



THE BEAR FACTS

VOL. XXI NO. 7

BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

APRIL 2009



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IN SHORT

Triumphant in PSIA

Brentwood Christian students in grades 1-5 took first place in the PSIA District 8AA tournament held at Redeemer Lutheran School on Saturday, March 7. Other schools in the district are Hyde Park Baptist, Redeemer Lutheran, Regents School, St. Francis, Trinity Episcopal, and Veritas Academy. Middle school students (grades 6-8) took second place. Twenty-seven BCS students will advance to the state tournament at TCU on April 25, competing in 38 events.

Technology plans

Systems administrator Jacob Rotich recently installed a new server for BCS – the Power Hedge 2900. The storage space for this new server is 1.2 TB, which is more than twice the old 500 GB. It is also faster and has more power. The old server is still intact and will be used as the final backup. Rotich said his next project is the share-point server, which will help students and teachers share resources throughout the entire school and will function as an internal website where everyone can share resources. In the future, Rotich said he is looking at SMART Boards, which are able to transmit the information on teachers' whiteboards to their computers. "We are trying to provide the best for our students," he said.

JuCo is back

The Junior High Student Council (JuCo) will return in the fall, but with a more broad focus than in previous years. New sponsors Heather Hammock and Tere Hager said they want a council that has opportunities similar to those of StuCo. The new JuCo will not only sponsor and run service projects but will also coordinate fun events for the junior high students and give the students opportunities to grow and develop leadership skills.

TCSIT: the dynasty continues

carter **BOYD**
reporter

As silence consumed Cullen Auditorium, days of acting, adding, authoring, and art-making culminated in a few tense seconds of announcing. And then everyone knew it. Brentwood Christian had won sweepstakes once again.

For the third year in a row, and the thirteenth time in sixteen years, Brentwood Christian

emerged victorious from the TCSIT tussle, hosted by Abilene Christian University, to claim the overall award for high school. In an almost-repeat of last year's victory, BCS totaled 479 points, just topping last year's 478, and going 112 points beyond second-place Fort Worth.

The junior high team was awarded third place but moved up to a tie for second when scores were recalculated.

From March 26-28, students from Brentwood

and other Texas schools competed in various events, including social studies, calculator applications, and duet acting. Friendly conversation and intense competition melded together for a weekend of wandering around the ACU campus, eating, playing music, and sometimes competing.

After Friday's competition, students from BCS and Oklahoma Christian dined at Gattiland, then headed to the game room for one more interscholastic throwdown. Both groups headed back to the same hotel and fell into a deep sleep preparing for the next day's long-awaited announcement.

BCS students took first place in all four art events, sweeping first, second, and third in art portfolio, and taking first, second, and fourth in photography. Senior Alexis Gardner placed three times in art events, finishing first in on-site drawing. Classmate Meghan Quinn won both art portfolio and computer-animated design, and placed fourth in photography, which was won by her sister, sophomore Jennifer Quinn. Senior Laura Peterson placed in two events, as BCS dominated the art competition.

"It was nice to sweep art portfolio, because we were really nervous about that,"



photo: Hoang Tang

UPHOLDING TRADITION Brentwood Christian's 14 senior participants grasp another first-place trophy after leading their school to a third consecutive win at TCSIT in Abilene on March 26-28.

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BCS takes TAPPS by storm

In only second year at academic meet, Brentwood wins state title

jacob **CARDENAS**
reporter

After dipping their toes in the water for the first time last year and earning a fifth-place finish, Brentwood Christian decided to jump in this time around, snatching up first place honors in the TAPPS 4A academic competition on the weekend of April 3-4.

That same weekend, the art department placed fifth in the state. Both events were held at Concordia University's new campus in Northwest Austin.

The academic team, which placed second in district, managed to put together an even

stronger performance in the state meet. Led by academic phenomenon Matthew Gardner, Brentwood came out on top with 74 points, 12 more than second-place Corpus Christi, which had won the competition the past two years. Last year, Brentwood's involvement in the event was a spur-of-the-moment decision, meaning there was very little preparation.

"We decided to do it as a trial last year," elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed said, as she explained that the event's timing usually conflicts with TCSIT. "We liked the idea of being in an all-Christian tournament, which is what TCSIT is."

According to Dr. Weed, a much more serious

effort was made to prepare the participating students for the competition this time. She credited Cindy Singleton for organizing all details of the district trip. The effort paid off and brought more than expected.

"To win first at state – we were blown away," Dr. Weed said.

Eight of the 16 students who contributed in the district meet placed fourth or higher in their events, moving them on to state. The most damage was done in math and science events. Gardner, a junior, won first in number sense, freshman Brittany Ho took third, and sophomore

see Best, page 3

STORYTIME WITH LAURA PETERSON

The adventures of Johnny Norwood

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

Johnny had always associated springtime with hard boiled eggs, jelly beans, and Peeps. But he quickly discovered that at Hundred Acre High, there was an entirely different reason for the season. The three weeks following spring break were wholly devoted to TCSASIAOFARC (Texas Christian Schools Annual Springtime Interscholastic And Or Fine Arts Related Competition). The Mathletes were particularly intense. Mrs. Gromley called her students to battle with the incentive of extra credit; students sharpened their pencils lovingly, as a warrior sharpens his spear; and, with the armor of oxfords and Sunday shoes, they marched fearlessly into combat. They went. They counted. They conquered.

But the classroom wasn't the only place that the competition was heating up; the lunchroom, the core of all social interaction, had suddenly become a battlefield as well due to the upcoming spring formal. What used to be a routine, casual conversation in the lunch line had suddenly become a cautious, strategically

planned dialogue for many a dateless young man. Lunch was the perfect opportunity to get your daily greeting in with your potential date, a common and effective tactic used by many boys to not only give a hint of his interest to the candidate, but also to scope out the terrain. After only a couple of weeks of dedicated small talk, you could usually tell if she was likely to say "yes" if you asked her to the big event. It was a simple matter of weighing several factors, such as how she answered certain questions, responded to jokes, or various other nonverbal reactions to polite and meaningless chitter chatter. Did she give a detailed description of how she did on the test, or did she simply do "fine"? Was that a genuine laugh, or an empty pity giggle? Normal lunchroom conversations were few and far between.

Lately Johnny had been able to sympathize with the lead singer of Foreigner, who always seemed to be climbing social mountains of epic proportions. Never had the minute hand dragged so slowly around a clock than it did each morning in Mrs. Gromley's classroom. Johnny's seat, positioned right next to Myles and catty-corner from the little redhead, could not have been in a more uncomfortable spot in the classroom. Johnny had trouble focusing on proofs and postulates while suffering under the intense waves of bitter resentment that radiated from Myles. The little redhead, oblivious to the tension between the ex-Hall Buddies, would turn around with a toss of her fiery hair and flash Johnny a brilliant smile every so often, to Johnny's great chagrin. He could feel the rift between himself and his watch-wearing friend grow wider each time she showed her pearly whites. She also made a point of mentioning something within earshot of Johnny about her dateless state for the spring formal almost every day after class. And Cassandra was certainly not helping matters.

"Johnny, you don't have a date either, do you?" she would say loudly when the redhead mentioned the color of her dress yet again.

A few months ago, Johnny could not have dreamed of a better date for the dance. But lately it was all he could do to be polite, for she was grating on his nerves like parmesan cheese. When Myles had stopped sitting with Johnny at lunch, Johnny had sat down in the chair offered by the little redhead at her table, his heart bursting with joy. But a few weeks of sitting with her friends had left a bad taste in his mouth which was completely unrelated to the cafeteria's fish sticks. He found that many of her qualities, which he had at first found endearing, made spending more than three and a half minutes at a time with her absolutely miserable. He hated that she could not talk to him without placing her delicate little hand on his arm. He hated the way she laughed hysterically at any and every attempt he made at humor, whether or not he was successful. He hated that she rarely let him get out a sentence without cutting him off midway, often completely derailing his train of thought. He hated that she seemed to lower her I.Q. whenever he was around. And most of all, she never left him alone!

Johnny had never had to deal with unwanted attention before, so he wasn't quite sure how to handle the situation. It was a tight spot. The way he saw it, he had two options. He could swallow his lumps and ask her to the dance, which would hopefully ensure him some breathing room; or he could summon up his courage and tell her how he really felt, an altogether terrifying prospect. He didn't want to hurt her feelings, but he did not think he could handle one more day of ditzzy conversation at the lunch table. What's more, he was beginning to genuinely miss the presence of his once constant, bubbly companion, Myles, and Johnny knew the only way that they could be reconciled was if the redhead was taken out of the equation. And after all, kids, honesty is the best policy.

The bell rang to end another day of torture in Mrs. Gromley's classroom. Johnny took a

see **Johnny**, page 6



photo: submitted

GUITAR HEROES BCS juniors Trevor Atherton (out of picture on drums) and Stephane Montgomery (left), and friend Asher Kurtz, entertain the crowd at Red 7 downtown last summer. Read about Brentwood's best band on page 5.

GUEST EDITORIAL: *Craig Moore*

Does anyone still read? A call to books

Stunning! The statistics about America's reading rate and love of reading are simply shocking. And there are no simple answers about how to reverse the downward trend in this bellwether indicator of cultural strength. One-third of high school graduates never read another book for the rest of their lives. Forty-two percent of college graduates never read another book after college. Seventy percent of American adults have not been in a bookstore in the past five years. Eighty percent of American families did not read or buy a book last year. Eighty percent of the books read in America last year were read by only ten percent of the population.

According to the National Education Association (NEA), the trend in all these categories is getting worse, not better. And this trend goes beyond reading. The NEA also opines that "reading develops a capacity for focused attention and imaginative growth that enriches both public and private life." Therefore the loss of reading indicates a lessening of both our national public life and individual private lives.

How did we get to this point? One factor is culture. American culture itself is much less oriented toward scholarship than it used to be. Everything about culture now emphasizes instant gratification, and scholarship, including reading, tends to be slow. Hip-hop culture embraces spur-of-the-moment emotional responses, whereas reading bespeaks planning and preparation.

Another is technology. We have so many new gadgets with which we instantly and constantly "communicate" that things like letter writing, and its concomitant reading, have become passé. Time for meditation and actual thinking is being reduced. E-mails and text messaging utilize a short-form style of writing and reading which obviates such niceties as plot, character development, and literary analysis, including thematic analysis which often transmits to readers solutions to various problems and predicaments they may encounter in their personal situations.

And finally, our current national attraction to post-modern philosophy, with its denigration of Christianity and statement that truth is not an absolute but is relational and conditional, is eroding our inner compulsion to find a true solution to life's complexities.

So, what can we do to improve this situation and develop a love of reading? How do we upgrade our lives to include more ability to focus on enriching and stimulating our own growth through association with great thinkers, both past and present? One idea is that we surround ourselves with literature. Have books

see **Moore**, 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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Around the world in eight days

eddie **CARLIN**
copy editor

St. Augustine once said: "The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only one page."

If this is true, then we 28 seniors and the 10 adults who accompanied us on our annual trip to Europe have read at least a couple more pages in the world's story.

After years of counting down, on the morning of March 11, we took our first steps

on a journey of several thousand miles as we trickled into the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. We took several group photos before Mr. Broadway led us in a prayer; then we were waving goodbye to teary-eyed parents wishing us *bon voyage* as we stepped through security. After spending a short layover in Atlanta, just 10 long hours later we caught our first glimpses of the sunrise over the Italian coastline as we touched down in The Eternal City.

Day 1: In Rome, we saw a few sights on our way to the hotel before we headed to the

Spanish Steps. Later that night, some of us ran into trouble at a small grocery store nearby when they kicked us out for taking pictures of the interior of the store. So much for good first impressions...

Day 2: We began our serious sightseeing in Rome with a guided tour of the Vatican, where we saw the beautiful Sistine Chapel, the crypt where most of the Popes are buried, and the breathtaking St. Peter's Basilica. In the afternoon, our guide showed us around the Colosseum. Then, the rest of the day was free until dinner, so many of us walked through most of the length of the city on our way back to the hotel. We were able to look down into the ruins of the original Forum about ten feet below the modern street level. We also made several stops at the many gelato shops throughout the city. At night, we took a bus tour and saw many of the same places illuminated, including a stop at the famous Trevi Fountain.

Day 3: Most of our third day in Europe was spent driving to Pisa and Florence. The Italian countryside was nice, but most of us used the time to catch up on some much needed sleep before we arrived in Pisa at around midday. Pisa is a little backwater town with not much besides the leaning tower and the adjacent church and its baptistry. Of course, being such a tourist trap, it is full of foreign merchants selling junk, and a couple of stragglers back to the bus were detained by the start of a protest against racism led by some of said merchants.

see **Europe**, page 4



photo: submitted

AH, GELATO! From left to right, Jay Wiles, Seth Cole, Mark Nesslage, and Nick Sterling enjoy yet another serving of delicious gelato as they tour Rome on their senior trip last month.

Runners reap great rewards for BCS

benjamin **INGRAM**
reporter

Mark Nesslage doesn't care about change. It doesn't matter if it's the newly added 5K Jog-a-fun, which he ran on March 9, or the same old jog around the soccer field which the junior high and elementary ran the next day, Nesslage won't be beat. He finished the formidable 3.1-mile course with a time of 19:02.

"I liked the 5K better because the old one got pretty monotonous, and I liked the change in scenery," Nesslage said, reflecting the opinion held by many of the runners.

It was a nice warm day for running and volunteers were around the course cheering runners on their way. The fastest girl was senior Katie Legband, finishing in 24:28. Freshman Megan Gum followed her in 26:56.

Through April 2, the juniors had raised the most money in the secondary, with \$6,292. In elementary, Geri Archer's first grade led with \$5,276.

Special events coordinator Donna Valdes said the goal is always to raise at least \$100,000 overall. She thought the 5K would not only help the school approach that goal, but it would also motivate students.

"We wanted something new and different to renew students' participation and interest in Jog-a-fun," Valdes said.

Sixth-grader Hudson Martin ran the most laps in the regular Jog-a-fun with 38, although he ran in the make-up jog three weeks later. Classmate Nicole Glenn topped all elementary girls with 33 laps. Eighth-grader Steven Bailey led the junior high boys with 34 laps, but seventh-grader Marisol Lawson beat him and every other junior higher with 36 laps.

The beginning of the new course for the high school 5K was a lap around the soccer field and the adjacent field, but then runners were directed behind the school through trails, eventually going behind the baseball field before returning on the back road to the athletic center and back to the soccer field. Before

running another of these larger laps, students were expected to run two short laps, and some students became confused at this point.

The new jog brought mixed reviews from high school students, including responses of confusion about the course, but most reviews were positive.

"I thought the 5K was much better because it gave you more incentive to try harder and do your best since it was an actual race and not merely repetitive laps around a field," senior Trever Brightwell said. "The only thing I would add to it next year is a bit more organization and instruction, but other than that I liked the 5K a lot."

Some didn't like the new course so much.

"I liked the original one, because this year's course was confusing and unsafe," sophomore David Ko said.

Individual winners and top classes will be announced on April 22 at the awards ceremony, where winners will receive their appropriate prizes.

Best in state

continued from page 1

Polly Park placed fifth. In advanced math, Gardner, again, snatched first. Park placed third in math, which consists of Algebra II and Geometry. Gardner placed second in computer science, while fellow junior Adam Cammack took fifth. In science, Gardner finished second.

Gardner has amazed many students with his genius mind. His academic stomping has become an expectation and is no longer a surprise.

"Matthew is incredibly talented and has been so blessed by God," junior Jillian Wilson said.

Algebra teacher Darrell Hutson said he admires Gardner for his diligence and hard work.

"He's the guy that sits at the back of my math class reading a Calculus book because he already knows Algebra II and Pre-Cal," he said. "He spent hours reading a physics book, a class he hasn't even taken, to prepare for the science event."

The common opinion among students is that the competitions are just easy for Gardner, but he disagrees.

"Yeah, it's hard for me," he said. "It's just harder for everyone else."

The newspaper and yearbook staffs also won first place, giving Brentwood a total of four gold medals. While The Bear Tracks had won yearbook competitions at district and at TCSIT, The Bear Facts' victory came as more of a surprise. Having placed second in district and at TCSIT, the newspaper managed to pull away with first-place honors when it mattered most.

"After the discouraging outcome of the two previous competitions, it was a pleasant surprise," editor-in-chief Laura Peterson said.

Junior Lizzy DuPond helped the team with a fifth-place finish in Spanish.

The art department, which placed fifth this year, exceeded art teacher Lori Morin's expectations, although they placed lower than last year's fourth. According to Morin, the competition was tougher this year because Brentwood is now one of the smaller 4A schools.

"I didn't expect to place this year," she said. "I was quite surprised and very pleased."

Another pleasant surprise is the fact that Brentwood placed higher than the two schools that beat them in district, San Antonio Christian and Corpus Christi.

"That was probably our biggest triumph," Morin said. "It shows we are very competitive with those larger schools. It was very cool."

DuPond won the only first-place for BCS, in the art history/picture memory test. Senior Meghan Quinn placed second in two events and third in another. Junior Skylar Haws also placed second in fashion accessories with his wire necklaces.

Senior Alexis Gardner was third in monochromatic drawing, while classmates Haleigh Davis and Peterson received third in crafts and fifth in on-site drawing, respectively. Junior Joelle Vargas took sixth in ink drawing.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: Katie Legband

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

Kind-hearted, kompetitive Katie

mark **NESSLAGE**
reporter

As a tall, slender girl with dirty blonde hair and blue eyes, Katie Legband might not appear imposing. But make no mistake, this girl lives to compete. Just ask the girl she ran over.

At the Troy Invitational track meet on March 7, Katie was participating in the girls' two-mile run. Near the front of the group of runners, Katie was in contention for a medal, when some onlooker who wasn't paying attention stepped out onto the track right in front of Katie. Going around the girl would cost precious time in an already close race, so Katie simply lowered her shoulder and knocked the oblivious girl off the track.

Katie was born on March 13, 1991, in Dallas. After moving to Austin when she was two, Katie attended Grace Covenant from kindergarten through third grade, and Round Rock Christian through sixth grade. She and her family felt like "more opportunities awaited" elsewhere, and at the beginning of seventh grade, Katie enrolled in BCS.

Her drive to succeed started early on at home. She considers her family very close-knit, and she points to her mother and grandmother as the top role models in her life. Katie has followed suit and become a role model for her sisters, who both attend Brentwood.

"She's a great sister and has been an

inspiration," sophomore Alyssa says.

Katie began playing sports at age five, when she went out for soccer. Unfortunately, Brentwood does not have a girls' soccer team, but Katie still plays on her club team. At age 10, she began running track, and one year later she started playing basketball as well.

T h e s e
e x p e r i e n c e s
c a m e i n v e r y
h a n d y f o r
K a t i e ,

who has contributed greatly to BCS athletics ever since she arrived. In basketball, she played four years for the Lady Bears, who won district all of those years, along with two appearances in the Final Four at state.

"She's one of those hard workers, which was kind of contagious to the underclassmen," basketball coach Devan Loftis says. "She and several other seniors set a standard for the basketball team."

In both track and cross country, Katie has earned first-team all-state honors. Her abilities extend beyond the court, field, and track, however. Her propensity to work hard and maintain a good attitude earned her the Lady Bear of the Year Award her sophomore year, an award given to the girl who best demonstrates Christ-like leadership in sports.

While she loves playing all of these sports, she points to track as her favorite. After high school, Katie plans to play intramural basketball and soccer, while continuing to run 10Ks with her dad on weekends once a month.

Katie manages to excel in academics as well in

athletics. The work ethic that she learned at a young age playing sports transferred to her schoolwork also. She has long had one of the top GPAs in her class. Her intelligence has won her the respect of her classmates, which has led to three class presidencies as well as a National Honor Society presidency. She also has been a member of the Bear Facts newspaper staff for the last four years, this year working as the sports editor.

Despite her intense competitive drive, Katie also has a fun-loving, relaxed side that people enjoy being around. The girl who knocks people off the track is also the girl who can be seen comforting a frustrated teammate after their race.

She has also proven herself to be forgiving to teammates who rear-end her car on the drive to practice. (My bad, Katie.)

"Katie is a very loyal and supportive friend," fellow senior L'nae Allen says. And judging from the multiple times she has been voted to the homecoming court, it is clear the loving support is mutual.

Katie says she has enjoyed the six years she has been at BCS. She has appreciated the small size of the school, and "being able to walk down the halls and know people's names."

Her drive to excel will continue when she leaves Brentwood, as she plans to double major in pre-law and psychology at SMU next fall. After that, she says she plans to be a lawyer for social services. This job involves protecting mistreated and neglected children, and prosecuting those who did not take care of them.

No matter what challenges she faces in this job or any aspect of life, you can be sure that Katie's drive to succeed will win out.



Americans in Paris ... and Rome and Florence and London ...

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Day 4: Having arrived in Florence the night before, we didn't begin seeing the city until the next morning. Another local guide led us through the museum where Michelangelo's famous statue "David" is displayed. The guide then led us on a walking tour of the city, where we saw such famous landmarks as the Ponte Vecchio, Il Duomo, and the Basilica di Santa Croce, where Galileo, Ghiberti, and Michelangelo are buried. Many of us did some serious shopping for the rest of the day, while a few others had some adventures of their own... some of which included getting ripped off by waffle vendors and haggling with the foreign vendors selling their fake prints of famous paintings.

After a long day in Florence, we boarded our (very cramped) overnight train at about 9 p.m., bound for Paris and saying *arrivederci* to Italy.

Day 5: Despite the small compartments and mysterious kidnappings in the night, we arrived

in Paris at about 10 a.m. ready to start the day, even though we didn't get to take a shower until after our bus tour. Led by Hélène, our local guide, we saw such famous sights as Les Champs-Élysées with the Arc de Triomphe, the Eiffel Tower, the residence of the French president, and Notre Dame Cathedral. When we arrived at our hotel, we bid her *au revoir* before taking some very quick showers in order to head out to the Louvre and the Eiffel Tour by night.

Day 6: Our first entire day completely to ourselves included visits to Le Sacré Cœur Basilica, the Moulin Rouge, and the famous Montmartre district full of street artists and shops. Another travel tip: Street vendors can be very aggressive, so be very firm with them.

Three of us even got to see a real Paris "riot" when we followed nine vanloads of the Paris military police to a protest outside one of the universities near the Sorbonne. Anticlimactically, it was nothing more than

a group of about 40 students voicing their "grievances" towards the school.

Day 7: Most of the day was spent driving to Calais, riding the ferry across the English Channel, and driving to London, where we arrived at around four in the afternoon. Our British guide Linda, who had accompanied us throughout the entire trip thus far, gave us a bus tour of her home city, pointing out The Eye, The Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, the London Tower Bridge, and several other aptly-named local attractions. That evening, our entire group took taxis to the theatre to see an outstanding performance of "Les Misérables."

Day 8: Our last day in Europe began with a walk through St. James' Park, then the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace; and yes, the Queen was there at the time, though we didn't see her. The remainder of the afternoon we spent in small groups, although each group was only able to visit one location in the short time we had. Some of us went to the

British Museum because it was free (London is an extremely expensive town), while others visited the Tower of London and heard the grisly tales of its past inhabitants. Determined to make the most of our last hours in Europe, many of us stayed out well into the night, some seeing a performance of "Wicked" while others continued sightseeing, even though we all knew the magic would end at the dreaded 4 a.m. wake-up call the next morning.

To those of you who plan on going to Europe when you're seniors, I'll spare you all the traveling advice you'll hear in the many pre-trip meetings. But if you're still hesitant about traveling, I'll leave you with a quote by Mark Twain to spark the wanderlust within you:

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines, sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

Eighth graders blast to past

kaalah **MANONGDO**
reporter

Twenty-three eighth-grade students from BCS traveled to Washington, D.C., over spring break and visited more than 30 memorials, monuments, and museums. The four-day trip to our nation's capital included many places the students have been learning about in American History.

"It's a good time and a good age for them to go and learn about this country and its founding principles," said Darrell Hutson, who has sponsored the trip for four years. "It brings places alive and makes them personal."

The main fundraising for the trip is done through the Valentine's Day sale and magazine sales. This paid \$100 to \$200 per student, depending on their participation, which was about enough for spending money. Last year, 49 students and chaperones traveled to D.C. This year's group was much smaller, and many did not go because of the cost of the trip.

Many of the chaperones commented on the respectfulness and good attitude of the students. They were also said to have been one of the healthier groups, going to bed at an early hour and making healthy food choices.

"We were a team," Linda Riedesel said. "Everyone got along and was agreeable."

A favorite attraction was the Marine Museum, which had a helicopter entrance so the students could get a feel for the Vietnam War. The museum room was humid, to represent Vietnam's climate, and the room for the Korean War was set cold like a winter in Korea.

"It was interesting because you got to see what it was like for them," eighth-grader Brooklyn Merkord said.

Other favorites were the Washington Memorial, Pentagon Memorial, National Archives, Ford's Theatre, and Arlington National Cemetery. Students reported learning a lot about how the country began, and how much people sacrificed.

"It's hard to believe so many people have died for our country," Taylor Allnutt said.

Students enjoyed the bus rides to and from their hotel, when Hutson would play a Cajun CD he had purchased for his children.

Another highlight of the trip was the tour of the National Cathedral. Inside, the students were inspired to sing a worship song, which Riedesel described as a "spontaneous worship moment."

During the trip, eighth-grader Niky McCafferty celebrated her birthday, and her mother flew up from Austin to celebrate with her.

After the trip, students can relate to and better understand their studies in history.

"They see where history was made," American History teacher Jeremy Anguish said. "They experience it for themselves, and it makes it more real."

A Legend in the making

BCS senior with fast and furious hobby thrives in racing world

ben **LANCASTER**
reporter

NASCAR racers Dale Earnhardt Jr., Kyle Busch, and Kurt Busch all have something in common with BCS senior Cody Iltis: Legends Auto Racing.

Iltis began racing in Legends when he was 15 years old and has continued throughout high school. He participates in races all over Texas, but he most frequently races at Texas Motor

Speedway in Dallas.

Legends is a type of automobile racing with 5/8-scale cars, which are smaller than full-size racecars, and it consists of 12- to 20-lap races that take place on 1/4- to 1/5-mile tracks. Its participants range from kids as young as 12 to men in the over-45 division. All the cars must have the same size engines and same kind of suspension, as well as a few other similarities to put the cars on par with each other. This is intended to put emphasis on the abilities of the

drivers rather than on who has the money to buy the fastest car.

Iltis has been interested in cars his whole life, and much of his appreciation and love of racing came from his father, Wayne, who raced in college. Wayne encouraged his son to begin racing, and at age 11, Cody entered the quarter-midget racing league, which is a slower league with smaller cars for younger racers. He raced in this league until the age of 14.

In the first qualifier race he ever did, his dad accidentally reversed the throttle spring, causing the throttle to be stuck open. Cody noticed as soon as he began the qualifier, but says, "I was like, 'Whatever, I'll just go with it.'" He finished the qualifier by setting a track record.

He excelled in the quarter-midget league, going on to win two regional championships in a region consisting of the states of Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas. At age 14 Iltis and his father decided he should move up to Legends. He entered the semi-pro division at the age of 15, and that's where he still races.

His Legends races take place twice a month during the school year, once a week during the summer, and are usually on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday. He races guys from as far as Nebraska.

Iltis is known at the tracks for his apparent fondness of the color black. His uniform, helmet, and all of his cars are black.



photo: submitted

SPEED RACER Known at the track for his all-black theme, BCS senior Cody Iltis has been competing in Legends Auto Racing since he was 15. He typically races twice a month.

see **Car racing**, page 6

Two students' rock band gains following

carter **BOYD**
reporter

Imagine, for a second, a downtown club packed full of Brentwood Christian high school students. Not something you see every day. In fact, something you only see when the Vladimir Jenkins Project is playing live at Red 7.

Commonly considered the most successful band in the BCS student body, the Vladimir Jenkins Project consists of juniors Stephane Montgomery and Trevor Atherton and a guitarist from out of town, Asher Kurtz. Kurtz is a senior at an art school in Dallas called Booker T. Washington, and was recently accepted as the only new guitarist in the Jazz Band of America. Montgomery plays the bass and provides vocals for the band while Atherton plays the drums behind them.

The Vladimir Jenkins Project played one concert last summer, at Red 7, on the corner of Red River and 7th streets downtown. A crowd of classmates and friends from Brentwood was there to support their student-body band, which

was one among a plethora of other similar local bands playing that night.

The band doesn't practice often, but not for a lack of discipline. When Kurtz, whose father lives in Austin, comes down to visit, the band gets together and practices at either Montgomery's or Atherton's house. Montgomery conjures up the lyrics and the rest collaborate to add music.

The Vladimir Jenkins Project, or VJP, describe their genre as progressive alternative rock, but also say that they try to incorporate different types of music into their songs. They are planning to release a CD as soon as they have enough money from concerts to finish recording and producing, but they currently have no concerts scheduled.

According to Atherton, an interesting story lies behind the band's name. The Vladimir Jenkins Project used to be known as Casually Dressed when they formed in 2004, but the name was changed when the band agreed that it didn't fit their genre of experimental rock. Kurtz, the guitarist, was required for a class

at his art school to write songs. He wrote the songs based on a fictional character named Vladimir Jenkins, an introvert with amazing musical talent but a lack of social skills. The band liked the name and decided to adopt the title as their official group name.

Recently, VJP has found its niche online. Their Myspace page has been booming, adding almost 30 new friends and being viewed more often lately. They have uploaded three songs to their page and have info about the band posted on the site.

When asked about his plans for schooling in the future, Montgomery said he plans to attend North Texas and then transfer to Berkeley School of Music for songwriting.

Unfortunately, the band will be forced to break up before next school year, as the guitarist is leaving for college in New England. Montgomery says he and Atherton will probably form a side project and make music on their own, a promise of more good tunes on the horizon.

Tennis player second in district

Sophomore Brunson headed to TAPPS state meet next week

megan **MONACELLI**
reporter

Brentwood Christian's first and only tennis player placed second in district last month and is headed to state for TAPPS 4A on April 24 in San Antonio.

Sophomore Ryan Brunson traveled to Corpus Christi for the TAPPS district tournament on March 30-31. He won his first match 6-1, 6-1; his second 6-0, 6-0; and his third 6-1, 6-2. He made it to the final round before losing 6-3, 6-3 to a senior from Hyde Park who has won district all four years and whom Brunson has played before.

"It started off with me hitting and playing better, but I made loose mistakes which is mostly what cost me the match," Brunson

said.

BCS athletic director Joseph Walker helped Brunson enter the TAPPS contest. Walker played tennis when he was in high school and was the head boys and girls tennis coach at Fort Worth Christian for two years.

"I have always enjoyed the game, so when I found out that Ryan was a tennis player, I just began casually talking to him and his parents about the game and how he was doing," Walker said.

Brunson said he was confident in his first two matches at district.

"The first wasn't easy because it was very windy and I hadn't played for a while," Brunson said, "but I wasn't nervous because I knew I was better."

In his third match, however, he said he did

not feel as confident. But after cruising to victory, he made it to the final match.

"The last one, I was calm because I had made it to the finals and I would just play him mostly for fun," Brunson said.

Brunson said he plans on competing next year in TAPPS and for several years beyond that.

"I have some work to do and improvement to make," he said, "but I think I have a chance at playing in college."

Brunson is not the first athlete from Brentwood to compete in TAPPS in a non-BCS sponsored or BCS organized team. Tiffany Sammis ('03) competed in the TAPPS regional and state swimming meets in 2001-2002 and won both her events, setting two state records in the process.

Blues on the green

Inexperience on defense brings losses, presents opportunity for lessons in poise, patience

trevor **ATHERTON**
reporter

The Brentwood Christian baseball team has struggled this year with a disappointing 2-10 district record through Tuesday's loss to Hyde Park. Although the results are not what the team had hoped for, head coach Scott Cunningham said the boys are improving.

"I see them really improving at the plate the most," he said. "They have learned to become a lot more patient at the plate, seeing more pitches and working the count."

On March 5 the Bears got their first district victory, beating Corpus Christi Incarnate Word 5-4 at Brentwood.

"The win felt really good and boosted everybody's confidence," sophomore Brett Withem said.

The very next day the Bears got on a bus and headed to the Grand Saline Tournament near Fredericksburg. The boys came up empty in the tournament, leaving without a win.

Brentwood dropped their next four games, losing to St. Andrews 10-2, San Antonio TMI 9-1, San Antonio Christian 16-2, and Victoria St. Joseph 10-0.

Although some of the players were discouraged after this stretch, many saw their season in a different way.

"Even though we have struggled this season in district," junior Brady Johnson explained, "it does not affect our overall performance. We still give it our all and work to get better each day."

On April 3 their hard work paid off and the Bears had a big win over San Marcos Baptist, a team that had beaten them a month earlier. In the sixth inning the Bears were down one

run when sophomore Benjamin Ingram hit a clutch single to tie it up. The rest of the game the Bears played good defense and ended up blowing SMBA out, winning 13-7.

Next the Bears traveled to San Antonio TMI and lost 10-3. After that was a double header at home on April 9 against undefeated Corpus Christi John Paul. The visitors beat Brentwood 16-0 and 10-0.

Cunningham said part of the reason for the difficult losses is the team's defense. Although the lopsided scores might suggest otherwise, the coach said his pitchers are performing very well.

"Our pitching with Trevor (Brightwell) and Bryant (Davis) has been outstanding, and I could not ask any more out of those two guys," Cunningham said. "Our defense has been our nemesis all year and we just have not backed them up the way we should to win ball games."

Although the Bears' record came up short of many players' expectations, several players said they have improved and grown together. The coach especially sees different lessons that the team has learned, both on and off the field.

"Win or lose, the kids are having fun and learning not just baseball, but how to become better men both on and off the field of play," Cunningham said.

Cunningham said he feels baseball is full of all sorts of life lessons, such as patience, poise, and passion.

Car racing

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Although he does like having an identity at the track, he admits it can get pretty hot during the summer.

He has put in a lot of practice over the years, improving his driving and racing skills, but Iltis still claims that his racing success was not just from practice.

"It's a natural talent that God gave me," Iltis says.

Iltis' favorite car is the '69 Camaro SS, and his favorite NASCAR racer is Tony Stewart. Iltis plans on attending the University of Texas-San Antonio in the fall and then transferring to Belmont Abbey in Charlotte, NC, to get a business degree in their motor sports program. He then hopes to go on to work in NASCAR as a team manager.

Iltis accepts that he probably will not be able to race professionally, but he hopes to continue being involved in the world of racing for a long time to come.

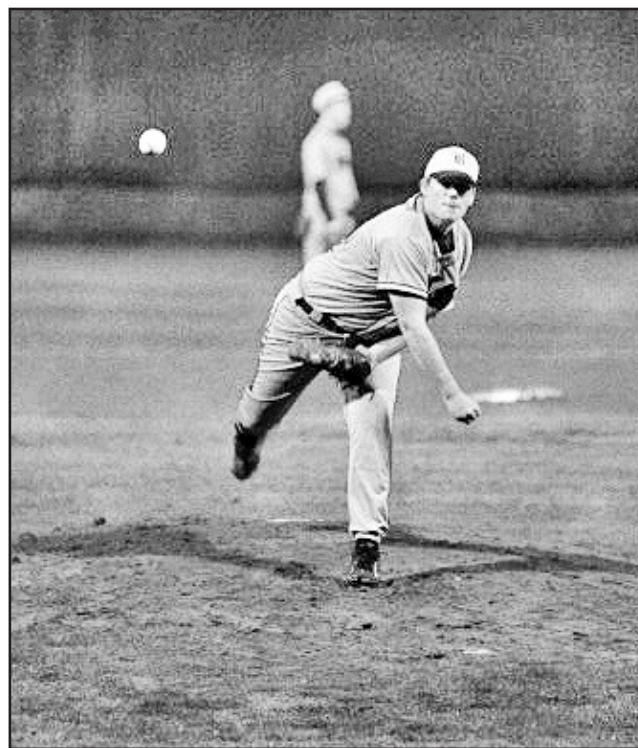


photo: Facebook

WARMING UP Bryant Davis loosens up between innings during a recent game. Davis and fellow senior Trevor Brightwell have handled most of the pitching this season.

"They are learning what it takes to work hard and see the fruits of hard work blossom," he said. "Without hard work and the want to be something better, you have nothing."

Johnny Norwood

continued from page 2

deep breath, rehearsing his script in his head, as the little redhead sidled slyly over to his desk.

"Well, Johnny, are you excited about the spring formal?" she asked innocently. He looked down at his shoes as he prepared to launch into his little speech.

"I'm glad you mentioned it," he said hesitantly. "I've actually been meaning to talk to you about it for a while now. You see, the thing is I..." But before he could finish his sentence, she jumped in with an emphatic, joyful exclamation.

"Yes! Oh, Johnny I thought you'd never ask me!"

"--No, I don't --"

"My dress is sort of light blue, but it shimmers silvery in the light--"

"--Um, actually I --"

"--so a silver vest would look nice for your tux. Well! I'm glad we've got that settled."

Johnny watched her glide down the hallway in disbelief, wondering how he could have ever been such a fool for a girl named Wendy.

Hitting high gear

Varsity track athletes getting plenty of preparation with district only one week away

lizzy DUPOND
reporter

The Bears' varsity track team has had a meet every week this month. Today, they are off to Addison for the Tom Landry Relays. This is their fourth minor meet before TAPPS district, which will be on Friday and Saturday, April 24 and 25, in San Antonio.

Head coach Joseph Walker said the realignment of school districts this year makes it very difficult to predict how the Brentwood teams will compete in the district contest. In years past, girls have won three times in district, and boys won district last year for the first time.

Team members say the Lion Invitational in San Antonio on April 9 was a rapidly run meet; there was very little rest between the events, which might have had a negative effect on performances. Results of the meet had not been released at press time.

On April 4, the girls took fourth while the boys placed tenth in the Round Rock Christian Invitational. Central Texas Christian School took first in both.

The boys' highest scores came from senior Mark Nesslage, who finished second in the 3200 meters and the pole vault, and third in the 1600. Seniors Nick Sterling, Ben Lancaster, and Seth Cole placed fourth in the 1600, fifth in the high jump, and fifth in discus, respectively. Sophomore Ryan Brunson took fifth in the 800. The boys' relay team placed

fourth in the 4 x 400.

For the girls, freshman Brittany Brunson took first in the 800 and the 1600, and senior Katie Legband won the 3200. Also, the girls'

relay team placed second in the 4 x 100 and the 4 x 400. Senior Audrei Welter tied for second in pole vault, but at the expense of an injury to her left wrist.



photo: Kay Taylor

DYNAMIC DUO Senior Mark Nesslage tries in vain to keep up with his coach in Jog-a-fun last month. Nesslage will lead the track team into district competition next week in San Antonio.

The team's first meet was the Troy Invitational on March 7. JV girls (freshmen and sophomores) placed fifth, and JV boys placed thirteenth. Varsity girls and boys took eleventh and sixteenth.

Katie Legband placed fourth in the 3200 and fifth in the 1600. Sophomores Brittany Johnson and Alyssa Legband, and junior Ashley Clement placed second in the high jump, 200, and 400, respectively. BCS also placed second in the 4 x 400.

For boys, Nesslage took fourth in the 3200 and sixth in the 1600, and junior Allen Taylor placed fifth in the 200.

"The first time, you're never completely ready," Walker said.

Walker said the first meet usually determines, or sets the stage for, student performance in district.

This year's new system for the TAPPS track tournament includes "regionals" as an intermediary competition; teams advance from district to regionals to state.

At the start of the season, students and coaches did not know what to expect from this year's team.

"It's mostly a lot of new faces," Welter said.

Despite the uncertainty of the year, Walker said the new faces are a good thing and especially important in track since BCS makes no cuts.

"We're really excited to have them," he said. "It's always good to have new kids."

The track team, rookies and all, has been preparing for district for nearly two months. March was a cluttered time for track due to spring break, TAPPS academics, and TCSIT. In April, however, the track team has been preparing almost non-stop. They will continue to do so if they advance to regionals.

Softball team needs three wins for playoffs

charles KIM
reporter

After losing two games early in the week, the Lady Bears' softball team must beat San Antonio Christian twice next week in order to make the playoffs.

In the beginning of the season, the girls lost several games, including two games against St. Andrews and nine games in two tournaments. Coach Paul Sladek said the girls struggled a little bit because most of them lacked experience as well as chemistry, since there are lots of new players this year. In fact, one third of the team is freshmen. However, Sladek and the girls have not become discouraged. Although they have lots to work on, Sladek said the problems are still fixable and they are getting better in every practice and every game.

Sladek also complimented the team for several things: their willingness to listen,

ability to understand specific situations, respect toward the coach and their teammates, and confidence. He gave special praise to the three captains of the team: senior Hannah Sinclair (first base), senior Carrie Thomas (catcher), and junior Katie Miertschin (second base). Sladek said those three are not only great players but also great leaders. They serve as mentors, they encourage and teach other players with their experience and leadership, and they also provide examples of honesty and discipline.

"I'm just honored to be around these captains because of their sportsmanship, willingness to listen, their attention to detail, and the attempts to win every game even though they were discouraged after losing several games," Sladek said.

March 23 vs. Hyde Park: L 11-2

This was the girls' first district game against their biggest rival. But BCS gave up four runs in the first inning before things got worse.

March 31 at San Marcos Baptist: W 25-8

The girls were losing 7-3 until the fifth inning, when Sinclair hit a grand slam. BCS scored nine more runs that inning.

April 3 vs. San Antonio Christian: L 7-6

Until the fourth inning, the girls were ahead 3-1. But SACS tied it up and then scored four more in the fifth.

April 6 vs. TMI-Episcopal School: W 15-1

The girls jumped out to six runs in the first. Freshman Haley Decker struck out six batters in a row at won point, and the girls "run-ruled" their opponent.

April 7 at Victoria St. Joseph: L 15-0

Victoria St. Joseph scored five runs in the first inning and 11 more in the second. The game was called after three innings.

April 13 vs. Victoria St. Joseph: L 18-2

April 14 at Hyde Park: L 9-2

This loss left the girls 2-5 in district, needing three wins next week to make playoffs.

Moore: Let's read

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in our personal environment and associate with others who like to read and discuss their readings. From such comes personal growth.

Another idea is to develop an attitude of planning and preparation in anticipation of being excellent. The ancient Greeks had a word, "arête," which meant "excellence." They used this word, in association with friendly competition with each other, to help produce their best in all their endeavors. The apostle Paul said the same thing in Philippians 4:8 when he encouraged Christians to think about excellence in their lives. Paul knew what we should know: Reading and the love of reading is critical in our lives. Reading not only encourages more reading and more of the love of reading, it is a mainspring factor in the development of truth and character in our personal lives.

Hollingsworth competes in state bee

brian **PETERSON**
reporter

Eighth-grader Lanae Hollingsworth took second place in the BCS geography bee in fourth grade. Perhaps she did not anticipate

that she would be in the running for a state championship four years later.

After winning the annual school-level National Geographic Bee in January, Hollingsworth took a written test to qualify for the state competition on April 3 in Bedford. In

early March, she was notified that her test score did, in fact, qualify her for state.

In the preliminaries she answered six out of eight questions correctly but was unable to make the group of 20 who advanced to the finals.

It was a tight race in the finals, as 17 contestants did not miss a single question, leading to a tie-breaker. Hollingsworth, along with her father and brother, watched as each finalist answered a question either at a microphone or on a white board. Though spectators were not allowed to watch the prelims, all the competitors and their families were able to watch the finals and tie-breaker rounds.

"It was still pretty fun," Hollingsworth said, though she was slightly disappointed she didn't make the finals.

Though the majority of competitors were in the seventh and eighth grades, Hollingsworth said there were approximately 20 fourth and fifth graders out of the 104 competitors in the state competition.

Hollingsworth said she enjoys learning about geography as it helps her understand the world around her – more than simply learning locations. She said geography is not just about climate and location, but also about who people are and what contributed to who they are.

"I enjoy learning about places, and especially about their culture," she said.

No one may ever have a life-or-death need to know whether Fort McHenry is in Maryland or Virginia, but you never know when a little trivia could come in handy.

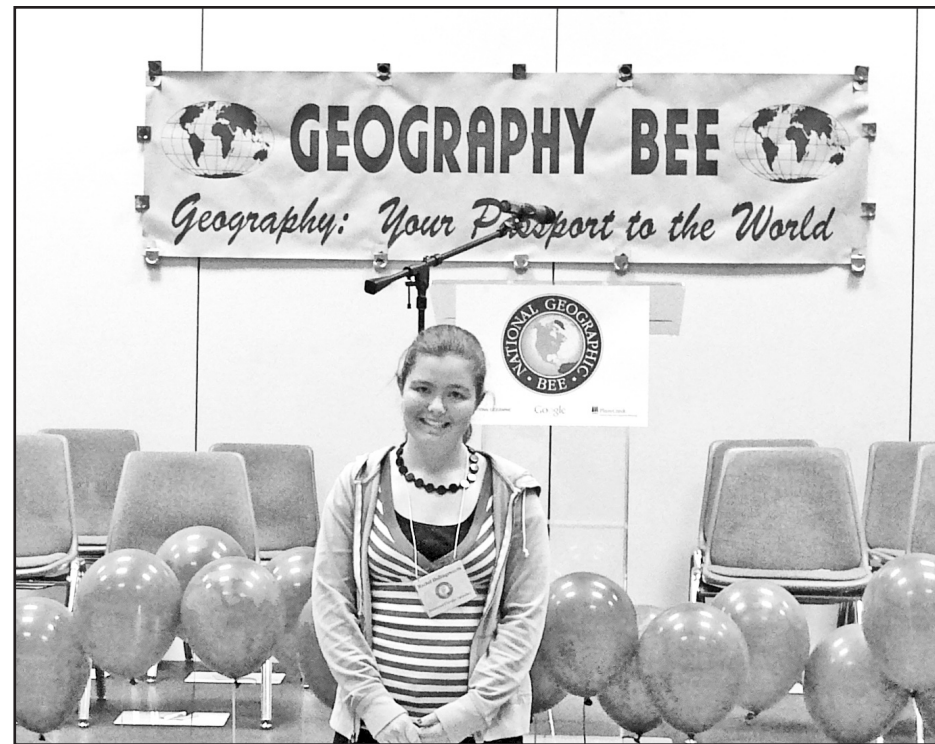


photo: Brent Hollingsworth

WHIZ KID Eighth-grader Lanae Hollingsworth competed at the state level of the National Geographic Bee on April 3. She narrowly missed qualifying for the final round.

Rosedale hunting trip

NJHS students hide eggs, bring cheer

megan **MONACELLI**
reporter

National Junior Honor Society members traveled to Rosedale, a school for special needs students, to conduct an Easter egg hunt on April 9. This has been a tradition for BCS eighth and ninth graders for more than 10 years.

A group of 38 students left from the school and arrived at Rosedale at about 12:45 p.m. Upon arriving students hid Easter eggs, already filled with candy and stickers, in a courtyard at the school. Students then met the kids from Rosedale, many of whom can't walk, and paired up with them. There is usually a two-to-one ratio of BCS students to Rosedale students.

Riding in their wheelchairs, gleeful children found the Easter eggs with help from their visiting friends. NJHS members were encouraged to interact with the children by talking to them even if they were not capable of responding in a verbal manner, according to NJHS sponsor Pam Hardin.

After the eggs had all been claimed, Brentwood students played games like bingo with the kids and also made Easter bunny ears. According to Hardin, the Rosedale students enjoy guests and they like fellow students to visit them because they see adults most of the time.

"They love people to come and visit with them," said Hardin, who added that the Rosedale workers are also fond of BCS students.

For the eighth graders in NJHS, this was their first time to visit Rosedale.

"The experience was very eye-opening," eighth-grader Mary Monacelli said, "but I enjoyed getting to know other kids that are different than me."

The main goal of this activity for BCS students is to be Christ-like examples and to show love to others, Hardin said.

"It is a good opportunity for our students to serve in the community and to be able to show Christ by loving on them," she said. "Overall it was a great experience for both Brentwood students and Rosedale students."

TCSIT title taken by Bears one more time

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Meghan Quinn said.

Another family dynasty broke loose in the objective tests, with freshman Daniel (calculator) and junior Matthew Gardner (comprehensive science, comprehensive math, number sense) collectively winning first in four math and science events. The trend continued with the Ho family, freshman Brittany placing twice in high school math events, and her seventh-grade brother Aaron also collecting two gold medals in junior high math events.

Under the direction and coaching of Lindsey Pierson, Brentwood's one-act play was rated a "one," the highest ranking possible. Though they were barely beaten out of Grand Champion position, the drama students placed multiple times in acting events at TCSIT. Junior Caleb Geer and sophomore Victoria Stewart took first in humorous duet acting, and freshman-junior duo Kailey Rodden and Alex Georgulas finished second, just ahead of sophomore pair Caleb Kronke and Gabe Breternitz, in dramatic duet.

Other gold-medal earners included sophomore Polly Park, who won both Algebra II and chemistry, and took second in number sense. Freshman Megan Monacelli won first in news writing, junior Lizzy DuPond won Spanish comprehension, and junior Skylar Haws took the gold in Bible knowledge.

Brentwood's yearbook, *The Bear Tracks*, also earned first place.

BCS students also competed viciously in the junior high events, placing first in six events. Eighth-graders Travis Clark and Lanae Hollingsworth tied for first in comprehensive math. Hollingsworth also won social studies, while classmates Danielle Riedesel and Priscilla Glenn took the gold in spelling and original oratory, respectively.

The junior high was awarded the third-place sweepstakes trophy, their 171 points falling one point short of Fort Worth Christian's total and nine points behind first-place Northland Christian. However, after math teacher Kaleen Graessle and some of her students refigured the totals, it was determined that BCS had tied for second. Contest officials agreed to straighten out the trophies accordingly.

When sweepstakes points were announced and the high school knew they had wrapped up another title, the front half of the auditorium erupted in celebration, and representatives strutted on stage to claim the gargantuan trophy. Finally, all the worn out students loaded up and drove home. But it wouldn't be TCSIT without a trip to the ever delicious and oh-so-unhealthy Underwood's Café in Brownwood.

Spiritual Emphasis Day: Take two

jay **WILES**
reporter

Brentwood Christian high school students heard the second part of Spiritual Emphasis Day on Monday.

Typically, this annual event features the cancellation of all classes, and the day is focused on renewing and building up spiritual faith. It was originally planned for Monday, March 2, but due to a snowstorm in the guest speaker's hometown, he was unable to travel.

The guest speaker for the day was Matt Goodman, the pulpit minister of the Biltmore Church of Christ in Asheville, N.C. He was a youth minister in Tulsa, Okla., several years ago when BCS senior Jay Wiles and sophomore Mandy Wiles were there.

Able to come for the rescheduled time, Goodman gave lessons related to the theme of "putting your faith into action" and spoke in three half-hour segments spread out across the afternoon.

Goodman said he is thankful that BCS was eager to bring him 1,000 miles to speak.

"I had a great experience meeting the teachers and students here," he said.