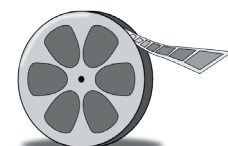


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THE BEAR FACTS

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Girls' soccer finishes record-breaking season

By Karlee Lawrence

The BCS girls' soccer team made school history by being the first girls' soccer team to win both a district and an area championship. The ladies have scored 34 goals with only one district loss. Leading goal scorer junior Mattie Hannah scored 21 goals and star senior goalie Ashlynn Alvarado had 45 saves in goal and 3 assists. Sophomore Eden Peterson has also been a major attribute on defense.

The team finished their season strong second in district with a 7-1 record and secured both the district and area championships.

"I would say the end-of-season highlights would definitely just be spending time with the girls, and seeing the joy of winning district for the first time in school history," said head coach Emma Hinson.

After winning their district playoff against Bishop Reicher easily with a final score of 8-0, with 5 goals from Hannah, 2 from junior Macie Griswold, and 1 from sophomore Ariba Mohammed. The Lady Bears went on to win their area game at home against Covenant Christian with a score of 3-2. Hannah and sophomores Ariba Mohammed and

Jenny Van all scored, securing the playoff win.

The girls matched up against tough competitor McKinney Christian in Waco for their regional playoff game, unfortunately ending their season with a loss of 6-1. Sophomore Charis McGaughy scored for the team.

However, the ladies have had an exciting season overall with big wins. Hinson believes the girls have grown closer and have definitely boosted each other's confidence and held high standards for each other.

Hinson says that a major part of the success is the chemistry between players and that they genuinely want to play together. With past struggles to have a full, successful team, the coach is excited to have a winning season, which will hopefully show any doubters that soccer can be fun and will prosper at Brentwood for years to come.

"It's been a great season. I had so much fun and was excited to make it so far in playoffs," said Van.

Hinson was recently hired to the BCS athletics staff as well as the elementary staff. She is a third grade teacher and played soccer in

see **SOCCER**, page 8



photo: Emma Hinson

Elite eight The BCS girls' soccer team smiles for the camera in front of a beautiful sky following their Jan. 17 game against Bishop Reicher. The team made history this year by securing both the district and area championships for girls' soccer.

Maxfield joins BCS community

By Addison Everline

Kyle Maxfield is the newest addition to Brentwood's athletic department, and will be leading the Brentwood football team as head football coach and associate director of athletics. Maxfield is from Sudan, Texas, and played at A&M as a safety after walking onto the team and earning a full scholarship. Along with his experience playing football, he has worked as a coach for 28 years, with 25 years as a football coach.

Maxfield said he "is looking forward to knowing the new students that he will be working with and coaching and developing new relationships." He has had some highs and some low experiences in his years of coaching but has been fortunate to lead fantastic teams at great schools and coach alongside wonderful staff, all of which has made

see **NEW COACH**, page 8



Kyle Maxfield

photo: Brandy Gauthier

Theater begins spring season

Will unveil two new plays this month

By Joshua Coimbra

Brentwood Christian's theater program has had an exciting start to the new year, with two new plays and four students nominated for HAYA award categories, selected over peers from large public theater programs such as McCallum and Weiss.

Sophomore Maeryn McCormick was nominated for Student Achievement in Design alongside senior sister Keira for Stage Management, and senior Mollie Walters was nominated for Student Achievement in Marketing. Senior Ashley Mondru was nominated for Best Supporting Actress for her role as Pugsley in the Addams Family.

Recipients for the awards will be

announced on Wednesday, Apr. 19. Senior Abigail Weston will perform at the awards as part of the Heller Awards select ensemble.

High school actors will unveil their spring production *Much Ado About Murder* on the weekend of March 31 and April 1. The play is, unsurprisingly, a murder mystery set within a Halloween party, with each cast member dressed as a character from Shakespeare.

Carlton Larraby, played by sophomore Reid Alexander, is a rich man who loves to scare his family. During a Shakespeare-themed halloween party, Larraby is murdered in in his study. The play is narrated by Master of Cer

see **PLAY**, page 8

All the Right Questions with Lucy Belcik

Middle Eastern vanity projects raise concerns

A mirrored linear city a hundred miles long. A crystal pyramid amidst a man-made desert oasis. Sustainable living on massive scales, gleaming metropolises, skyscrapers towering high above all records. All these things and more are what have been promised to the Middle East, where vanity and the desire for a return to richer times reigns supreme, regardless of the superficial problems of widespread economic failure and humanitarian crises.

The Middle East has seen a surge of lofty projects in the past decade, with royal leaders determined, somehow, to return to the golden age of the Middle East, when Egyptian gods were worshiped by all and mighty pyramids and obelisks struck awe in the hearts of any who witnessed

them.

One such project is branded as "The Line," a \$500 billion linear smart city currently under construction in Neom, Saudi Arabia. The city is planned to consist of two mirrored slabs of glass and steel encasing a lush greenspace between them.

Residents will have no need to leave, as all daily needs are promised to be just a five minute walk away from any point in the city. Planners of the city also say that the city's transportation infrastructure will allow a resident to travel from one end of the city to the other in just 20 minutes.

Although designed by a US architecture firm, the city and its parent organization NEOM are spearheaded by Saudi Arabia's crown prince, Mohammed Bin Salman. Salman has released statements that reveal his passion for the pet project.

"The Line will shine a light on alternative ways to live and create a model for preservation," said Salman.

But will construction of such a massive structure really accomplish these buzz-worthy goals promised by Salman?

Obviously such ambitious and hyper-futuristic ambitions have drawn attention from architects and engineers from around the world. Most raise concerns about the actual sustainability of the mega-project, despite its claims of eventually running on 100% renewable energy.

"The huge embodied carbon cost of construction will overwhelm any environmental benefits," said Philip Oldfield, professor at the University of South Wales in an interview with Dezeem magazine.

Simply put, the vast amount of steel and concrete needed to pull off such a project would set the city back so much in its carbon footprint that it would take decades to start having positive impacts on the environment. It's estimated that the construction of the Line alone would produce upwards of 1.8 billion tons of carbon dioxide, equal to more than four years of the United Kingdom's entire emissions.

Other concerns include effects on biodiversity. Once completed, the Line will basically be a huge wall cutting a hundred miles across the desert. This blocks migration patterns of native birds and makes it harder for desert animals to keep the all-important genetic variety within their populations. Practically, anyone who has seen a bird mistakenly fly into a reflective window can easily see the danger of building what is essentially a skyscraper mirror stretching as far as the avian eye can see.

Ethical concerns have also arisen after the announcement of the city's plans to the general Saudi Arabian public. The city plans to make use of data collection and artificial intelligence to find ways to improve life for its citizens. With

the country's poor human rights record, digital rights researcher Vincent Mosco warns of the dangers of misuse of private information and data collected from citizens.

"It is, in effect, a surveillance city," said Mosco, in an interview with Reuters magazine.

Additionally, three men of Saudi Arabia's indigenous Howaitat tribe were quietly sentenced to death after refusing to vacate land earmarked for NEOM's construction projects.

Another futuristic project that seeks to reach such great heights is the construction of Egypt's New Administrative Capital. The unnamed city is planned to be the country's new capital, intended to take pressure off of Cairo's crowded and smoggy shoulders.

The city's similarities to the Line are clear. Lush greenescapes in the middle of the desert, towering skyscrapers, and a city powered by AI and data collection.

Just as with the Line, concerns from expert have been raised about the viability of the mega-project, this time of the economic variety. The project this time is spurred on by Egypt's president, Abdal Fattah el-Sisi.

According to the investment bank Goldman Sachs, Egypt would need a \$15 billion bailout to fend off creditors. Interest rates and food prices for the average Egyptian are soaring, and with the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in early 2022 and the widespread global economic repercussions of the war, the country's financial situation becomes increasingly more unstable.

Egypt's government promises that the city will create new jobs and housing for those affected by its ailing economy and overcrowded cities. But most construction workers know they will never return to the shining city once completed, where the cheapest rent for an apartment is \$80,000.

It is not the first time that el-Sisi has taken loans and entered his country into debt for the completion of a shining new construction project that eventually fell short of promised revenue goals. Eight-lane highways, giant bridges spanning the Nile, an \$8 billion extension to the Suez Canal.



photo: The New York Times

Forgone conclusions Egyptian workers take a break from construction of Egypt's Iconic Tower, planned to be the tallest in Africa.

In an interview with the New York Times, Egyptian political analyst Maged Mandor put the situation frankly:

"[The president] is borrowing money from abroad to build a massive city for the rich."

These two examples of Middle Eastern vanity projects are only recent illustrations of an expensive trend throughout Asia and the Middle East. Myanmar famously constructed a new capital city, Naypyidaw, that has remained empty despite six-lane highways and huge apartment buildings and entertainment districts. The city is rumored to have cost 4 billion US dollars to construct in a country that spends 0.4% of its GDP on healthcare for its people.

The construction for the city this time was prompted by former strongman "prime minister" Than Shwe, who had authoritarian power of the country for almost 20 years.

Qatar was more recently engulfed in scandal for its abuse of migrant workers in the construction of the 2022 FIFA World Cup stadiums, projects that reportedly cost Qatar \$6.5 billion. In addition to these human rights issues, environmental concerns were again raised, this time in regards to the massive amounts of ocean water pumped out and desalinated to maintain football pitches during the tournament.

But what do all of these massive vanity projects have in common? They are mostly futuristic in nature, appealing to the sense of wonder that humans have at something new and never before seen. They are all spearheaded by powerful and often dictatorial leaders of countries known for their government corruption, human rights issues, and misuse of power. And they are all wildly, wonderfully, and completely excessive, although never quite living up to promises given.

see **EDITORIAL**, page 8

Engineering Fair teaches, entertains

By Natalie McGee

Energy can be neither created nor destroyed, and our science teachers certainly put a lot of time and energy into the Science and Engineering Day for the students to have the most fun with science all year.

Brentwood students of all ages participated in Science and Engineering Day on Wednesday, Feb. 8.

All over the Brentwood campus, the students completed different activities such as crafting, escape rooms, and competitions. The different tasks inspired creativity and teamwork among the students, making them put their minds to work as they went throughout the day.

Elementary students created miniature hot air balloons, working with partners from the junior and senior classes. They also played Kahoot and went to the chemistry circus in the CSA, while the juniors and seniors played

Angry Birds and Kahoot, including an escape room.

Students in grades 6-10 worked to make boats out of hot glue, popsicle sticks, and a rubber band. These boats needed to make it from one side of a tub to the other faster than the other boats to win.

Boats were tested and timed throughout a two-hour period of time. Winners from each group competed at the end of the day, hoping their boats could perform under the lights and cameras in the auditorium with the whole school watching. Winners of each grade earned a jeans day, and the top two winners in every classroom got an ice cream party with the science teachers. The overall middle school and high school winners were given a comfy clothes day.

"All the science teachers were really excited and proud of the students because they got re-

ally creative with their boat designs," said science teacher Madison Pamplin, who worked

many hours to prepare for the day. "It was a really fun day with lots of learning."



Future scientists Senior Mollie Walters and her two third-grade buddies, LeeAnn Morgan and Rhiannon McKay, pause admist construction of their hot-air balloon.

Students serve community and neighbors

By Lucy Belcik

Acts of service are certainly a significant part of Brentwood's mission as a school, and the past two months have seen several opportunities for students to get involved in their community and show Christ-like love for their neighbors.

Brentwood seniors had a unique opportunity to serve this January at Community First! Village, a ministry of Mobile Loaves and Fishes. The 51-acre property offers affordable housing for the chronically homeless of Austin, allowing them to earn a "dignified living" through gardening, art, and other micro-enterprises.

BCS has had an affiliation with the organization for several years, helping to clear land when the planned community was first being constructed. Groups have since traveled to the village for Spiritual Emphasis Day and NHS service days. Covid-19 paused these trips, but NHS advisor Kaleen Graessle is eager to reestablish the connection.

"I thought of them when I was wanting to get back to routine service projects for NHS post-Covid," said Graessle.

Graessle's first step was an outing with a small group of NHS members to visit the village for their annual holiday market in December. In addition to a bazaar featuring pieces of artwork and pottery crafted by residents, the event featured food trucks, Christmas lights, and train rides.

"It was a fun outing and we did have opportunities to visit with some of the residents,"

said Graessle. "I definitely will take an NHS group to the market in future years."

This first trip preceded a planned volunteer opportunity for BCS's seniors to serve the residents of Community First. Seniors traveled to the property on Jan. 6 and spent the day helping in the community's gardens and chicken coops and taking down Christmas lights. The group received a tour of the village before their departure.

Graessle said what she hopes for students to take away from their time serving at the village is that the homeless of Austin are people just like them.

"It is easy to get desensitized to the problem, forgetting that people without homes are still people," said Graessle. "It is good to learn their names and their stories. It is also good to see what people can do, in the name of Jesus, when they think big and work together."

A second planned trip for juniors of BCS fell during a long week of inclement weather and is in the process of being rescheduled. In the meantime, Graessle is happy that a relationship with the ministry and its residents is being rebuilt and that students are able to reap the benefits of serving their neighbors in God's name.

"I believe in the mission of BCS, to help students develop their God-given gifts for lives of leadership and service. I hope that introducing students to different types of service will help our students to seriously consider what they can do to help others, now and in the future," said Graessle.

Brentwood's annual Spiritual Emphasis Day

on Mar. 1 also provided numerous opportunities for students to serve their community. Juniors and seniors spent their day off-campus, serving in groups at Round Rock Service Center, St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store, and Texas Baptist Children's Home.

"I got a new sense of companionship, getting to work together with people I don't often get to talk to," said junior Laynie Ruiz, who served with the group at St. Vincent de Paul, sorting clothes and jewelry to sell at the ministry's thrift store. "It was so much fun, and I was happy to serve my community."

After completing their service, upperclassmen were treated to an extended off-campus lunch and returned to school to finish the day alongside underclassmen, which included a performance by Encore and a chapel service led by East Side Church of Christ youth minister Robert Jackson.

Underclassmen did not travel off-campus to serve, instead spending their day with rotations

of activities such as painting, dramatic scripture readings, and periods of quiet reflection.

"Service is important because the world would be a less friendly place if people weren't willing to serve," said junior Emily Mulcahy. "I'm so happy I got to serve our community with my friends."



Serving with a smile Senior Ocean Peterson takes some time to appreciate a feathered companion on the senior class' service day at Community First! Village.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: Mollie Walters

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

Artistic senior is friend to all, leader to many

By Evelyn Lee

You'll see her on campus handing out smiles and encouragement to everyone. Friends and teachers describe her as kind, creative, responsible, and absolutely wonderful.

Mollie Walters was born in Virginia and moved here to Austin when her dad was stationed at Camp Mabry. She began attending Brentwood in the third grade. For several years, her mom, Dorothy Walters, has taught K-4 computer science.

Mollie has a younger sister, Ellie, an eighth-grader, and an older sister Carlie, who graduated from Brentwood in 2021. Nine years at Brentwood has made her many friends and many memories. From her first year here with Mrs. Ellis, to her senior year, Mollie has left a significant impact on campus.

She has been involved in many activities on and off campus. Most notable is her involvement in the theater department and her loyalty to being co-editor of the yearbook. Mollie is also involved in the Brentwood Oaks youth group and attends church there.

Since her freshman year, Mollie has been class president and has led the class through many activities and helped make many class memories.

"I loved planning junior-senior," said Mollie. "Even though it was stressful coming up to the date, the result was fantastic and very rewarding."

Though most of her peers admire and applaud her devotion to being a class president, Mollie says that the biggest accomplishment

on campus to her is what she's done for the yearbook.

"Yearbook is the intersection of all my gifts and talents. My communication, leadership, design, and my writing skills," said Mollie.

Mollie has participated in the class all four years of her high school career. Lindsey Smith has been there to guide and mentor her as editor. Smith lauds Mollie's skills and dedication to the class.

"She's a great leader and has done such a good job at staying on top of things even when she's busy working on other projects for other classes," said Smith. "She's very diligent, and her artistic skills are a blessing."

Mollie has many favorite memories from her time here at BCS, and it's hard for her to choose.

However, some that stand out are memories of her performance as Amy in Little Women, the time she ran into a Buc-ee's after a cheer

performance with Kennedy Drennon in near freezing weather, and being surrounded by the overall goodness of the community she's found here at Brentwood.

Not only does she put her whole heart into fine arts, Mollie also works hard academically and takes her studies seriously. You can find Mollie working on her AP Physics labs and

acing her Calculus homework. She'd like to thank

Mrs. Broadway for her help over the years in math class.

"I always want to do my best in every area of my life," Mollie says, "It's important to dedicate time to getting the best of my education."

After Brentwood, Mollie plans to study speech pathology, which she believes will best suit her skills. She has applied to several colleges, and is still deciding on and praying hard about where to go. She doesn't want to jinx her chances though, so stay tuned for the big reveal in the end of the year senior send off article!

Another place you can find Mollie is surrounded by her best friends. After nine years at BCS, there's not many people here she doesn't know and get along with. Befriending and bonding with people from difficult classes, finding a family during her time in the cheer squad, and jamming with school friends outside of school in a "guitar club" are all ways Mollie keeps her connections.

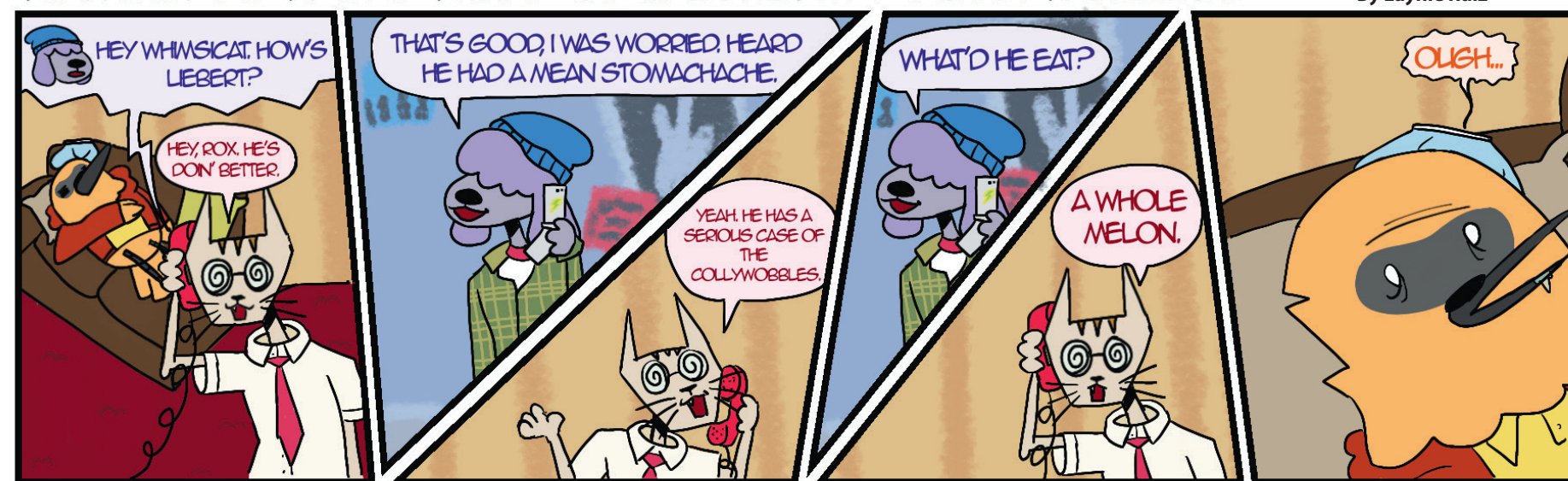
Close friend Hayden Hudson says, "She's the kind of person who's able to put so much effort into everything she does and still have time to be a caring friend."

Mollie's friends appreciate her kind spirit and ability to make everyone feel welcome and loved.

"Being her friend has been life's greatest gift to me," says Lily Trueper, "and I know she will continue to change the lives of everyone around her no matter where she goes."

WHIMSCAT'S WACKY WORD OF THE MONTH: "COLLYWOBBLES"

By Laynie Ruiz



New club attracts BCS film-lovers

By Lucy Belcik, club members

What began as a few friends gathering to watch a favorite movie has grown into Brentwood's newest special-interest group, the Film Appreciation Club. Dedicated to appreciating movies and how they impact culture and the medium of film-making, the club was conceived by Brentwood students Katie Pittner, Andrew Davis, John Youngdale, Landon Hejl and Lucy Belcik in their sophomore year, and has achieved status as an official club this year.

The club is sponsored by freshman English and junior Bible teacher Taylor Mayfield. Students meet each Wednesday at lunch to watch a movie, discuss previous viewings, and eat together. Additional meetings are held outside of school at members' houses.

"Sponsoring the club is easy with the incredible group of students that I get to work with and is one of the highlights of my week," says Mayfield.

Membership in the club is reserved for upperclassmen, but even so the club has quickly grown from just a few classmates to 12 regular members since the beginning of the year.

A shared appreciation of film and its contributions to popular culture is what brought the group together, and is what the club will continue to be committed to in the years to come.

"My hope is that as the club continues to grow, we can continue to introduce incredible stories - stories that help us grow in our appreciation of God as a storyteller," says Mayfield.

Following are descriptions of the member's favorite films.

Taylor Mayfield: *Wizard of Oz*, dir. Victor Fleming

Hello, I'm Mr. Mayfield and I sponsor the Film Appreciation Club. Narrowing down to just one favorite movie is a near impossible task. Today, I'll say the 1939 classic, *The Wizard of Oz*. Ask me tomorrow, and I may have a different answer. This was a very important movie in my childhood; one I played in excess to the annoyance of my family. There was something incredible about the film's bold colors and fantastic musical score that drew me in and made me cling to it.

Lucy Belcik: *Once*, dir. John Carney

I love music, and I feel like this movie might have one of the best soundtracks ever. All of the songs were written by the two (at-the-time) unknown costars, and it makes for a beautiful film. It's very handmade and set against the moody backdrop of Dublin, Ireland, which just adds to its beauty. My parents introduced me to this movie because they watched it first together, and now I have the poster hanging on my wall!



photo: Parker Saxon

Cinephiles Members of the Film Appreciation Club smile for the camera. The club meets each Wednesday at lunch and are sponsored by Brentwood English and Bible teacher Taylor Mayfield, pictured far right.

Elijah Catron: *Titanic*, dir. James Cameron

This past weekend my friend, Roy, convinced me to see this movie in theaters with him for its 25 year anniversary. At first I wasn't thrilled to sit down for a 3+ hour movie, but right from the start I was hooked. Young DiCaprio brought a whole new American energy to the screen in the midst of the British Isles culture that was displayed. The story of this young boy coming from nothing and how his fate intertwined with Rose, a girl of royal status created a feeling of heartache, drama, and passion. Jack wanted to live; Rose wanted to die; Jack died for Rose, Rose lived for Jack. Beautiful.

Renne Cooper: *12 Angry Men*, dir. Sidney Lumet

This was one of the movies that the Film Appreciation Club watched. Although there is no action in this movie, it makes you think very deeply about the assumptions people make and it shows the act of one man who causes 11 others to change their minds using logical reasoning.

Andrew Davis: *Batman: The Dark Knight*, dir. Christopher Nolan

John Youngdale introduced me to this movie one night when I was at his house. It is my fa-

vorite movie because of Heath Ledger's performance as the Joker. Ledger's is the best acting I've seen. It also has pretty funny scenes as well.

Gavin Garcia: *The Pursuit of Happyness*, dir. Gabriele Muccino

I stumbled across this movie on Netflix one night on a beach trip right before Covid happened. This movie and that trip are some of my favorite memories from that time. This film showcases the indomitable human spirit to a perfection and I love it for that.

Landon Hejl: *The Emperor's New Groove*, dir. Mark Dindal

This movie has got to be one of the greatest comedic masterpieces of all time. It's so effortlessly hilarious, AND has an amazing heartwarming core. I love its themes surrounding one's ability to change and better themselves. Also: Kronk. The single funniest character in all of film history, hands down. I have no clue who introduced this movie to me, but God bless whoever it was.

Emily Mulcahy: *Porco Rosso*, dir. Hayao Miyazaki

I watched this movie about a year ago. My family has been trying to watch all of the Stu-

dio Ghibli movies. This one deals with guilt and how the way you see yourself affects how others see you. At the same time it's a beautiful movie with amazing characters.

Lara Pasternak: *Little Women* (2019), dir. Greta Gerwig

I watched this movie over two years ago with my mom. I love this movie because it depicts the time period of the mid to late 1800s beautifully and emphasizes the importance of family and work ethic.

Katie Pittner: *10 Things I Hate About You*, dir. Gil Junger

I was first introduced to this movie by my sister, Claire, a few years ago, and after only a few minutes I knew I would love it. With captivating performances from Heath Ledger, Julia Stiles, and Joseph Gordon-Levitt, it explores typical high school rom-com themes without being a typical movie itself.

Lauren Rutt: *Labyrinth*, dir. Jim Henson

My mom introduced this movie to me when I was around eight-years old, and I fell in love with it. I adored the whimsical nature of the film as well as the mixed media special effects. This movie always brings back nostalgic feelings for me.

Kora Simon: *Steel Magnolias*, dir. Herbert Ross

My mom first introduced me to *Steel Magnolias* when I was nine because it had always been her favorite movie. The film displays the pain of losing a loved one, but also shows determination and optimism during hardships. It also depicts the value of friendship and family.

John Youngdale: *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*, dir. Ben Stiller

I watched this movie with my aunt when it came out. I had to be about seven. It was the first movie I remember watching and enjoying it for its story and its artistic value. It follows Walter, played by Ben Stiller, a Time magazine employee, who has to travel all over the Arctic Ocean looking for a photo negative. Overall, it's an extremely beautiful film. I highly recommend it to anybody who wants to watch a movie with a high attention to cinematography, and a very sweet, wholesome story that might make you cry.

Lady Bears surprise, impress

By Karlee Lawrence

The Lady Bears basketball team finished their regular season third in district with a record of 8-3, 13-22 overall.

The Lady Bears started the non-district season with some challenging competitors and tough games but used experience to power through to district. Head coach Julie Walker said she thinks the first Hill Country game was the true turning point of the season. With impressive improvements and cheers from the fans in the stands the Lady Bears had an overall encouraging season.

The district tournament was hosted at Hill Country, and saw the team open against the Lady Knights and bring home a hard-earned 38-32 win. The ladies then faced off against rival Bourne Geneva in their second playoff game, bringing their season to an end after a tough loss. The team knew it would take strength but came up short to the talented team. While the Eagles were climbing the score, Brentwood was able to keep the fourth quarter, seeing the game through to its end.

The team certainly saw a vast difference between the beginning of their season and the end. Head coach Julie Walker stated that she is proud and thinks there was incredible improvement from start to finish.

"In all of my years of coaching this team expe-

rienced the most growth within a season I have ever witnessed," said Walker. "I'm proud of them for that and they should also have a strong sense of accomplishment through the growth that occurred."

With major differences to the athletics community now surrounding Walker, who is coaching for her first year at Brentwood, she stated that she feels the change is good and that she is proud of the accomplishments of the young team.

The Lady Bears are losing three key seniors at the conclusion of their season. These include Tynneson Allen, a major powerhouse for the team, Abbie Burcham, a experienced senior, and Carolyn Morgan, who unfortunately was out with an injury this season.

The Lady Bears district starting five consisted of sophomore Zaniah Williams, juniors Aubrey Acheson and Zariah Williams, and seniors Allen and Burcham.

Acheson returned for her third consecutive season as a varsity Lady Bear, being an anchor as the team's point. Acheson handled tough defense from opposing teams and proved herself as one of the top players in district.

Allen dominated underneath the basket supporting the team not just in boards but also being a threat offensively by scoring many baskets.

Sisters Zariah and Zaniah stepped up as a dynamic duo. Zaniah was able to use speed and athleticism to cut hard to the basket and be a threat on both the offensive and defensive sides, while Zariah shot spot up threes beside her.

Burcham had to recover from a tough wrist injury, but returned to the court with experience.

Walker says that besides this strong starting five, the younger or new-to-the-team players were also major assets to the Lady Bears.

"Many of our younger players who either hadn't played before or had limited varsity experience stepped up big at various points in the season, which bodes well for next year," said Walker.

The team was led by Acheson with 11.1 points per game and 4.8 assists. Allen averaged 10.6 in rebounds and had 7.4 points per game.



photo: BCS Yearbook

On defense Junior guard Aubrey Acheson led the varsity Lady Bears this year in points per game and assists.

Bat-and-ball sports start up

By Maddie Kirchoff, Jack Gonzalez

Both spring round-ball sports have officially begun their seasons, gaining experience and bringing in wins for Brentwood athletics.

All players on the Lady Bears softball team are finally filtered in from winter basketball and soccer. The girls currently sit at a record of 10-5 overall.

Head coach Rory Tyson has the goals to do well in district this season, make it to the playoffs, and win. She is excited to have returning starters and to see new freshmen play.

Junior McKenna Counts and freshman Jolie Shepard lead the Lady Bears as their only pitchers this season.

"I am very happy to be playing for Brentwood and I'm excited to grow as a player and with my team," said Shepard.

Tyson said she is excited to see how Shepard does on the mound. She is also excited to regain junior Keira Black, who is back on the field following an injury last season. The team has seen major growth this year with seven freshmen joining the varsity team.

"I'm excited to see how the freshmen learn and grow in their sport and excited to get this

season started," said Tyson.

The ladies recently won their Mar. 3 game against East Austin College Prep, as well as their first district game against TSD on Mar. 6. Their next home game is scheduled for Mar. 21 against Hill Country Christain School.

Shepard leads the team with a batting average of 0.600 and ERA of 4.13, followed closely by freshman Harper Counts with a batting average 0.571 and sister McKenna with an ERA of 6.67.

The Bears baseball team is nine games into their season, currently sitting at a 5-4 record overall, with only a few weeks until the start of district games. The Bears started off rockily with an 0-2 losing streak, but have gone 5-2 in their last seven games.

The Bears are looking stronger after playing a tough first few games of the season, and "will be ready for district," according to junior Jamie Nauman. Nauman plays second base varsity and holds the leading batting average for the team alongside juniors Giovanni Perez and Braden Darling.

The team recently won their home tournament, the fifth annual BCS Claws Up Baseball Classic, held Thursday, Feb. 23 through Saturday, Feb. 25. Their next home game is scheduled for Mar. 17 against Concordia.

Track team opens season

By Quinn Kirchoff

The Brentwood track teams have officially begun their season, running their first meet at St. Andrew's Episcopal School in Austin on Mar. 4, closely followed by their second at Vandegrift High School on Mar. 9.

"Coaching track is like putting together a puzzle," said Katie Smith, head coach of the Lady Bear's track team. "You have to look at everyone's talents and interests."

Although the ladies have had fairly sparse attendance throughout the offseason, with many athletes filtering in from recently-ended basketball and soccer seasons, the season is looking promising already. The team consists of many returning athletes, most of whom are strong junior runners.

"I think we will be led this year by our strong junior class," said Smith.

Smith, along with the rest of the athletes, hope to compete for a district championship and qualify runners for regionals and state, including all three relay teams.

"There are so many moving parts but it is fun to see it all come together," said Smith.

Smith is helped this year by assistant coach

and fourth-grade teacher Veronica Eke, who coaches sprints and relays.

Men's track has a new coach this year, recent BCS hire Kyle Tidwell. Tidwell shared that he is excited watch the team compete and come together as a team this year, and has visions of securing a state championship.

"I believe winning is the objective, however to watch the bonds and relationship form is a special thing to watch as well," said Tidwell.

The Bears have switched to a new practice schedule as well this year, completing strength training and conditioning before school and finishing general sprints and distance workouts in the afternoon by the dismissal bell.

Both Smith and Tidwell are benefitting from the help of several assistant field coaches this year. Long-time throwing coach Randy Yarbrough has returned to assist athletes and new associate athletic director Kyle Maxfield is coaching long jump and hurdles. Another new addition, Joe Vasek, is coaching triple and high jump.

The teams are scheduled to run their next full meet on Mar. 25 in Marble Falls.

Bears' varsity boys fall just short of state

By Karlee Lawrence

The Bears basketball team brought their season to a close with a record of 11-1 in



Ready to play Senior Levi Rutledge helped to lead the Brentwood Bears this year in points per game and assists.

district and 25-10 overall. The boys finished second in district and proceeded to the third round of playoffs, ending their season strong.

The team had a tough playoff game against the strong Houston competitor, St. Thomas. Although ranked close, St. Thomas played the better game. The Bears gave it their all, playing hard for the seniors on the court, but came short of the playoff victory.

"I am super proud of our season. We had the most wins that we've ever had at Brentwood, which amounts to back-to-back seasons of over 20 wins, so I am really proud of our team and where our program is going in the future," said head coach Dustin Karrer.

Brentwood placed second in district, putting them in a great position to

host district tournament and playoff games. Karrer said he believes that district is solid, having four teams that put up a fight for the Bears.

Though the district can be challenging, Karrer says that the boys are peaking at the right time, using their experiences to push them to the next level. The 4A district looked challenging, but the Bears were ready to endure.

"We have some great leaders that have helped us get to that next level," Karrer said.

He added that his five starters really made a difference to the team and their outcomes on the court.

Senior Evan Gruis is a true natural leader that also leads the team in scoring and grabbing important boards, while senior Levi Rutledge scores high in games while also assisting in important boards.

"Evan is a definite leader for our team," Karrer said. "Levi also plays well for our team, getting important points and grabbing necessary boards."

The other starters consist of senior Nicholas Makumi, senior Mason Emerson, and

sophomore Blake Petty. Makumi is essential under the basket; rebounding while also being a great passer.

While Emerson was out for a couple weeks with an injury, Karrer is pleased that he was able to get back on the court, proving himself an essential teammate during his senior year.

Petty, while only a sophomore, stepped up to support his team and averaged a double double.

"I'm sad the seniors are leaving, they were the core of our team and were great teammates on and off the court," said Petty.

Losing the seniors will be tough on the team, but with the culture the starting four created Brentwood can only succeed.

"While we might have fallen short of our ultimate goal, we learned to win together and play for a bigger purpose, not just basketball," Rutledge said.

The Bears' leading scorers were Gruis with 16.1 points per game and Rutledge with 15.5. Makumi averaged 9.5 rebounds per game and Rutledge 4.4 assists.

Boys' soccer ends strong season

By Karlee Lawrence

The Bears soccer team ended their season 8-1 in district and 11-4-1 overall. Though they ended the season on a tough playoff loss on Feb. 20, the Bears did very well in district. The Bears are expected to have a good season next year because of the extra experience that the young players have gained this year.

The Bears had a tough playoff matchup against Pantego Christian which ended in a close loss with a final score of 2-1. The season's final goal was scored by junior Ike Ruiz.

"The difference between last season's stats and this season's stats show that the hard work the players put in really paid off," said head coach Cash Miller.

This year the team really showed up, demonstrating that they had great chemistry and supported each other. Last year the Bears had less district wins than losses; this year the team exhibited their improvement and only lost one district game.

The Bears had several key players for the team. Senior Rodrigo Real played solid in mid-field alongside junior Renne Cooper. The boys were also supported by junior Landon Hejl and senior Michael Reich staying strong in the back

while also having one of the best keepers in the state, Andrew Davis. Ruiz and junior Ryder Shelton-Lamb were major striking forwards, proving themselves a tough tag team to stop. Freshman Jacob Valladares was a team staple, being a player the team could lean on to play multiple positions.

"Jacob is a complete and talented player," Cash said.

The Bears had an exciting win against Veritas this season, winning it all in the final three minutes. The team looks to this win as their most important and the game they showed up.

"We put in the work all game long to get the final result," Cash said. "We worked hard and

finished with a win against a very good opponent."

Cash said that going forward, he is excited about the experience and drive the team has gained this season.

Despite an unfortunate end to their season, the Bears have a season to look forward to and a great team to compete with.



Down the field Freshman Jacob Valladares proved himself to the team this year as a "complete and talented player."

Golf team tees off spring season

By Karlee Lawrence

The Brentwood golf team started practice Feb. 13 and played their first JV tournament on Feb 24. The JV team placed third overall and scored in the low 100s.

The Bears will have a men's varsity team and a men's JV team that is still being finalized, while also having two girls that will score separately, sophomores Karlee Lawrence and Julia Sabin.

So far there are five non-district tournaments scheduled, which will allow the young golfers to gain experience. The Bears have been practicing and preparing for tournaments. Practice consists of birdie balls and heading to the driving range.

New head coach Trey Stewart is excited for the spring season. Coming from 30 years in public education, he is happy to be in a small community. Stewart brings experience and fun to Brentwood golf. He is excited to see the golfers grow and enjoy playing this interesting sport.

"It's a big adjustment, switching from big schools to a small one but I am happy in my new environment," Stewart said.

The team is excited to grow, learn, and build chemistry on and off the course.

Editorial

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The existence of these vanity projects in countries known for their poverty and lack of natural resources calls to mind a scene from the film adaptation of Frank Herbert's Dune. Protagonist Paul Atreides, upon sight of a grove of date palms in his new home, the desert planet Arrakis, questions the caretaker of the trees, observing that they are not native to the planet.

"They can't survive without me," the caretaker tells him. "Each one of these drinks every day the equivalent of five men. Twenty trees. One hundred lives."

"Should we remove them?" asks Paul. "Save the water?"

"No, these are sacred," replies the caretaker. "Old dream."

This begs the question - what dream is Saudi Arabia chasing? Qatar? Cambodia? Egypt? A return to their golden ages, apparently. Certainly they have caught our attention with their dazzling cities of the future. But the shine does not last. No longer can we justify pyramids built on the backs of slaves.

The important difference between fictional Arrakis and the Middle East is that our deserts do not hold magical spices or riches beneath their depths. Our sand is simply sand. It can neither fund nor sustain such grandiose ambitions that royal leaders of the Middle East and Asia hold. Despite their best efforts.

Leeward wins spelling bee

By Max Fuentes

The annual spelling bee competition was Jan. 11 at Brentwood, and is available for first through eighth graders.

This year seventh-grader Hollis Leeward won first place, followed by Mark Sheth and Evan Berger.

Leeward advanced into the online citywide spelling bee, and is one of 48 kids in the region that gets to advance; no Brentwood student has progressed this far in over three years.



Hollis Leeward

photo: Dorothy Walters

"I am proud to represent Brentwood at the Regional Spelling Bee and I am proud to be a Brentwood Bear. I hope that by representing the school at the regional meet I am also able to show others my love of Christ and be an example of grace and perseverance to others," Leeward shared.

The regional is March 5, followed by the National Spelling bee.

"Out of all the public and private elementary and middle Schools that compete from the Austin area, only 48 students advanced to Regionals. Hollis will compete at Four Points Middle School on Sunday, March 5th. Congratulations and we are so proud!" said PTF spelling bee advisor Jane Humphrey.

New football coach

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him the coach he is today.

"I'm looking forward to building on the successes at Brentwood," said Maxfield.

Outside of coaching, Maxfield and his family attend Brentwood Church of Christ. His youngest children are also attending Brentwood, while his oldest is a senior in college.

"I am excited to take the foundation from the team last year and build on that to win games

out on the field," said Maxfield.

Overall, Coach Maxfield is looking forward to being a part of the athletic program and leading the football team to success in their upcoming season. Most importantly, he cherishes the opportunity to have a purpose in what we do, knowing what that purpose is, and representing Christ while doing it.

Soccer girls

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college as goalie. She has been enjoying her time as a coach and teacher and is incredibly proud of her girl's team.

"I think I've grown as a coach by just being someone who listens to what the players need, how I can help them, and also help them grow as people, not

only as soccer players. I feel like we've definitely grown a lot together this year, and these girls have made me a better coach overall," said Hinson.

Swim team competes at state

By Ashleigh Butler

The Brentwood swim team finished their season strong this year with all three team members advancing to the TAPPS state meet after swimming both the district and regional meets as a team.

At district, Gus Ebner placed first in the 100 freestyle and second in the 100 breast-

stroke, Reid Alexander placed first in the 200 freestyle, and Ashleigh Butler placed third in the 100 freestyle and fourth in the 100 backstroke. Overall the Bears placed fourth at district in total points, with the boys placing third overall.

The team went on to swim at regionals in San Antonio. Ebner won the 100 freestyle and placed third in the 50 yard freestyle, Alexander placed second in the 100 butterfly and third in the 500 freestyle, with Butler placing fifth in the 100 freestyle.

All three swimmers advanced to state with Ebner placing 9th in the 100 freestyle and 10th in the 50 freestyle, Alexander placing 7th in the 500 freestyle and 11th in the 100 butterfly, while Butler placed 12th in the 200 freestyle.

"I am proud to have swum for Brentwood with this team. I think we all did amazing this year and hope that in the coming years the team is just as strong," says Butler.



photo: Ivo Alexander

Finishing strong The BCS swim team poses in front of the Austin skyline following one of their meets.