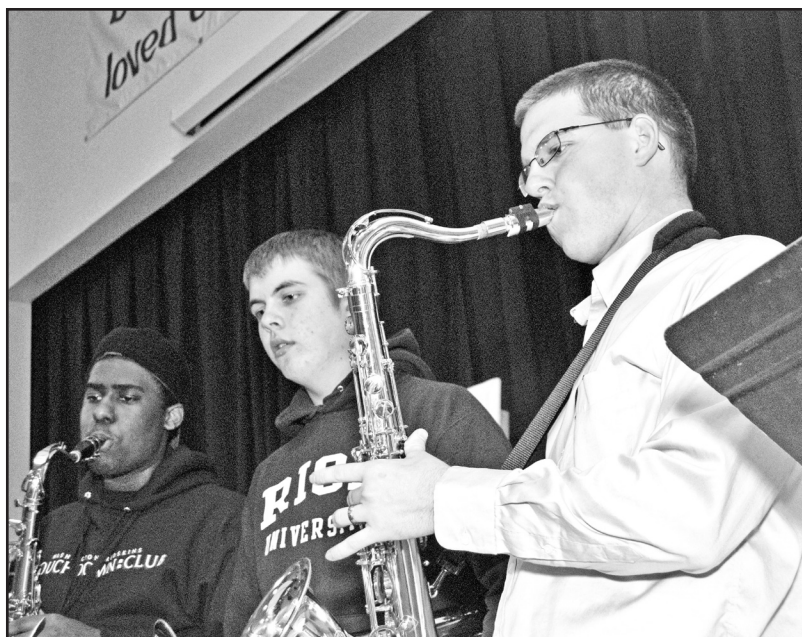


photo: Kay Taylor

JAMMIN’ Travis Pollard, here playing with the jazz band during a break in January’s talent show, is known for his diverse interests and abilities.

Lent: forty days of fasting, from ashes to Easter

eddie CARLIN
copy editor

If you saw people with ashes on their foreheads last Wednesday and wondered what it meant, you are not alone. Ash Wednesday marks the start of the season of Lent, the period of 40 days before Easter in which Christians – mostly Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Eastern Orthodox – practice prayer, fasting, and almsgiving with particular fervor.

The number 40 is a Biblical number signifying cleansing or purification and can be traced back to several stories such as Noah’s 40 days and nights on the ark, or the 40 years the Israelites spent wandering in the desert before entering the Promised Land. However, the precedent for Lent is based mostly upon the 40 days Jesus spent fasting and facing temptation in the desert before his death, burial, and resurrection.

On Ash Wednesday, people’s foreheads are traced in the sign of the cross with the

ashes of the palms from the previous year’s Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter that commemorates Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The ashes are an ancient symbol of grief and penitence (Job 45:6 says, “Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.”), and they also symbolize our mortal nature (Abraham says in Genesis 18:27, “I am nothing but dust and ashes.”).

While most people may not be familiar with Ash Wednesday or Lent, many know about the celebrations on Mardi Gras, which literally means “fat Tuesday” in French. As the last day before the penitential season of Lent begins, the holiday marks the climax of Carnival, which developed as a pre-Lenten period of revelry and merriment. It arose mainly in the Middle Ages (though some say it even predates Christianity as a pagan holiday), but around the world today, Carnival is an integral part of many cultures, especially those of Italy, Brazil, and the Caribbean, where parades are held for days at a time and people dress in

elaborate, colorful costumes. The fête, though, has evolved as a secular tradition more at home with the likes of Sixth Street, and most of the people who participate in the merry-making are non-religious.

Not to be confused with “lint,” the word “Lent” comes from the Germanic root for “long” since the days of the year visibly lengthen during springtime, although in Latin it was originally called “quadagesima,” which simply meant “forty days.”

During Lent, Christians try to renew their devotion to God with increased intensity before the most solemn remembrance of the Last Supper, Jesus’ death, burial, and subsequent resurrection. In the spirit of Psalm 51, many Catholics focus on penitence by fasting, almsgiving, and increased prayer. On Fridays during this season, Catholic churches will often offer a fish fry supper (adult Catholics are obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday and to abstain from eating meat on Fridays) and pray a devotion called “The

Stations of the Cross” in remembrance of Jesus’ suffering.

Some churches conduct various charities or outreach programs during this time, and many people “give up” something in order to focus more energy on returning to God.

Freshman Victoria Johannigman said she plans on giving up sweets in general, while seniors Meghan Quinn and Courtney Pool say they will abstain from television and soda, respectively.

Quinn says she hears a lot about Jesus’ sacrifice, but until we actually suffer ourselves, it is hard to relate to it. By offering up something trivial, she says, it puts Jesus’ sacrifice into perspective.

Senior Alexis Gardner elected to do without a very basic food – bread – and is pleased with her progress.

“For the first time in a long time or ever, I have successfully stayed consistent with something. The benefits have been so great and it hasn’t even been that long.”

No easy games ahead for softball girls

fanny **FECKSKOVICS**
reporter

The varsity softball season is underway, and the team is looking forward to a challenging season, with a lot of difficult games. Coach Paul Sladek said the girls will face intense games and competition.

"The girls will have no easy games on our non-district schedule," said Sladek, who is beginning his second year with the girls. "We will see some of the top teams in the public and private ranks, which is just really exciting to see how we compete against them."

Including BCS there are six teams in district this year. Since Brentwood moved up to TAPPS 4A, they can expect that the district schedule will also be hard. The first district game is Monday, March 23, against Hyde Park at Balcones.

On Feb. 19, the girls started off their season

against TSD with a 12-2 win. Their next game was on Feb. 23 against St. Andrew's, and the girls lost 9-0.

At the Fort Bend Baptist Academy softball tournament last weekend, the girls won one out of five games. Their victory came after they were losing 6-5 in the final inning. Senior Hannah Sinclair hit a two-RBI double and won the game 7-6.

In spite of their rough start, the team is not too discouraged.

"This year we are hitting a lot better than last year," junior Katie Miertschin said. "The freshmen are stepping up and are not scared to go out and swing at the ball."

Only four starters return from last year's team that lost in the first round of the playoffs. Three of them – Sinclair, Miertschin, and senior Carrie Thomas – were all-district selections. Since last year's pitcher no longer attends BCS, freshman Haley Decker has emerged as

this year's starting pitcher.

Sladek said this team has been working very hard on hitting with timing. After the FBBA tournament, Miertschin added that defense also needs a lot of work.

"It's just about focusing and playing every game the right way, with a lot of hustle and heart, and we will see where that gets us," Sladek said.

Coach Sladek said he hopes the girls grow together as team and that they grow to love the game, each other, and Christ.

"I'm very excited about what the future holds for softball at Brentwood, especially with our returnees from last year and a couple of kids transferring into the program this year," Sladek said.

The practices and home games are held at Balcones Little League's big softball field. Sladek said the first 20 students arriving at home games get free pizza.

Tournaments

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celebration was quiet, due in part to an injury suffered by a Hill Country player at the end of the third quarter that involved EMS taking him out on a stretcher. Diving for a loose ball, the boy apparently hit his head on another player's knee and suffered a severe concussion.

For the Bears, who now boast a 25-1 record, there remains one more challenge: Avenge the season's only loss, which came against San Antonio Concordia in January. The teams will rematch at Brentwood at 7 p.m. on March 12.

The elementary boys' tournament offered at least as much excitement, ending in a Brentwood vs. Brentwood championship battle. The AA team pulled out a 23-16 victory to win the tournament trophy.

Coach Jeff Orick's AA team first had to beat higher-seeded Round Rock Christian, who had beaten them twice during the season and had the home-court advantage for the tournament. The Bears pulled out a narrow victory with stifling defense and clutch free throws.

Meanwhile, the A team pulled off the upset of the day by knocking off top-seeded Sterling Classical. Although they were routed by this opponent twice during the season, coach Nathan Smith said the boys were eager for a rematch. Armed with a scouting report from Orick, Smith said his team had a clear plan and executed it well. But things didn't fall into place until Sterling Classical's star player fouled out of the game with three minutes left. BCS stormed back to send the game to overtime before winning 26-22. John Hollingsworth led the team with 11 points.

The elementary girls' tournament, played at Summit in Leander, also featured a Brentwood vs. Brentwood match up, this time in the semifinals. Coach Paul Browder of the A team began by using every kind of defense he could. Still, the AA team prevailed 14-10.

"We threw everything we had at the AA team to try to slow their scoring down," he said.

After the game, Browder expressed gratitude for the girls' attitudes throughout the season, for the parents' support, and for the help of his assistant, Rebecca Lopez-Roeper.

The AA team went on to the championship against Austin Royals, with whom they had split the season series. With just over two minutes remaining, BCS clung to a 17-15 lead, but they lost 21-17.

Neither of the junior high girls teams was able to pull out a win in their tournament, played at Hill Country. The AA team lost to Round Rock Christian 30-26, although they had been behind by 11 in the fourth quarter. Coach Kaylee Loftis said it was their best performance of the year.

The A team lost 33-22 to Memorial, a team that had one star player. Coach Katie Smith praised her girls' effort and said they showed tremendous improvement through the season.

The junior high boys' A team faced Veritas, a team of much taller boys that expected to roll over the Bears. BCS held a 7-0 lead after the first quarter and led by two at halftime. But Veritas was able to use their press to pull away in the third quarter, and they won 29-18.

Coach Jonathan Weed said it was his team's best game of the year, and he was proud of the way they worked on both ends of the court.

Curtains fall on another great year

megan **MONACELLI**
reporter

"Just love every minute because you never know when it is going to end," senior Laura Peterson said with tears running down her face after the Lady Bears lost 53-30 to Ft. Worth Christian, knocking them out of the playoffs.

Peterson wasn't the only one crying. Many sniffles and tears were heard from the team after that emotional game in San Antonio on Feb. 21. The Lady Bears never led in this game and for the first time this season they were unable to make a three-pointer. Ft. Worth Christian had an obvious height advantage with two girls at 6-foot-4 and 6-foot-2. These two opposing players were able to block Brentwood's inside shots.

Coach Devan Loftis said the Lady Bears played really well, but their opponent was stronger all around.

"We may have played our best game all year," Loftis said, "but Ft. Worth Christian was just really good."

Loftis said Ft. Worth was dominant in every facet of the game, and he was not at all ashamed to come out with a 23-point loss.

"We held them in check," he said.

The team traveled to Victoria on Feb. 6 for their last district game against second-place Victoria St. Joseph. Losing this game would have forced a playoff for the district title against the same team, but the Lady Bears won 45-39 with help from senior Katie Legband coming off the bench and getting some key buckets. With the victory, the girls became the first team in school history to go undefeated in district, finishing 10-0.

However, the win came at a great cost. Peterson, the starting point guard, tore her ACL and meniscus in the first quarter of the

game, ending her season. Junior Joelle Vargas, another key guard for the team, fractured her ankle in a previous game and missed the first playoff game.

With high hopes to return to the Final Four, the team hosted Lutheran North from Houston in the first round of the playoffs on Feb. 13. The Lady Bears won 61-40, and freshman Brittany Brunson stepped up to fill the starting point guard role usually filled by Peterson and Vargas. The leading scorer of this game was junior Tyla Wells with 14 points.

The Lady Bears broke the school record for victories with 29 wins and only eight losses. Three years ago, the team went 27-7.

The five seniors – Olivia Brinson, Legband, Peterson, Hannah Sinclair, and Rebekah Singleton – have been district champions every year of high school. Their four consecutive district titles – or "four-peat" – are also a first in BCS history.

Brinson was named district MVP, while first-team all-district honors also went to junior Ashley Clement, Peterson, Vargas, and Wells. Earning spots on the second team were Brunson, junior Katie Miertschin, and Sinclair.

Legband and Singleton were given honorable mention.

"It was a good basketball career and I am going to miss it," Legband said.



photo: Kim Sinclair

UH-OH Senior Hannah Sinclair stays strong in the post against Fort Worth Christian's 6-4 defender in the regional playoff game Feb. 21. The Lady Bears lost 53-30.

Old ballgame features new players, district, coach

Bears baseball team off to rough start in district after losing nine seniors

benjamin **INGRAM**
reporter

The Brentwood Christian baseball team is 0-3 in district after losing their first three games to Hyde Park, Corpus Christi Incarnate Word, and San Marcos Baptist.

Right now, Brentwood is using a two-man starting rotation to handle the pitching – seniors Trever Brightwell and Bryant Davis – but head coach Scott Cunningham said senior Nate Shackelford will also see some action. The Bears' only other senior on the team, Ben Lancaster, is completely new to baseball.

After losing nine seniors from last year's district runner-up, the team is also faced with the challenges of a tougher new district.

"We can win with these guys, we just have to come together as a team," Cunningham said.

Cunningham, an assistant for last year's team, played baseball at Westwood High School in the early '90s and at Blinn Junior College. He had secured a full scholarship to play at the University of Kentucky, but the dream ended when he blew out his shoulder. According to athletic director Joseph Walker, Cunningham has a "wealth of knowledge" about baseball. Devan Loftis is returning to the sport as an assistant.

After hosting Incarnate Word in a rematch yesterday, the team left for Dallas to play in

this weekend's Grand Saline Tournament.

Here are the results since the beginning of the season. (* denotes district game)

Feb. 12 at Regents: W 9-6

The Bears got out to a 9-1 lead, which included a triple by sophomore Brandon Jones, before

relief pitching let Regents back into the game. Starting pitcher Brightwell was reinserted and got the last out to close the game.

Feb. 17 at Hill Country: W 7-5

For the first six innings, Brentwood could not get any hitting going as they were down 4-1,

but their bats erupted and they broke out six runs in the top of the seventh. Davis closed the game.

Feb. 19 vs. RRCA: W 17-6

This game was more like a scrimmage. Each team got to bat for six outs at a time, and after three outs the bases were cleared and the teams batted for three more outs. Brentwood rocked Round Rock's pitcher with 11 runs in their first six-out period. Cunningham took out his starters after that, and in Brentwood's next six-out frame, they put up six more runs to wrap up their scoring. Notably, freshman Chance Morris had his first hit, with an RBI double in the second six-out period.

Feb. 24 vs. Hyde Park: L 12-0*

BCS couldn't get their bats to heat up at all, while their rivals opened up with a seven-run first inning. After five innings, the Panthers pitcher finished his five-inning no-hitter as the 10-run rule went into effect.

Feb. 27 at CC Incarnate Word: L 15-5*

The Bears got off to a good start with two runs in the first inning, but Corpus scored six runs over the next two innings to make it 6-2. In the third inning, sophomore catcher Matthew Welter hit a leadoff triple to begin a rally that would produce three runs and trim the deficit to one run. But Brentwood committed eight errors and gave up 10 unearned runs, making things difficult for Davis on the mound.



photo: Olivia Brinson

TAKING A CUT Junior Luke Mallett begins his swing during Tuesday's game against San Marcos Baptist Academy. The Bears lost 16-2.

Korean hopes to bridge divide

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answers. Senior John Cha said he likes being here because he doesn't have to stay at school until 10 p.m. like the students do in Korea. Junior Ben Kim's favorite thing in America is shopping, since stuff like clothes and electronics are much cheaper here than in Korea. For junior Diesel Kim, BCS is his favorite thing in America.

"Great and helpful teachers, nice classmates, and Christian-like school atmosphere are the reasons why I fell in love with BCS," he said.

Freshman Ray Yoo likes to participate in school sports teams, since he said he couldn't join one in Korea unless he was planning to become a professional player. As for myself, I like to go to gatherings like birthday parties, which is something I have never been to in Korea.

But most Koreans agree that their favorite things are lots of great opportunities that exist here and freedoms which allow them to spend their time on a variety of things.

Secondly, I asked them what are the differences between Korea and America. Koreans told me that cultural differences

are what stand out. Also, they complained how they must have cars to go somewhere, unlike in Korea, where you can go anywhere in the country with public transportation like subways and buses.

My final question was: "What do you miss most?" The Koreans suddenly became silent and then answered slowly. They all said the thing they miss most is their families back home. They also said they miss their friends, home, foods, and the old way of life they used to live in Korea. Like all other foreign students, our Korean students often get homesick.

"Even though there are many great things in America," sophomore Mike Lee said, "I think nothing is better than what I get when I go home and spend time with my family."

From these two editorials, I hope you have learned a lot about the Koreans, their culture, and their lifestyle. So, next time you see Korean students in the hallway, say "Ahn-young!" to them. Who knows? Just saying hello could bring you and them much closer together.

Track season underway

katie **LEGBAND**
reporter

Last year Brentwood Christian's varsity track and field teams turned in a strong performance, as the girls won district and the boys finished second. This year, with many key athletes gone and having moved up to a district with larger schools, the team will have to work hard.

Because of the new district and so many new athletes on the team, head coach Joseph Walker said he is not sure how well he expects the team to do or even who will be the top athletes.

"It's really exciting to be at the beginning of a new season, and anticipating what our runners and throwers are going to do," Walker said.

This year's new district alignment has brought a new feature for BCS: a regional meet between district and state meets. The top four athletes in district events advance to regionals, and the top four in region will go to state.

Some returning athletes include senior Mark Nesslage, who was state champion in the two-mile and took third in the mile; senior Hannah Sinclair, who won district in the shot put; and junior Henry Rhea, the district 200-meters champ.

The team also has many new members, partly because assistant Craig Moore has worked hard to recruit students whenever he can. Also contributing to the team's growth is some students' boredom in P.E. and their desire to be in a sport, any sport, rather than having to be in P.E.

"I want to stay in shape, and track is better for that than P.E.," freshman Daniel Pando said.

The team practices every day after school, either on the soccer field or at Lanier High.

The first meet is an invitational event at Troy tomorrow morning at 7 a.m.

Track 2009

- 3/7 Troy Invitational
- 4/4 Round Rock Christian Invitational
- 4/9 Lion Invitational (San Antonio)
- 4/17 Tom Landry Relays (Addison)
- 4/24-25 TAPPS district (San Antonio)
- 5/1-2 TAPPS regional (Houston)
- 5/5 ACAA meet (Austin) - JH/elem.
- 5/8-9 TAPPS state (Waco)

The cozy little cafe next door

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to admire the myriad decorations adorning the walls. You'll see license plates, bumper stickers, certificates of thanks, newspaper articles, and pictures of the Sterzing Family as well as some notable artists who have played on the stage in

the corner of the establishment.

Ross' has always been a supporter of live music. Neighborhood residents report hearing the strains of bluegrass and the twangs of country from as far as a mile away on weekend

nights. Several well-known artists have played the venue, including some big names like Pauline Reese, Brennan Lee, and Dave Jorgenson.

Recently, Ross' has had to discontinue its live music due to disagreements concerning royalty payments with two music unions, Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI) and the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP). So, as long as the dispute stands, the music stops. Ross' hopes to start live music concerts again sometime in the summer, using only original music to avoid further complications with ASCAP and BMI.

Brentwood students name the Old Austin Cafe among their favorite off-campus lunch locations and after-school hangouts. The more musically inclined tell stories about the famous "Ross' Guitar," an old acoustic guitar that resides on the inner stage; their tradition is to play it on every visit to the eatery. The readers like to go over the Ross Family history you'll find at every table, next to the Corona bottles filled with salt and pepper. And the foodies describe in great detail their first taste of the Ross' steaks. Ross' has something for everyone, it seems.

Special day, abbreviated

Jay WILES
reporter

Spiritual Emphasis Day was planned for March 2, but due to inclement weather on the east coast, the scheduled guest speaker, preacher Matt Goodman, had his flights canceled from his hometown of Asheville, N.C.

Late Sunday, Goodman informed co-leaders of the Spiritual Life Committee senior Jay Wiles and junior Allen Taylor that he would not be able to make it to Austin.

Secondary principal Jared Lee had already booked Lubbock Christian University's singing group, Best Friends, to sing at 10 a.m. as part of Spiritual Emphasis Day, and these singers had safely made it to town.

With the coordination of high school secretary Linda Riedesel, the Committee put together a plan to cancel third and fourth periods to enjoy Best Friends and listen to a talk prepared at the last minute by Wiles.

"Even though things didn't go as planned, it was still really good," junior Reagan Smith said.

A skit was performed by members of the SLC and was directed by juniors Jillian Wilson, Hanna Boyd, and Ashley Clement.



photo: Laura Peterson

Encore

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music for Encore, but also every song for the full choir as well. When the time for the state competition comes around in March, the workload is sometimes very trying.

"Sure there is hard work involved, but seeing the expressions on people's faces after a concert is worth all of the effort," junior Lindsey Bernard said.

Despite the workload and the effort put into perfecting each song, there is something in what they do that Encore members say cannot be found anywhere else.

"Being in Encore for me is about touching people's lives, which is something that is kind of hard for someone to see unless they are a part of it," Bernard said.

Weaver believes very much in the power of music to change people's lives, which is one of the main reasons for Encore's mission. She says that not everyone will share this belief with her, but as a choir director she has seen it in action, and has even been changed by it herself. She is not the only one who has noticed the power in the music of Encore, or even in the simple act of a group of teens trying to serve God.

"It is so encouraging to

see young people, the future of the church, giving up their time to serve the purpose of Christ," said Dr. Carson Stevens, a minister at the Bastrop Church of Christ, after witnessing several songs performed by Encore. "It is a great encouragement to me, and others like me who are realizing that their time is passing, and soon the church will be in someone else's hands."

Encore has a tendency to inspire not only those who hear their music, but also those who take part in it.

"It's even better than I thought it would be," said first-year member Reagan Smith, a junior.

"I've developed great relationships with people in the group, and when you realize what words you are really singing, it helps you grow closer to God as well."

Some students have said they see Encore as a "preppy club" that is exclusive in many respects. They see these students stand on a stage with shiny microphones in their hands, and they label it as artificial and insincere. One student who has recently been introduced to Encore in greater detail said he had "no idea what it was really about," and he was impressed by what he saw. After spending time with these people, he realized that what he had seen before was "only from the outside."

Before almost every concert, Weaver tells the group that it does not matter how many people are in the audience. She tells them to sing for those people who need encouragement and who have never heard them sing before.

Whether the audience is big or small, noteworthy or insignificant, the one these songs are for is always there to hear his praise. One member described his emotions, fittingly, in the words of a song: "How can I keep from singing your praise? ...How amazing is your love? How can I keep from shouting your name? I know I am loved by the king, and it makes my heart want to sing."



photo: Laura Peterson

PARTY TIME This year's Encore group celebrated with director Missy Weaver on her birthday at their morning practice on Feb. 12.

Jog-a-fun

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tower at the start/finish line, and the students will be given computer chips, like the ones used in real long distance races, to clip onto their shoes. This will allow for official, accurate times for each runner.

Nesslage, who is accustomed to real races, is not daunted by the new racing format.

"We ran 5Ks in cross-country all the time," he said.

Nesslage was not always as serious about running as he is now. He admits that when he was younger it wasn't the competition that drove him to victory, but rather, the atmosphere of Jog-a-fun got him excited for the run.

"All of the people, music, snowcones, and bubbles just gave me a whole lot of energy," Nesslage said.

As he grew older he became a much more serious runner. He has competed in many races since those snowcone-filled days and went on to win first in state in the two-mile, third in state in the mile, and fourth in state in cross country. He intends to run track and cross country at either Oklahoma Christian or Harding University in the fall.

"I don't get excited about it like I used to, but I always feel compelled to do better than I did the previous year," Nesslage said.

He may not get revved up for the Jog as he did years ago, but the Golden Boy is sure to perform well when the day finally arrives.