



THE BEAR FACTS

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BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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Fall musical spooky, filled with laughter

By Samantha Kirchoff

The lights in the CSA slowly faded to black to match the theme of the night: dark, enchanting and comedic.

The Brentwood Christian Fine Arts Department presented the national tour version of *The Addams Family* play for this year's fall musical, directed by Vanessa Malzare. Performances were held October 13-15, with Thursday and Friday night performances, a Saturday understudy matinee and a final Saturday night performance.

Starring in the play were seniors Abigail Weston and Elisabeth Herring as Morticia Addams, junior Landon Hejl as Gomez Addams, senior Kennedy Drennon as Wednesday Addams, and junior Roy Zou as Lucas Beineke.

The play also benefitted from the talents of senior Mollie Walters, who served as assistant director, and Travis Pollard as orchestra director.

After the final bow and senior thank-you's, the entire cast and crew gathered at cast member Jack Weston's house for a party to celebrate the success of the musical.

Brentwood staff didn't think just one party was enough to justify how well the play went. President Burcham used the intercom system to invite anyone who was involved in the play to another party during the school day the following Wednesday.

"We thought we were in trouble and had done something wrong; why else would Mr. Burcham call out everyone in the play?" recalled sophomore cast member Shaye Malzare. "We all headed over to the CSA and were met with a wave of relief when—instead of finding trouble—we found a party."

Snacks and drinks were set out for the cast and crew, along with a TV playing their production on the screen.

Why was the musical so enjoyed by cast

see **FALL THEATER**, page 3

Homecoming brightens hallways, spirits

By Victoria Cartay

Just one week in the whole school year paints the hallways with vivid colors and colorful clothing for every day of the week. That week, as most have guessed, is homecoming week. Homecoming serves the purpose of bringing school spirit directly to the mind of each student. Brentwood students and faculty alike appreciate the days where they can show off their creativity and fashion sense with each themed day.

This year homecoming, taking place the week of Oct. 17-21, was set to the theme of "Drive-In to Homecoming". Stu-Co planned this theme with the intention of making every dress up day go along with diverse movie themes and styles.

"It was very vibrant and I enjoyed the week," said sophomore Reid Alexander. "I love how StuCo decorated the hallways, it was awesome."

StuCo began planning homecoming very early in the year, and they announced the dress-up days and theme through a video played during chapel. Students started off the week with a Marvelous Monday where they could dress up as a character from Marvel or as a celebrity going to the Oscars. Terrifying Tuesday offered a preview of Halloween, al-



photo: Lisa Lee

Smile and wave! The BCS cheer team laugh happily on their green-and-white covered float, which won second place overall in the parade held on Oct. 21.

lowing students to dress up as something scary for the day at BCS. On Wild Wednesday students were allowed to wear outfits from the wild west or as a character from shows or movies such as *Stranger Things* or *Monster Inc.* Throwback Thursday brought back all of the iconic outfits from favorite teen movies like

Clueless and *Back to the Future*. Finally, on Friday, everyone showed off their Brentwood Bear spirit wearing all green and maybe even including green face paint or hair dye.

"It was a lot of fun and very creative," stated sophomore Sofia Geevarghese.

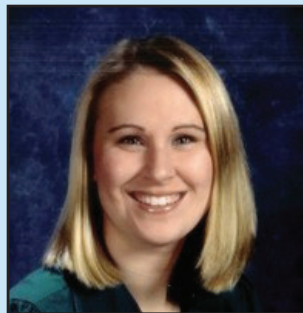
see **HOMECOMING**, page 3

Fresh faces bring talent, experience

By Bear Facts Staff

Brentwood has welcomed 10 new faculty and staff this year, all of whom bring diverse talent and experience to the halls of BCS.

Kimberly Calton has 13 years of diverse teaching experience, from pre-school through junior college. Graduating from the United States Military Academy with a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science, she later earned her master's in Mathematics from The University of



Calton

Texas at Austin. Calton previously taught upper-level mathematics at Weiss High School.

Calton has two daughters who attend Brentwood a second grader, Elizabeth, and a seventh grader, Katie. Her hobbies include running, quilting, and spending time with her family.

Calton says she is excited to watch students grow, learn and try new things.

"I love teaching math and am excited to share my love and excitement for math with my students at Brentwood," says Calton.

Deborah Thornton has been teaching the last 12 years at Stony Point High School. She has taught Health Science Technology classes to students going into the medical field. Prior to her time as a high school teacher, she taught RN and LVN students at the university level.

Thornton has several family members at Brentwood, which include Jeremy Thornton,

elementary principal, Rita Thornton, executive assistant to the middle school principal, and fifth grader Clay Thornton. She has



Thornton

been a registered nurse for 31 years and holds a BSN from Grand Canyon University.

Thornton enjoys knitting, crocheting and sewing. She is excited about being in a Christian environment as well as applying her science experiences with her students.

see **BRENTWOOD**, page 5

Pandemic had far-reaching effect on students

By Lucy Belcik

What happens when an entire nation of students switches from a long-used and tested model of schooling to one that is completely new, untested and studied, for an entire year?

How do we, as students, learn, and does the accepted model of the American high school still even work? Some would argue that it most certainly doesn't, that old-school block scheduling and test-based learning slows, rather than encourages, student development. In a modern high school today, you can find many teachers who try their best to veer from these traditional approaches and fashion a learning experience for their students that centers on the students themselves.

The nationwide switch to virtual learning can be said to theoretically have helped some

teachers achieve these goals. With students out of the standard classroom and many requirements for regular testing and classwork lifted, teachers found themselves able to map out their classes how they wished.

However, even if online learning did mean the disappearance of many difficulties with traditional schooling, these were simply replaced with new restrictions for teachers to adapt to. Network issues, easy access to distraction, the digital divide, having to create curriculum, often from scratch—to list them all would be a pointless exercise.

Students, when asked about memories from time spent in virtual classes, grumble right along with their teachers. But why? Surely a long break from the standardized (and often more strenuous) method of teaching and learning would have been cause for celebration from students, or at least contentment?

It should be clear to most why this is not the case. Virtual learning lacks completely the ability to allow students to socially interact and learn alongside their peers. Why this is a problem should also be clear—isolation is never good for the human brain, especially when long periods of it are forced on those with developing brains and self-esteem.

For most high school students, time lost to Covid lockdowns and closures amounts to a little over a year, with most schools closing in March 2020, and reopening fully (excluding hybrid models) in fall of 2021. This year, while not completely devoid of contact, had a big impact on many students. Lack of peer interaction and feedback meant that social learning was slowed, and lower standards for testing and assignments, while intended to ease the stress already put on students in lockdown, may have been more harmful than helpful.

Few studies have been conducted on high school students to confirm the negative impact prolonged online classes had on student development, but those involving university students all suggest that they “reduce student success and progress” when compared to in-person lectures and classes, according to a study conducted by the American Economic Association.

Studies such as these also often conclude that those students who are already classified as “low-achieving” struggle more with distance learning than those who are classified as “high-achieving”, according to a study conducted by the University of Chicago. This means that those who were already struggling with school prior to the pandemic had a harder time adapting to new online classes.

As most at Brentwood can recall, virtual learning, at least in its early stages, put a lot on students themselves in terms of motivation to get assignments and actual learning done. Those without systems of self-motivation already in place, or with habits of procrastina-



photo: The New York Times

In the waiting line The pandemic forced most schools to close nationwide, isolating students alongside them. This isolation produced far-reaching consequences.

tion, would have understandably found it hard to thrive in a less-demanding, detached learning environment.

Of course, academic growth was not the only thing affected by the pandemic. School closures caused most students to miss out on an entire year of peer interaction and feedback, as mentioned above, which for many came right in the middle of key developmental periods.

These lost months mean that many middle schoolers and high schoolers today are now struggling to catch up with classmates that may have benefited from quickly implemented hybrid models. They are behind not only academically, but also socially, which is undeniably a harder problem to fix.

And even if and when these students recover that lost year socially, they may also find themselves with other underlying issues. Although most can figure this on their own, studies, such as one conducted by the American Psychological Association, also show that symptoms of anxiety, depression, and panic were “significantly greater” among teens during the lockdown. It can also be concluded that many still deal with the aftermath of these issues today, even after a return to normal schooling and activities.

But who are these classmates that benefited from hybrid classrooms and a quick return to mostly in-person learning? This editor would argue that they are those who were able to attend Brentwood during the “lost year” of the pandemic.

Although masks and cohorts were definitely not the most welcome trade for a normal school

year, when compared to the year of Zoom meetings and isolation most endured, those at Brentwood were very blessed to have at least a little normalcy.

Not only was it not completely bad in the short-term—for instance, many at BCS have fond memories of time spent with those in their cohorts—in the long-term it may have been more beneficial that we yet realize.

Brentwood students were able, if they chose, to attend in-person classes, interact with their peers, albeit in a distanced fashion, and on the whole take part in all the things they would have in a normal school year, including sports and extracurricular activities. This private, small-school experience is a very different reality from what the majority of high school students went through during the lockdown.

Overall, was the pandemic worth it? That is, were extended lockdowns and school closures, which have been shown to have such a negative and long-term impact on the school-age population, a worthy trade for “flattening the curve” and lowering case counts? I would say yes, but from a privileged position, having been lucky enough to attend a school where my individual development, not only academically, was prioritized during the pandemic.

There are some who are beginning to wonder this very question, of whether the world should have gone into such an extensive and complete lockdown, if its pros actually outweighed its cons.

How do we, as students who suffered the

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THE BEAR FACTS

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The Bear Facts is published monthly by the journalism classes of BCS. The paper is a learning tool which informs the student body while teaching students to become critical observers of their environment and to validate Truth within the context of the Christian world view.

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The Bear Facts is available online at
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Fall theater production a lively success

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and audience alike? Maleare has this to say:

“Anyone can love this production. It has something for everyone: humor and Halloween-y fun, romance, and heartwarming family stuff.”

“There were so many opportunities for everyone to be involved; everyone had a part. This year’s play felt a lot more put together, and I think that’s what really made the play stand out,” said sophomore crew member Allie Landry.

“The best part of the musical was the fun and shenanigans that everyone had behind the scenes of the play,” commented sophomore crew member Claire Morris.

Everyone agreed that one of the most difficult parts of the production was preparing a musical without a full-time choir director. However, Maleare was able to use her extensive theater connections to find voice coaches and choreographers such as Sarah Hernandez and Ashten Falter (now serving as interim choir director) to help chip in.

Each of the actors were a perfect match for their roles but one person in particular especially “became” his character, junior Hejl, who played the role of family man and devoted husband Gomez Addams.

Maleare commented, “I loved working with

Landon as Gomez. Gomez is the dad everyone wishes they had, and that every dad could aspire to be. He’s strong, loyal, playful and warm. He’s clearly in love with his wife and family and is comfortable showing them.”

Producing a play and making the characters shine is a difficult task. “Memorization and multitasking was one of the hardest things for most of the students since they hadn’t practiced their lines before the whole cast started practicing together, and were still memorizing stuff a week before the play,” stated freshman Lily Wright.

Putting on a play is more than just memorizing lines however, for many it also means juggling school and sports, along with musical commitments.

“Balancing school work and choreographed dances was hard but I’m glad I did it. There was never a moment where everyone was not having fun,” said sophomore Taia Robinson.

“The Addams Family is a quirky family that presents as non-traditional. However, they have strong ties and love for one another. That’s kind of the point of the show...sometimes that which we prejudge as being weird or bizarre can actually end up being good for us,” said Maleare.

In the end we have God to thank for an opportunity to let BCS talents shine through and show off creative ideas and talents.

“It’s a very upside down view of things, which I also find compelling as a Christian. What the world judges as “weird,” (devoting

our lives to a supernatural being who cannot be seen) is our “normal,” and can be very good for us when done well,” said Maleare.



photo: Mollie Walters

To the moon! Senior Clive Whaley performs as Uncle Fester in the Brentwood Fine Arts Department’s hilariously spooky fall production of *The Addams Family*.

Homecoming

continued from page 1

Elementary was again able to take part in the dress-up days as well, with parallel themes such as crazy socks day and throw-back jersey day.

Homecoming dress-up week concluded with several events held on Friday, the first of which was a parade held that morning. Floats from various sports teams and Brentwood clubs promenaded around BCS campus, throwing candy and greeting elementary and secondary students alike.

Winners of the parade were announced at the pep rallies held later in the day on Friday. Lady Bellas took home first place with a float decorated in their signature pink flamingo theme, and the BCS Cheer team won second, in a float centerpieced by a huge green and white megaphone.

Students yelled and cheered as loud as they could for pep rally performances from the drill team, cheer team, band, Bella Bros, and StuCo. The secondary pep rally saw a fierce competition between the junior and senior classes for the coveted spirit stick. After a heated class cheering match, the juniors

eventually triumphed, taking home bragging rights as well as the sparkly stick.

During the home football game vs Bay Area Christian on Friday, Oct. 21, all members of the homecoming court, which were voted on by secondary students earlier in the week, were announced. Homecoming king and queen were seniors Ben Gatlin and Mollie Walters. Runners-up for homecoming king included Aden Mann and Drew Landry. Queen runner-ups were Alisha Mohammed, Ocean Peterson, and Josie Koncaba.

Freshman lord and lady were Zach Czerlinsky and Harper Counts, alongside sophomore duke and duchess Bolu Bayo-Ajayi and Zaniah Williams. Junior prince and princess were Anh Truong and Juliet.

Homecoming festivities finally concluded with a school-wide party hosted by the Brentwood Lady Bellas on Saturday, Oct. 22 in the Athletic Center. Students jammed out to music played by a live DJ, and had fun with entertainments such as 360° video camera, clips of movies projected on the wall, and lawn games such as cornhole.

“It was super cool; everyone had fun and felt welcomed,” said sophomore Bolu Bayo-Ajayi.

NHS welcomes new members

By Lucy Belcik

The annual induction ceremony for the Brentwood Christian chapter of the National Honor Society took place the evening of Sept. 29 in the BOCC auditorium.

Guest speaker for the night was academic advisor and now interim middle school principal Leah Smith, who spoke of her personal experience and encounters of those with service-minded hearts.

The traditional candle-lighting ceremony itself was led by NHS officers, which included president Kennedy Drennon, vice-president Nancy Kwak, secretary Madeline Griswold, treasurer Dylan Nguyen, and historian Caroline Morgan.

Inductees from sophomore through senior year were sworn into the society before an audience consisting of their families and returning members.

After the conclusion of the ceremony, guests were invited to a string-light lit dessert reception held on the CSA promenade.



photo: Lisa Lee

Welcome NHS president Kennedy Drennon takes to the podium to introduce guest speaker for the night, Leah Smith.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: Ashlynn Alvarado

Seniors featured in the Bear Facts were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS Class of 2023.

Hard-working athlete serves aces, brings smiles

By Lucy Belcik

A fierce competitor on the court and loving friend to all, it's crystal clear that senior Ashlynn Alvarado fits the role of the ideal teammate, student, and companion. Described by classmates and teachers as hardworking, positive, and above all loyal, Ashlynn embodies what it means to be a servant leader.

It's hard to find someone on campus who doesn't have a good word to describe Ashlynn. Friends and teachers alike find her determination to succeed both academically and athletically an inspiration, and her warm spirit and kindness have helped many a classmate through many a rough spot.

"Since the day Ashlynn came to Brentwood in sixth grade, we have been super close friends," says senior Evan Gruis. "I know I can always count on her for anything I need, whether that be calling each other to get something off our chest, or simply grabbing food for each other."

"Ashlynn embodies the attributes of an ideal friend: kindness, openness, patience, and humility," says senior Celeste Flores. "She is one of my closest friends who I know will positively impact my life for many years to come."

A Brentwood student since sixth grade, Ashlynn says that her biggest role model is her sister, Ava Alvarado, who graduated from Brentwood just last year.

"She's like my other half. It made going through high school so much more fun and so much easier, to know that I always had a friend right there for me," says Ashlynn.

Volleyball and softball coach Rory Tyson, who formerly coached Ava and now coaches Ashlynn, has seen the tight bond between the sisters firsthand.

"Ashlynn was the first student I met at Brentwood. She and Ava would come to the FLC every day all summer long to work out and play volleyball. They had a special connection on the volleyball court and watching them pray together before every game was a testament to that special bond," says Tyson.

Although she can be found all over campus, Ashlynn feels most at home on the fields and courts of BCS. Soccer, basketball, softball, and volleyball have all been blessed with her

dedication and talents, although she will readily admit that volleyball has been her favorite.

Tyson says that her adaptability and

like a fun memory, but we actually bonded a lot over it since everyone was in the same boat and we all had to help take care of each other."

Sports are a huge part of Ashlynn's high school experience, and she acknowledges that playing sports have helped her find many new friendships, as well as

build on old ones.

"You're pretty much guaranteed to find friends on a sports team, since you all share a common goal and interest. I've been so lucky to be able to play sports and build friendships like that," says Ashlynn.

Ashlynn will graduate having earned a considerable list of all-district and all-state honors. For her junior volleyball season alone she received TAPPS Academic All-State honors, as well as 1st Team All-State and 1st Team All-District. In softball she has earned 2nd Team All-District as a sophomore, and another 2nd Team All-District during her freshman volleyball season.

Apart from sports, Ashlynn has taken art classes at Brentwood for all four years of high school, and names art instructor and yearbook adviser Lindsey Smith as one of her favorite teachers.

"Having Ashlynn in my classes has been such a privilege. She is a loyal and loving friend to those around her and leader when needed. She definitely always manages to put smiles on everyone's faces whenever she is in the room," said Smith.

Ashlynn is also a member of the Environmental Care Club and Cultural Appreciation Club at Brentwood, which are recent additions to the community, as both were formed just last year.

Her other hobbies include skateboarding, which Ashlynn says she enjoys when she gets the chance. She has also been a member of the National Honor Society for three years and attends Grace Covenant Church in North Austin.

It's still early in the year, so Ashlynn's plans for the future are still understandably in the works. However, she says she is interested in either neo-natal nursing or criminology. Her top colleges include Johns Hopkins University. Plans to play sports such as volleyball in college depend on who gives her an offer, she says.

"I am waiting to see where God leads me," says Ashlynn.

Wherever she goes, she will certainly be a welcome addition to any college program or team. Smith sums up her character and attitude best, saying:

"She is determined and hardworking in the classroom, on the field, and on the court. Ashlynn encourages those around her not only to work hard, but also to do the right thing when life get tough."



willingness to serve not only balls, but also her teammates and peers, makes her a valuable addition to any team.

"Watching Ashlynn her senior year has been fun because she has come out of her shell and has become more outspoken and a leader in the gym," says Tyson.

Ashlynn recalls a favorite team memory from her sophomore year: "We all went to eat at On the Border after a game, and literally everyone got food poisoning. It sounds super gross and not

Brentwood welcomes several new faculty, staff

continued from page 1

She wishes to encourage them to “be aware that we are all scientists in everything we do.”

Michelle Weilemann is joining Brentwood Christian as the high school geometry teacher. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Weilemann also completed an alternate certification program through T.E.A.C.H. Quest to earn her teaching certificates in 7th - 12th grade math and science. She has taught numerous classes at the high school and middle school levels, primarily in the science and math fields.

Weilemann’s husband, John, coaches fifth and sixth grade girls volleyball and basketball and her oldest daughter, Lauren, graduated from BCS in 2018. Her youngest daughter, Kaitlyn, is a senior at BCS this year.

Weilemann enjoys crafts such as designing and creating earrings with her daughter Kaitlyn, as well as knitting. Other hobbies include playing puzzle games and listening to audio books.

Weilemann says she is excited to be at the same school with Kaitlyn for her senior year. She is also excited to teach students in a Christ-centered environment where she is able to discuss her faith openly and where “others are praying for our students’ success in and out of the classroom.”

Weilemann is also excited to share her interest for math with her students.

“I know that math can be a hard subject for many students, so I hope I can help to give students a better understanding of geometry and that I can get some of them to love math too,” says Weilemann.

Weilemann previously taught chemistry at Weiss High School.

-Maddie Kirchoff



Graessle

Isabelle Graessle, a former student of Brentwood Christian, rejoins the community as freshman biology teacher. She now works in the same building as her mother, long-time high school mathematics teacher Kaleen Graessle.

Graessle’s last teaching job was with the Peace Corps in Tanzania teaching seventh and eighth grade, although she was forced to leave during the Covid-19 pandemic.

When asked what she misses from Tanzania she answers: “I was heartbroken when I had to leave, due to COVID-19. I knew that when I left, my 300+ students wouldn’t have a science teacher at all which is just so sad. I made fantastic friends in my village, at the market, and at my school with the other teachers and I miss them every day and always wonder how they did throughout the pandemic.”

However, she says it’s good to be back at Brentwood. She is excited to help foster her students with a love of science.

“I want to show them the God that I see in science. I want them to be able to see God in everything they come across in the natural world, because he created it for us,” says Graessle.

Elena Moore is the new Executive Assistant to the High School Principal. Previously employed at Grace Capital Management, an investment management company, she has worked as a Client Services Associate since 2019.

“I was homeschooled all through grade school, so I did not have pep rallies, homecomings, or football games, so I’m excited to experience a lot of that for the first time! Everyone has been so encouraging and helpful,” says Moore.

Moore has been job searching for a few years, and she says that finding this job helped her realize that “God was teaching me patience for the best to come.”

“I am so excited to be a part of the Brentwood family and to get to know all of you! Please stop by the High School office and say hello, introduce yourselves, and forgive me if I keep asking for your names!” says Moore.

-Joshua Coimbra

Recent college graduate **Emma Hinson** is Brentwood’s newest third grade teacher. Holding a Bachelor of Arts in Education from Point Loma Nazarene University, this will be Hinson’s first year teaching. Previously Hinson volunteered and worked as a student teacher in San Diego, Calif.



Hinson, PLNU Women’s Soccer

Hinson says that if she wasn’t a teacher she would be a nature photographer and travel the world. Other passions include soccer, which she played all four years of university. She also coaches local club soccer teams.

Katherine Blasingame joins the BCS community as the new second grade teacher. A graduate of Texas State University, she holds a bachelor of science degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with an emphasis in Child Development. Blasingame has been teaching since 2019 at the elementary level in the Round Rock and Taylor Independent School Districts. Most recently she taught fifth grade at Pond Springs Elementary School in Round Rock.

Blasingame says she enjoys teaching all subjects at school, but her favorite subjects growing up were social studies and reading. She has two daughters.

Tania Sneed is new to the Foreign Language Department and will teach elementary Spanish. Graduating from Angelo State University with a bachelor’s in Education, Sneed also holds a masters degree in Elementary Education from Texas State University.

Sneed has almost 20 years of experience teaching at the elementary level, as well as experience as an assistant principal at both Elgin Elementary and Elgin Middle School. She is currently also serving as assistant principal.

Sneed has two daughters who attend Brentwood. She and her family attend Westside Church of Christ.

Shannon Martin has joined Brentwood Christian as a K4 teacher’s aide. She has a love for teaching and helping others, and has been working in early childhood education since 2017. Previous jobs include teaching at Westside Christian Preschool, and being a full-time mother to two, an 11 year-old daughter and eight year-old son.

“My favorite thing about being an aide at Brentwood is helping the little ones with social interactions. Forgiveness and loving others as yourself are lifelong lessons. I love to see how much they grow throughout the year,” says Martin.

Martin and her family attend Westside Church of Christ.

-Jensen Nehrige

Amanda Burcham, sister of school president Jay Burcham, is serving Brentwood in the elementary offices. Her roles include assisting faculty with classroom resources and managing elementary lunch periods. She also serves as the campus-wide Substitute Coordinator. She is a mother of two.

“I am definitely enjoying working at Brentwood—except when the plague is going around!” joked Burcham.

Also joining Brentwood staff is **Jacinto Torres**, who will serve as the new facilities manager for BCS.

Torres is a graduate of KIPP Austin Collegiate. He has served Hyde Park Baptist Church as maintenance technician, and most recently worked as residential electrician with Charley Electric.

Torres has been working in maintenance and residential electric since 2017.

-Lucy Belcik



Torres

Lady Bears win district, eye state title

By Addison Everline

This year the Brentwood Lady Bears started the season off strong. The varsity volleyball team is currently 10-0 in district with an overall record of 39-7-1 beating out last year's school record, and a winning streak of 16 games.

Head coach Rory Tyson names seven players that contribute greatly every game.

Senior Ashlynn Alvarado plays all the way around and is a leading passer, digger and attacker while sophomore Rayen Flandes "is a solid player" and leads in assists, aces and defense.

Junior Aubrey Acheson is playing a new role as libero this year and "is becoming more confident with her passing and defense as the season progresses," says Tyson.

Senior Tynneson Allen is dynamic in the middle of the court and junior Parker Kimball is a consistent server and hitter as well as the team's second setter.

The team also gains much from freshmen such as Claire Montgomery who has a "powerful serve and is very aggressive with her hitting", as well as Kendal Roberson who is a powerhouse blocker and middle attacker.

"The ultimate goal this season is to win state and be undefeated district champs," says Tyson.

The Lady Bears have done a great job so far

winning Tuesday night's game against Veritas in a three-set game putting them into the championship game against Schertz John Paul II; defending state champs. The first area playoff game will start Nov. 1.

The varsity team has welcomed some newcomers since last season such as Montgomery, Roberson, and Kimball.

Tyson describes Kimball as "a difference maker with her positive attitude and consistency on the court."

"I have really loved growing with my team on and off the court this year. The freshmen have been amazing and our new setter has been too and I am thankful for how quickly they connected with the team because they add so much," says Allen.

Unfortunately, the team has had to overcome some obstacles throughout the season.

Illness has hit the team hard in the past few weeks, which has meant adjustment for the team overall. The Lady Bears also lost DS senior Ashlynn Anthony the first district game, so Montgomery has had to step in.

However, the team has played some great games this season, such as wins against last year's district rivals, St. Michaels, a close five-set game against Boerne Geneva, and a four-



Bump, set, spike Junior Parker Kimball hits the ground to pass the ball to waiting teammates Ashlynn Alvarado and Tynneson Allen. Kimball plays as the team's second setter.

set win against Schertz John Paul II.

"[The team is] more mature on the court and stays in close games better than we did last year. We also have more offensive threats and are well-rounded,"

says Tyson.

The team will advance to state playoffs after winning their district championship game against JPII at home on Oct. 25.

Strong runners aim for podium at state

By Lucy Belcik

The Brentwood Christian varsity cross country teams are drawing close to the end of the season, but with state on the horizon, still determined to run hard in their last meet, scheduled for Oct. 31 in Waco.

The teams, led by head coach Katie Smith alongside assistant coach Sandy Arguijo, have benefitted this year from their two top runners, junior Renne Cooper and freshman Harper Counts. Both club runners with 620 Running, the pair have come in first or close to it in all of their races.

"They have been exciting to watch this year," said Smith. "This is the first time we have had anyone, boy or girl, compete at such a high level among all levels of runners in the state and it has been really cool to see both of them do so well."

Both the girl's and boy's team have struggled with illness and in-

jury this year, particularly with an outbreak of colds and coughs among the girl's team, and the loss of top runner junior Macie Griswold to injury early in the season.

"We have had to deal with injury and sickness, like all the other teams have, but are hoping to be healthy and ready for the state meet," said Smith.

Griswold expects to be cleared for activity and participate in the state meet.

Following are summaries of some of the team's meets, in reverse chronological order.

The team took a two week break between their last practice meet in San Antonio and state. The meet at San Antonio Christian was attended on Oct. 15 in place of the team's district meet, which due to the recent drop in district and small size of teams in the area, was not held at Brentwood's home course as it usually is.

Recovering from illness, the team bussed a small number of members to the meet to compete. A large hill near the end of the slightly overlong course meant slower times across the board and no PRs. The boy's team was led by Cooper with a time of 16:48, and girl's by junior Lucy Belcik with a time of 14:45.

A better representation of both teams' talent was seen at McNeil Invitational on Sept. 24, the largest meet in number of runners the teams attend. Both Counts and Cooper qualified for the women's and men's 5K gold divisions, with times of 18:08 and 15:29, respectively.

Close to full attendance from both teams was seen at the Cedar Park Invitational on Sept. 10, the team's third of the season. A smaller meet, but still competitive, both girls and boys teams ran well. Counts and Cooper placed 8th and 11th with times of 19:25 and 16:33 in the top girl's and boy's races, respectively.

The rest of the girl's team went on to win their race later in the day, led by junior Katie Pittner, who placed second and ran with a time of 13:52. The boy's team was led by sophomore Hollis Harlan, running a time of 18:43.

Both teams aim to run hard at their upcoming 4A state meet and place in the top four for women's and men's divisions.

I think we have a great chance to finish on the podium for both boys and girls this year, which would be a first," says Smith. "It will not be easy, but if we run well I believe we can have our best cross country finish in school history."



photo: BCS Yearbook

Home trail advantage Freshman Harper Counts works up a hill at the Brentwood Invitational on Oct. 1. Counts, who holds the BCS 2-mile record, has been top runner on the girls team this season.

Young football team struggles through learning year

By Jack Gonzalez, Griffin Smith

The Brentwood Bears' football team is close to the end of the season with a 1-6 overall record, 0-1 in district, following their loss in their first district game against Bay Area Christian on Oct. 21. Currently the Bears rank third in the four team TAPPS district. They are set to play two more district games this season, against Cypress Christian on Oct. 28 and Legacy Prep Christian on Nov. 4.

"We have a young team this year," said head football coach Coby Tyson. "We hit a rough patch of about three weeks of illness that set us back as far as growth and evolving what we wanted to do. It's been a learning experience for many of the players."

However, the Bears are still hopeful for playoffs and future games.

"That's what our goal has always been. If our kids will hold their heads up and keep moving forward we have a shot," says Tyson.

Top defensive players this year include senior Ben Gaitlin, who leads the team in tackles per game, alongside as sophomore running back and linebacker Conor Schehl, who leads in total sacks per game.

Junior defensive back Tabor Tyson has dominated the offensive element of the team, leading in total touchdowns and interceptions. He has rushed 991 yards and made 11 touchdowns.

"There is no question that from a win/loss

standpoint the season has not gone like we had hoped," said Coach Tyson. "However, we have a lot of potential. I have always said potential is a resting object. You have to act on it to get any thing out of it. We challenge the kids to work hard, study, learn, and play hard. When they learn how to put all that together we will be a good team."

Next year, Tyson shares that he hopes the Bears will be able to rebuild and continue to learn and grow as a team.

"We know next year we will return a lot as we only have two seniors graduating this year. However, we want to focus on what we have left in front of us this year. Once this year's ends we can look toward the future."

Following are the Bears' most recent results:

8/26: Central Texas Christian 14-12 L

The Bears took on CTCS for their first home game, although it was played at Stony Point High due to resolving issues with the Brentwood home field. CTCS jumped out to a 14-0 lead in the first quarter and the Bears offense responded with a touchdown. CTCS was held out of the endzone for the last three quarters of the game, with the defense forcing three turnovers. After a very close game, with Tyson scoring on a long run and a defensive fumble recovery for a touchdown by junior linebacker Taylor Cunningham, the Bears eventually lost.



photo: Kevin McKinnerney

Your... Brentwood Bears! The Bears charge onto the field at the beginning of their first "home" game against CTCS, held at a neutral site due to issues with BCS home turf.

9/2: Somerville 42-13 W

The Bears traveled to Somerville in Burleson to take on the Yeguas for their first away game. After a close game through the second quarter, lightning struck and would delay the game about an hour and a half. After the long delay the Bears pulled away to secure a 42-13 win over Somerville.

9/9: TMI 21-14 L

The Bears took on TMI for their second home game.

"Our players knew that they would have their hands full with a really good team. TMI has a UTSA football commit," said assistant coach Kyle Tidwell. "Coming into the game he had been averaging 8 catches for 93 yards and two touchdowns a game. We held him significantly under those averages with four catches for 48 yards and one rushing touchdown."

Freshman Brayden Jennings had a 50-yard touchdown throw to Tyson, with Tyson also making a 70-yard touchdown run.

The Bears played a good game against the Panthers but eventually lost 21-14.

9/16: D'Hanis 17-14 L

The Bears, at home again, took on the D'Hanis Cowboys. This game was frustratingly close with the Bears leading at halftime thanks to a last second touchdown pass. Unfortunately the game went downhill from there with the Bears losing to a last minute field goal with no time left on the clock.

9/23: Savio 37-21 L

The Bears started out strong in the first half as they were up 21-14 with 1:36 left to go in the second quarter. After a few turnovers, they went into halftime down 23-21. The team was not able to generate much offense after halftime. Tyson, despite an injury obtained during the game, was accountable for all three touchdowns. Freshman Zach Czerlinsky made one interception, with Cunningham accounting for another two. The Bears worked hard in another close game but again failed to take home a win in a difficult game, losing 37-21.

9/30: Shiner St. Paul 44-0 L

Against Shiner St Paul, four time 3A TAPPS State Champions, the Bears unfortunately took a crushing defeat at home.

10/6: Boerne Geneva 42-7 L

Boerne Geneva was looking for revenge after a loss to the Bears last season. The Eagles came out strong scoring several times in the first quarter and defeated the Bears 42-7.

10/21: Bay Area Christian 37-14 L

Following a week seven bye the Bears had their first district matchup against Bay Area Christian. Bay Area found the endzone early on several long runs for touchdowns and the Bears were not able to recover. They lost 37-14.

Next up for the Bears would be two trips to Houston to finish out the regular season.



photo: Kevin McKinnerney

Going down Senior Ben Gatlin, seen here going in for a tackle against CTCS on Aug. 26, leads the team's defensive side, with most tackles per game.

New women's AD, coaches offer experience, enthusiasm

By Karlee Lawrence

Julie Walker has joined the Brentwood Christian athletics department as head women's basketball coach and women's athletic director. Walker is not new to Brentwood, as she already attends Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ. She was previously the head coach at Stony Point High School, in Round Rock.

Walker attended high school in Durand, Illinois and graduated from Beloit College, in Beloit, Wisconsin. She started playing basketball at a very young age and started competing in organized basketball in the seventh grade. Walker is very passionate about basketball and women's sports in general and is excited for the upcoming basketball season as well as the in-season sports that are coming to an end.

"I'm excited for the opportunity to coach and to build a basketball program in a great

community," Walker said.

Walker joined the BCS with hopes to build up the basketball program and to instill competition in younger students. She plans to have girls in all grades interested in competing in the sport. Walker says she wants to instill passion, toughness and teamwork in all of her players.

Walker enjoys spending time with her family in her free time. She has been married to her husband, John, for eight years, and together they own a 17-year-old dog, Wally.

Coach **Connor White** is already familiar with Brentwood Christian School, as he is a BCS graduate with the class of 2018. White graduated from Harding University with a B.A. in Social Studies with Teacher Licensure. He enjoys being back on the BCS campus, now as a teacher and as Assistant Boys' Basketball Coach. He says that he is most looking

forward to building relationships; that this is his main focus in teaching and coaching.

White wants students to know that he cares about them a lot more than he cares about Basketball or History or Economics. He loves those things, but he loves students more. White commented, "As a student, I loved playing basketball in the BCS Invitational, when all the students got to be there during the day, even elementary. So far, my favorite experiences this year have been getting called up for two pep rallies. It has been a very cool experience to relate to my old teachers now as colleagues. A little bit weird, but really a blessing."

New boys' track coach and assistant football coach **Kyle Tidwell** comes to Brentwood from La Grange Middle School, where he taught seventh and eighth grade P.E. and coached football, basketball, and track. He has been

coaching and teaching since 2018.

Tidwell holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications with an emphasis in Journalism and Electronic Media. In addition to coaching, Tidwell serves as study hall proctor for the middle and high schools.

Tidwell looks forward to making an impact on his students and athletes and "giving them tools to be successful in athletics and their daily life." He says that what he enjoys most about coaching is the relationships he gets to build.

"Everyday I get a chance to give back what my high school head coach gave to me. I tell everyone that he is the richest man in the world to me, because of the relationships and the people that genuinely look to him for guidance. I strive to be more like him as far as a coach and a figure to the players I come across," said Tidwell.

Elementary "Fire Truck Day" brings smiles, fire safety lessons



photo: Brandy Gauthier

Stop, drop, and smile! Pre-K students (from left to right) Diana Culling, Nolan Vasquez, Kayla Kinser, and Julia Prundeanu smile wide for their close-up, seated in Austin Fire Department's Engine No. 30. The squadron from ASD Station #30 paid a visit to elementary students at Brentwood on Oct. 18 to teach a brief fire safety class and demonstrate their equipment and protection gear. Students took turns taking a "ride" in the truck and holding a firehose, with help from the firemen. It was a special experience that they will remember for a long time.

Editorial

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cons of the lockdown, deal with this? It's certainly a scary thing to truly confront for those who weren't able to attend in-person school during the year of lockdown, or even those who did. The idea that such an event, which has had a profound impact on so many, could have occurred for reasons not absolutely necessary, no matter how slight that chance, is not an easy one to grasp.

The sheer longevity of the Covid pandemic and the reach it had on every single aspect of our lives while it was prevalent means that it is not something that any of us are likely to ever fully forget or experience again, even while its short-term effects are quickly fading into our memories.

To quickly brush this "profound impact" off, while speaking of the future and our roles in it, would be unwise of me. However, I feel that while we should always remember our time spent in lockdown and how it effectively changed the way we look at ourselves and the world, it would also be unwise of me to ignore the fact that most of us have moved on.

Although some of us may still bear hidden scars from our lost year, we are healing. In the future, we will know how to better adapt and deal with things like Covid. We are unlikely to encounter anything as severe as the March lockdowns of 2020 again, so dwelling too long on them is unwise.

Therefore, carrying our experiences with us, I urge all of us to move forward, using our newfound knowledge to help others along the way.

Brentwood Christian Homecoming Court

2022

Freshman Lord and Lady
Zach Czerlinsky and Harper Counts

Sophomore Duke and Duchess
Bolu Bayo-Ajayi and Zaniah Williams

Junior Prince and Princess
Anh Truong and Juliet Booker

Senior King and Queen
Ben Gatlin and Mollie Walters

