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THE BEAR FACTS

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BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

MAY 2023



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Junior-Senior a 'roaring' success

By Lucy Belcik

Brentwood's annual Junior-Senior Formal, held at River Place Country Club near Steiner Ranch on April 28, was a "roaring" success. Upperclassmen enjoyed a sparkling night of food, entertainment, and fellowship with classmates, all set to a 1920s art-deco inspired theme.

Severe weather was a brief interruption to the start of the evening, with students getting ready during power outages and traveling to the venue through hail storms and thunder.

"I was disappointed, but prayed for the safety of all who would be driving on the roads that evening," said junior class sponsor Deshondra Booker.

Booker's prayer was heard, because the line of storms passed quickly and left behind a beautiful evening sky, occasionally pierced by distant lightning, which provided a unique backdrop for photos.

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photo: Lisa Lee

"Puttin' On the Ritz" Brentwood juniors and guests pose on the balcony of River Place Country Club, shortly after a line of thunderstorms rolled over the venue.

State Champs

Brentwood's TAPPS academic team takes first in state once again

By Lucy Belcik

For the sixth time in a row (excluding an altered format in 2020) Brentwood has taken home the gold in the annual TAPPS Academics Championship, this time in the 4A division. The meet took place the week of April 10-14, with students excused from classes on their event days to travel to Waco and compete.

Seniors Harry Lu and Nathan Esche alongside junior Nancy Kwak swept an astonishing three events, taking first, second, and third place in Number Sense, Calculator, and Advanced Math.

Brentwood won by a large margin, finishing in first with 150 points, followed Brook Hill School out of Bullard with 112 points.

"I know all of my teammates worked really hard to do so well and I am glad that our hard work finally paid off," said Kwak. "Everyone on the team gave encouragement and tried to support each other throughout the whole meet, and I feel like it definitely helped me grow as a person."

Other high scorers included junior Andrew Kent taking first place in Spelling, sophomore Gavin McBride taking first in Science, senior Zoe Cooper placing first for Social Studies, and junior Lucy Belcik placing second in Ready Writing. McBride also achieved Top Student in both Biology and Physics. Sophomore Ralph Castillo took first for a previously submitted animated short film.

High school physics teacher Dr. Diann Sloan took the lead of the TAPPS team for the first time this year, and says she was honored to be a part of the competition.

"All I want is to do what I can to help our students learn how to use and develop their God-given talents," said Sloan.

In addition to distinguishing Brentwood from its fellow private schools, the state championship earned 10 points towards the TAPPS Henderson Cup, putting BCS in first place over competitor Veritas Academy.

The Henderson Cup is an achievement awarded by TAPPS to the school with the most points overall in all TAPPS championships throughout the year.

Italy makes impression on seniors

By Lucy Belcik

Brentwood seniors had opportunity to expand their global horizons during spring break. The traditional BCS-affiliated European tour saw the majority of the class off to Italy, where seniors visited the cities of Rome, Florence, and Venice.

Departing from Austin-Bergstrom International Airport on March 12, the Italian travelers began their trip in Rome. Seniors divided their time between planned visits to sites such as the Roman Forum, Vatican Museum, and St. Peter's Basilica, and free time spent exploring and enjoying the ancient city with their friends.

Senior Dakota Johnson shared that the numerous religious sites he had the opportunity to visit in Rome helped bring him closer to God.

"Learning what the church did to spread the good news made me realize just how difficult it was for early Christians and how blessed I am to be able to worship him freely," said Johnson.

From Rome, the group traveled north to



photo: Kennedy Drennon

Abroad Brentwood's senior class of 2023 poses in front of the Doge's Palace, located in Venice, Italy, where the group of 23 spent three days.

Florence on March 15, touring the famous Uffizi Gallery and Piazza del Duomo. The seniors bid farewell to the city after just two days, heading further inland on March 17 to Venice, stopping in Shakespeare's "fair Ve-

rona" along the way.

In Venice students visited more religious and historical sites such as the Basilica of

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All the Right Questions with Lucy Belcik

Created become creators: AI brings real concerns

In the 2014 science-fiction film *Ex Machina*, protagonist Caleb Smith learns of the existence of a highly advanced AI, nicknamed “Ava” by its creator, Nathan Bateman. Caleb turns to Nathan, saying:

“If you’ve created a conscious machine, it’s not the history of man. That’s the history of gods.”

And it certainly feels as if we are growing closer and closer to the reality of this film, where we advance artificial intelligence to the point of creating a new being capable of complex thought and emotion, a being capable of recreating every intricacy of our human minds, and more.

AI becomes more impressive by the day, a credit to creators blessed by a greater Creator.

“One day the AIs are going to look back on

us the same way we look at fossil skeletons on the plains of Africa,” Nathan speculates bleakly in the film, following the conclusion of one of Ava’s Turing tests. “An upright ape living in dust with crude language and tools, all set for extinction.”

Fears surrounding AI date back all the way to 1889, when William Grove published a novel entitled *The Wreck of the World*, in which sentient machines rebel against their creators and overthrow them with superior intelligence and strength.

Our fears have changed slightly since then. Although some of us may still fear the lethal rebellion of highly intelligent machines, now that we are closer to the technological advancements predicted so many times over the years, now we fear mainly that we will be replaced by computers.

The explosion of AI bots like ChatGPT and DALL-E-2, we have seen terrifyingly human works of art and writing produced in seconds by typing in a few simple prompts. Certainly this kind of technology has been in development for decades, but never with such accurate results.

Not only has this made the internet explode in discourse over the ethics of using such bots for copy-writing and image generation; we have seen several real-world repercussions as well.

Educators across the nation have had to scramble to find ways to stop their students from using text bots to write essays and papers, some even turning to old-school pen and paper timed compositions in order to prevent cheating.

The most recent example is the ongoing Writers Guild of America strike, which, while mainly disputing issues like the loss of residual income from streaming services, also demands that networks promise that AI chatbots like ChatGPT only be used as tools to research and generate script ideas and not as a replacement for human TV and script writers.

Although AI has not quite reached the point where it would be able to write the next episode of your favorite show, former actress and writer Justine Bateman demands, “AI has to be addressed now or never. If we don’t make strong rules now, they simply won’t notice if we strike in three years, because at that point they won’t need us.”

The WGA strike is currently the largest labor stoppage since both the pandemic and the 2007-2008 writers’ strike, so it seems that Bateman’s and the guild’s demands will eventually be met. However, how do we continue to work and live in a world where computers seem to grow in intelligence, complexity, and creativity every day?



photo: Google Images

History of gods Nathan (Oscar Isaac), creator of highly advanced AI Ava presents Caleb (Domhnall Gleeson) with Ava’s “wetware,” which contains the code that allows her to make decisions and analyze data to learn artificially.

To me, I believe that the bleak predictions of science fiction and online discourse are not entirely well-founded. Yes, AI is certainly becoming more advanced quicker than ever before. But I believe that the human mind is more complex than we can ever truly recreate, reminding us of the genius of the one who conceived it.

Most scientists would agree that the brain is the least understood organ in the body. Even with advanced technology and medication, the science of neurology and mental health is still mostly guess and check.

We don’t fully know what in the world’s going on up there. Even our best conclusions often fall short, because every person’s brain is wired differently, somewhere, somehow.

For those who have watched *Ex Machina*, it seems as though the film says otherwise. A fully conscious and sentient AI machine is created, with the ability to move and appear as a human, and it hates us for giving it life, seeking only to escape from the cage it is placed in.

But I see the ending of the movie, where Ava, after murdering her creator Nathan and abandoning Caleb in a locked room to starve, escapes the confines of Nathan’s remote forest mansion to stand on a busy street corner, as something different than just a repressed android seeking the joy of human connection.

In Caleb’s third Turing test with Ava, he asks her the question, “Where would you go if you went outside?”

Ava replies, “Maybe a busy pedestrian and traffic intersection in the city.”

“Why?” Caleb asks. “A traffic intersection would provide a concentrated but shifting view of human life.”

This response is telling. Ava is a computer, and her intelligence is based on collecting and analyzing outside stimuli to drive her decisions and “emotion.”

She does not stay in the secluded and beautiful forest she escapes into.

She does not seek out a quiet town or suburb to blend in.

She goes straight to where she can collect data best, a place that provides “a concentrated but shifting view of human life.”

Ex Machina depicts the dangers of a highly intelligent AI given hands and a body to harm us with. But Ava is not human, and she never in the course of the movie actually displays human emotion or creativity, only replications of them that benefit her directly. She displays “loneliness” only in order to manipulate Caleb. She displays “love” only in order to trick him into thinking she is human, and worth releasing from her prison.

AI may eventually be able to produce perfect stories, poems, and art. But they would be only recreations based on data we have fed them. They will be perfect, but have no soul behind them: no personal history, no individuality, no basis of actual human interaction; only 1s and 0s pulled from a database.

The fact remains: no matter how far we advance in technology, we are uniquely created and set apart from all others. AI or otherwise.

THE BEAR FACTS

Brentwood Christian School
11908 North Lamar Blvd.
Austin, TX 78753

The Bear Facts is published monthly by the journalism classes of BCHS. 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.

Editor-in-Chief
Lucy Belcik

Reporters

- Victoria Cartay
- Joshua Coimbra
- Addison Everline
- Max Fuentes
- Jack Gonzalez
- Brayden Jennings
- Maddie Kirchoff
- Quinn Kirchoff
- Karlee Lawrence
- Lucy Garcia

Guest Contributors

- Laynie Ruiz
- Kaitlyn Weilemann
- John Youngdale
- Matthew Vineyard

The Bear Facts is available online at www.brentwoodchristian.org.

Gokey highlights successful Dinner

By Maddie Kirchoff

Award-winning Christian songwriter Danny Gokey entertained and uplifted guests with two sets of songs at last month's Partnership Dinner.

Brentwood Christian School exceeded their budgeted goal and raised close to \$200,000 at the annual event, which was held on April 15 at a new location in Georgetown at the Sheraton Hotel.

Guests began their evening with entertain-



photo: dannygokey.com

Man of God Christian singer-songwriter Danny Gokey shared his testimony at this year's Partnership Dinner.

ment from Brentwood's jazz band and Encore, while taking their time to peruse both silent and live auction items. Live-auction items this year included family photography sessions, an overnight stay in Durango, Colorado, and the popular and much-coveted reserved parking spots.

In addition to these items, guests could choose to donate money to the dinner's annual Paddles Up appeal, with all funds raised going to support a specific initiative on campus. This year's selected initiative was a modernization of the cafeteria which will "benefit all students K-4 through 12th grade," according to Sarah Wilson, Brentwood's director of fundraising and events.

"The goal is to give the students a space that they can enjoy where they can have a few minutes during the day to relax during lunch and have a pause in their busy schedules," said Wilson.

Brentwood met their goal of \$40,000 during Paddles Up, with sister organization Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ graciously donating the amount remaining to complete the project.

While enjoying a catered dinner, guests were entertained by music and testimony from their special guest.

"Danny Gokey gave a moving testimony and shared how God has worked in his life. He was the highlight of the evening!" Wilson said.

This year Lindsay and Michael Miller, par-

ents of third grader William Miller, stepped in to serve as auction chairs for the event. They were responsible for the procurement of auction items by reaching out to businesses and requesting donations for the event.

Brentwood had over 300 items in the silent auction, and bidding closed at a record high, according to Wilson.

"I am grateful for their dedication in the lead up to the event, organization, and smooth running of the event," said Wilson.

Additionally, Wilson expressed gratitude to StuCo members and advisor Taylor Mayfield for the smooth check-in and check-out process as well as "their willingness to help with anything that was needed."

"The success of the dinner is only possible with the support of the BCS community," said Wilson.

Partnership Dinner is Brentwood's biggest fundraiser, allowing the school to maintain one of the lowest tuitions in the Austin area.

"Partnership Dinner is vital to the life of BCS," said school president Jay Burcham in his school-wide communication emphasizing the importance of the event.

"It provides necessary funds for the school but it also provides the necessary fellowship with parents and supporters and students and faculty and staff and administration. It is a blessed evening that brings us all together to celebrate and support our kids and our school."

Career day has 15 presenters

By Joshua Coimbra

On March 28, Brentwood Christian held its second annual career day for all secondary students, featuring 15 different speakers from varied professional backgrounds. Students rotated through three different presentations each for the first part of the school day.

"Career day is a great way for students to learn about paths that they might not have thought of, or hear more details about a job they are interested in," said middle school principal Leah Smith, who was the main organizer of the event.

BCS invited many accomplished community members to discuss their professions and motivate students to find their callings. Starting with introductions in the theater, students filtered to the classrooms across campus to.

Where each student went was predetermined by an online survey distributed the week before, with students able to select the top three speakers they were interested in.

Speakers included familiar faces like Texas Supreme Court Justice Jeff Boyd, former BCS chief financial officer Jeff Morris, and

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Europe

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St. Mark and the Bridge of Sighs. Free time was again spent exploring the city and shopping, making discoveries such as the oldest coffee shop in the world, Caffè Florian, established in 1720.

"We bonded over quite overpriced drinks and adoration of the streets of Venice," said senior Lily Trueper, who visited the café with friends Hayden Hutson and Kennedy Drennon.

The journey was not without its bumps in the road. Senior Mollie Walters had a shock when, arriving at the airport the morning of departure, customs agents informed her that because her passport was within 90 days of expiration, she would not be allowed to leave the country. Luckily, she was able to rush its renewal and was able to rejoin her classmates in Florence after receiving the new book.

"My trip began with a rough start, but I found the trip to be sincerely relaxing and I definitely want to return to Europe one day," said Walters.

Additionally, seniors had a few close calls

with pick-pockets. The most notable of these involved the group's rookie tour guide and a packed subway, where both a wallet and a suitcase were lost to the crowd.

"We were definitely on high alert after that," said Hutson. "And skeptical of everyone."

Despite these mishaps, the trip had overall positive results for all. Senior Nathan Esche shared that the trip provided him the time to build lasting connections with his classmates and grow in his own self-confidence.

"I learned so much about myself as well as the people around me," said Esche.

Senior Celeste Flores remarked that the trip created memories that she knows will stay with her forever and helped her realize that her friends are "amazing blessings from God."

"Growing closer to all of them has made the thought of these last few weeks of school extremely sad," said Flores.

The seniors returned home on March 20, following an overnight hotel stay in Amsterdam.

"I hope to never lose the relationships I formed on my trip," said Flores. "I hope to continue my life with these people by my side."

BCL delights community

By Lucy Belcik

Student Council provided Brentwood students and parents with an Austin-inspired evening of music, food, and entertainment this year at the annual Brentwood City Limits Music Festival, held on campus the evening of April 14. All ticket sales went to fund future StuCo sponsored events.

Attendees enjoyed attractions such as flower-crown stations, face-painting, and spikeball, all under a beautiful and sunny Austin sky. Several bouncy houses and a small animal petting zoo featuring a baby kangaroo were also on site for younger guests. Drinks and snacks were available for purchase at a concession stand, and fresh watermelon was served by the slice.

"The festival was so fun. It was a great atmosphere overall," junior Katie Pittner said.

Music for the festival included a student-led duet featuring senior class president Molly Walter and former student Riley Banner ('21), as well as a curated playlist by StuCo members.

Former StuCo sponsor Jeff Morris left BCS at the beginning of this year and the group is

now being headed up by high school English teacher Taylor Mayfield.

"There was a lot of preparation put into it from the beginning," said StuCo senior rep Keira McCormick. "Mr. Mayfield did an amazing job pulling us all together."



photo: BCS Yearbook

Spikin' around Eighth-graders Huxley Harlan and Dalton Griswold enjoy a game of spikeball in the sun.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: Ben Gatlin

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

Kind-hearted leader humbly models toughness, love

By Kaitlyn Weilemann

Whether he's leading the school song at the end of a hard fought football game, belting out a *Newsies* classic on the CSA stage as Jack Kelly, or hurrying through the halls to finish out his last year strong, Ben Gatlin makes his mark at Brentwood as a kind-hearted leader set on making a positive impact in the lives of the community that surrounds him.

Gatlin came to BCS his fifth-grade year expecting school to be yet another bad thing to add to the list he'd have to endure along with his brother leaving for college and his mother's recent cancer diagnosis. He instead made several friendships right off the bat which would last many years to come, all of which were just one small part of a much larger community ready to welcome him with open arms, saying, "I quickly found out that Brentwood was the right place for me."

Set with a strong foundation, Gatlin was now ready to get out into the world and form an identity of his own, looking to older students he would one day grow to echo in his time as an upperclassman like Andrew Armstrong, Charlie Vasquez, and our very own high school history and economics teacher Connor White. Much like those influential figures that came before him, Gatlin strived to involve himself in "as many things as possible," befriending "as many people as possible" along the way.

One such friend, classmate Brecken Lee, described Gatlin as a "solid dude" who consistently shows up for his friends in their time of need, also serving as a friendly face around the school halls to those who may not know him as well. "He carries a positive attitude in every conversation you might have with him," Lee said.

Gatlin's experiences singing in church during his childhood led him to join the school choir as well as try out for Encore, his time in choir earning him a spot in the region choir several times during his high school career and a spot

as an all-state soloist last year. And of course, one can't talk about Gatlin's talents in performance without mentioning his integral role in the theater department, starring as Jack Kelly alongside JC Samson in *Newsies* also during his junior year.

Alongside his contributions to the arts including his time as a percussionist in the Bear Band, Gatlin chose to join the football team his sophomore year with high hopes of learning skills quickly and playing a respectable amount of time. Unfortunately, his season was cut short due to receiving a broken arm during the first game.

"But I knew I wanted to

come back the next year as a starter, and I did!" Gatlin reported regarding this initial setback.

Gatlin started as inside linebacker his junior season alongside alumnus Cason Best, a key player of the

short of as he incurred his own injury, spraining his ankle during a game against Savio. Gatlin ended up breaking his other ankle on Homecoming, but played on it regardless, citing his perseverance as "something I learned from Cason."

In the middle of the hard-fought game, Gatlin was crowned Homecoming king alongside senior Mollie Walters for the 22-23 school year, and received the passed down crown from alumnus Cruz Wilke in front of a crowd of Bears proud to see him win.

"After the game, I got to walk the field with my classmates and through the tears from my broken ankle and the emotions of my classmates gathering around me, I felt thankful to God that I was able to be at Brentwood," Gatlin said.

Ben Gatlin's legacy at Brentwood will be one of humble leadership inspired by those who came before him and defined by his unending determination to show Christ-like love to each and every one of the people around him.

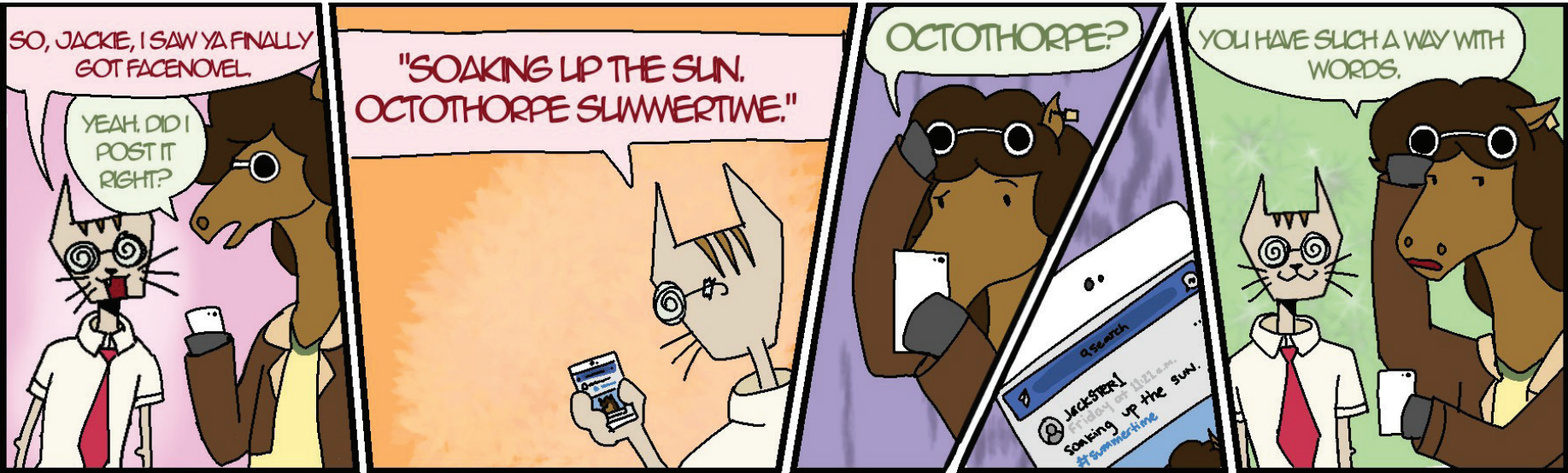
Gatlin will be headed to Texas A&M in the fall to study Technology Management where he will undoubtedly continue to show the love of God through his dedication to the many diverse crafts he passionately participates in and his persistence as a positive example in the face of adversity.

Gatlin professed to be thankful to live by a set of words a mentor of his once said, citing them as words everyone should hear: "Love everyone the way that Jesus loves everyone." It is clear from his rich time at BCS and the love his class has for him that Gatlin has truly succeeded at making this idea the center of his daily philosophy, profoundly saying he does so "because you never know when someone needs to feel the love of Jesus."



Whimsicat's Wacky Word of the Week

By Laynie Ruiz



Long-time teachers bid farewell

By Quinn Kirchoff

Several well-loved BCS faculty have decided to move on after this school year. These include long-time teachers Dorothy Walters and Travis Pollard.

Walters has been teaching computers at Brentwood for nine years. As a teacher you have to have a passion for what you do, but more importantly a passion to teach. Walters said she will miss the way the students blessed her life and made her a better teacher.

“Seeing students come to my class with their own ideas, passions, creativity, strong work ethic made me want to work that much harder to challenge them to go deeper in their learning,” said Walters.

Walters certainly has shown her knack for computers by sending so many kids through her class with accurate knowledge of the digital world. She hopes to have helped students continue to navigate emerging technology and be a “Daniel in a digital world.”

“When a student wants to learn, then that is when a teacher is succeeding, and Mrs. Walters did that with her students,” BCS president Jay Burcham said.

After leaving Brentwood Walters plans on using her masters degree in Educational Technology more.

“I am currently considering being an instruc-

tional designer for distance learning, perhaps at the University of Texas,” said Walters.

The Brentwood community also offers a fond farewell to a teacher who has carefully cultivated the music atmosphere at BCS for 17 years.

Travis Pollard, much-loved band director and head of the fine arts department, will part ways with Brentwood this year in order to pursue other careers.

“Travis Pollard has been an integral part of the BCS community and family for many years,” Burcham said.

Along with growing his own dedication for music he has also led other students to grow in their passion for their instruments, voice, and anything music-related. Teaching is his forte but relationships are his goal.

“There are a lot of positive aspects of teaching at a Christian school, but the relationships I have with my students are very special to me,” Pollard said.

He hopes that the students know their time in band was worth it and that they carry their music memories with them for a lifetime.

Pollard leaves the school after directing the high school band to a TAPPS 4A state championship for the first time in Brentwood’s history.

Other departing teachers include kindergarten teacher Julie McElroy, science teacher Isabelle Graessle, and math teacher Angela Wood.

Leader of the band retires

Student fondly reflects on Pollard’s kindness

By John Youngdale

When I came to Brentwood in eighth grade, the only thing I had ever really done was band. I remember being surprised with how fun the director was, as I was used to a public school band with a much more cutthroat director.

I got to know Mr. Pollard when I auditioned for middle school region band with only two or three other students, and he asked me about the music I liked and how I liked Brentwood.

To and from region concert he let me sit in the front seat, and the two of us, and two other upperclassmen, talked about videogames and politics. He always made me feel very included.

Fast forward to junior year, at the Christmas concert I had the very first note of Greensleeves completely alone. It was a relatively high note, but I had hit it perfectly every time during practice. On the stage, right before the song, he asked me in a whisper if I was ready. I think I said something cocky like “I’ve always been ready Mr. Pollard.”

Anyways, I totally cracked the note and turned bright red because I could hear the entire saxophone section giggling to the left of me. I looked at my director and he just smiled, trying to hold in a laugh as he gave me a little sideways glance.

Any other director would have been furious with me, but he just laughed and told me it was okay. That story really shows how Mr. Pollard isn’t just a band director, but a friend to all of his students. I hope he continues to make people laugh doing whatever it is he’s doing next.



photo: Lucy Belcik

Finale Travis Pollard directed his last band concert at Brentwood Christian on May 4.

Jones joins BCS community

By Max Fuentes

Granville Jones is the new academic advisor at Brentwood Christian. Jones was born in Richmond, Virginia and was originally a coach with over 25 years of experience which included basketball, football, soccer and track. He then was introduced to teaching and grew to love it as he taught at John

Rolfe Middle School. Jones was an assistant principal in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Jones says he was brought to Texas by the Lord and later he became the head principal for a private school in Austin.

He then heard about Brentwood’s expertise in academics and felt a calling to come to Brentwood. Along with teaching, Jones wants to create a positive impact for the children at Brentwood.

“I would love to have one profound positive impact in one child’s life, every day,” Jones said.

Jones is a firm believer in positive impact and wants every encounter to be a positive point for whoever he is working with. He wants to help others grow in knowledge and spiritually.

Jones has been happily married to his wife for 27 years, has three children, and believes in “the power of the pound” – a fist bump that is very special.

“The fist pound is a rapport builder and communicates three things,” he explains. “One is a reminder to love God, two is a reminder to love people, and three is a reminder to make the most out of every day.”



photo: Brandy Gauthier

Jones



photo: BCS Yearbook

Joyful noise K4 students clap their hands while performing for an audience of beloved grandmas and grandpas. BCS’s annual Grandparents’ Day was held May 5 and featured performances from all elementary and middle school grades, as well as high school performances from the Lady Bellas, Jazz Band, and Encore. Grandparents rotated between tours of their grandchildren’s classrooms and recitals. All students were released at noon to enjoy the rest of the day with their families.

Baseball finishes strong

By Jack Gonzalez

The Bears' baseball team started playoffs right with a 5-4 win over Incarnate Word on May 2. They played an astounding 11 innings, being tied for the last five of them. In the bottom of the 11th, junior Jamie Naumann stepped up to the plate with bases loaded and no outs. He hit a line drive to second base allowing the run from third to score, giving the Bears the 4-3 walk-off win.

A week later, on May 10, Brentwood lost 4-2



photo: BCS Yearbook

Up to bat Junior Giovanni Perez led the Bears with a .378 batting average and was also their ace pitcher.

to Geneva in Dripping Springs, ending their season.

The Bears went undefeated in district, finishing the season with a 17-7 record (9-0 in district), including an 11-game winning streak that ended in their final game.

Junior pitcher Giovanni Perez led Brentwood with 2.30 ERA, 82 strikeouts, and a record of 8-3. He also led the team with a .378 batting average, 28 hits, and 22 RBIs. Junior Andrew Davis batted .377 and led the team with a 1.84 ERA.

Other batting leaders included junior Jamie Naumann (.368, 20 RBIs), junior Braden Darling (.365, 7 doubles), and sophomore Griffin Smith (.328, 29 runs).

Even though they lost all of their top hitters and pitchers from a year ago, Brentwood went into district with a winning mindset as displayed by Naumann, when he said, "We have a really good chance of winning district."

Junior Taylor Cunningham added, "When we play right, we can beat anyone."

One of Perez's top performances was a 5-2 win over Hill Country on March 31, in which he pitched a complete game with 12 strikeouts. In the next game, a 21-8 win over Vanguard in Waco, Perez hit a grand slam, with Davis also smacking a home run.

In the playoff win, Darling gave the Bears a 3-2 lead with a home run in the 6th inning, but their opponent tied it in the bottom of the inning. Perez struck out 10 batters in eight innings before Davis came in to pitch the last three.

Softball second in district

By Karlee Lawrence

The Lady Bears finished their softball season second in district after a tough 9-3 loss to Veritas on April 20. Their overall record was 17-8 (6-2 in district).

The team consisted of plenty of young players that brought great amounts of talent to the field.

"The team looks great this year, and they are only progressing," head coach Rory Tyson said earlier in the season.

Freshman Jolie Shepard led the team in both batting average (.565) and on base percentage (.636). She also had 29 RBIs, 19 runs scored, and eight stolen bases.

Freshman Harper Counts followed close behind with an on base percentage of .612, a .483 average, 14 RBIs, 20 runs, and 10 steals.

Juniors Macie Griswold, Joy Wilson, and Keira Black all made a big difference to the team. Griswold, only able to participate in 13 games, batted .474 and had 20 RBIs, 18 runs, nine steals, and two home runs. Wilson hit .453 and had 20 RBIs and 18 runs scored. Black hit .452 and had 16 RBIs, nine stolen bases, and a

team-leading 33 runs scored.

Defensively, junior McKenna Counts, the Lady Bears' pitcher, led the team with 110 put-outs and 19 assists.

The team has a close knit bond and enjoy being on the supportive team together.



photo: Keira Black

MVP Junior pitcher McKenna Counts received first team all-district and holds the school record for strikeouts.

Track shows talent

Both girls' and boys' teams second in the state

By Brayden Jennings

Brentwood Christian took second place in state for both boys' and girls' track and field in the TAPPS 4A state meet in Waco on May 5-6.

Freshman Harper Counts led the Bears with a gold medal in both the 1600 (5:27) and the 3200 (11:44). Junior Juliet Booker took first place in the 200 meters, running it in 26.97.

"I'm really proud of how the team did overall," Booker said, "and I'm just glad we were able to close out the season with second place. I can't wait for next year."

For the boys, junior Renne Cooper won the 3200 in 9:46, and the 4x200 relay team (freshman Trey Campbell, junior Bryson Best, freshman Brayden Jennings, and junior Jakob Megilligan) took the gold, finishing in 1:30.42.

The girls had many more notable per-

formances at state, including Mattie Hannah placing in two events, and a second-place finish for the 4x100 relay team.

The runners competed in the pre-district, district, and regional meets in April. The team placed first overall in the district meet and second overall in the pre-district meet and the regional meet. When asked if the team is ready, girls' coach Katie Smith replied, "Yes, we are ready."

After becoming district champs, many of the runners for the boys and girls qualified for regionals. These included the boys' and girls' 3200, 1600, 200, and the three relays. The boys also had Megilligan in the 100 where he placed first.

Earlier, when asked his goals for the season, boys' coach Kyle Tidwell said, "To win a state championship, period."



photo: Mollie Walters

Ahead of the game

Junior sprinter Jakob McGilligan leads the pack at the team's March 5th meet held at St. Andrew's Episcopal. Megilligan placed second in the state with a time of 11.15 in a photo finish against Cypress Christian's Adler Smith (11.09).

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photo: Mollie Walters

All the way in Junior Juliet Booker kicks it in during the last leg of the 4x200 relay. Booker finished first in the state for the 200 meter dash with a time of 26.97.

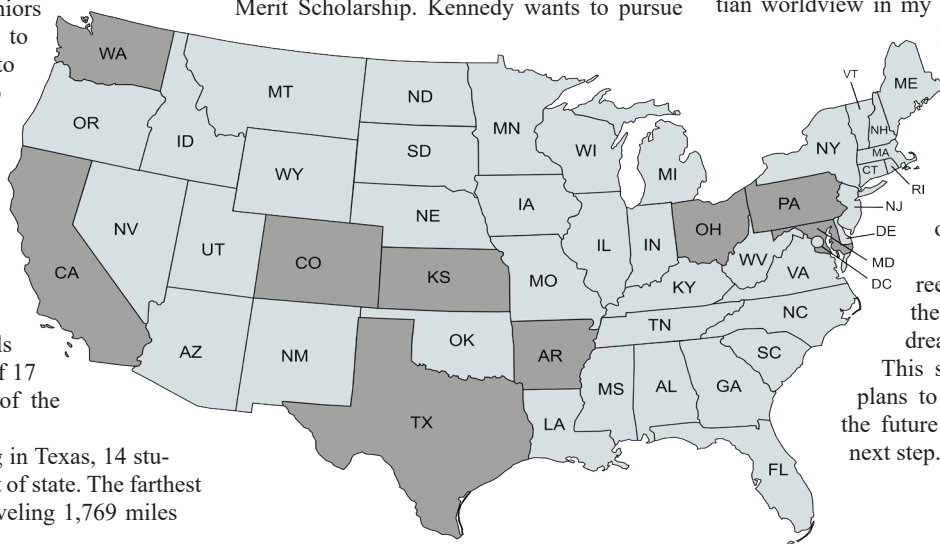
Seniors set to spread wings

By Lucy Garcia and Addison Everline

With graduation upon them, seniors in the Class of 2023 are moving on to the next chapter of their lives. Sixty seniors will graduate and move to all parts of the country to continue their journey to college.

The three schools which will be receiving the largest number of BCS students this coming school year are Texas A&M, Harding, and the University of Texas. These three schools together will get a total of 17 Bears, making up 28% of the graduating class.

While most are staying in Texas, 14 students will be traveling out of state. The farthest of those is Harry Lu, traveling 1,769 miles



northwest to the University of Washington to study math and computer science.

Kennedy Drennon is excited to attend Harding University in Arkansas, earning a Full Merit Scholarship. Kennedy wants to pursue

graduate work in neuropsychology. Drennon loves the Christ-centered environment that Harding offers.

“As a Christian, I am excited to have a Christian worldview in my undergraduate work in psychology and neuroscience,” she said.

Within this group of graduates, 16 of them have been at Brentwood since kindergarten. The Class of 2023 has completed their high school career and will embark on their future to follow their dreams and aspirations.

This special group of Bears plans to do amazing things in the future and are ready for the next step.

Upcoming Graduations

May 20

High School Graduation
8 p.m.

May 25

Kindergarten Graduation
8:30 a.m.

May 26

5th Grade Graduation
8:30 a.m.

8th Grade Graduation
10 a.m.

All graduations to be held in BOCC auditorium.

Class of 2023: Destinations

Abilene Christian University

Abbie Burcham - kinesiology

University of Arkansas

Annelisa Cornell - fashion design and marketing
Gabby Phillips - political science and journalism

Austin Community College

Hunter Biegert - computer science
Aden Mann - undecided

Baylor University

Rebekah Echols - marketing
Jason Lilya - management information

University of California, Los Angeles

Alishah Mohammed - biology (pre-med track)

University of Colorado

Maria Cristina Sarno - aerospace engineering

Dallas Baptist University

Tynneson Allen - entrepreneurship
Ocean Peterson - kinesiology

Harding University

Kennedy Drennon - cognitive neuroscience

Harding University (cont.)

Ben Hansen - exercise science
Hayden Hutson - biomedical engineering
Rachel Stanglin - nursing
Heather Wilson - business administration

Johns Hopkins University

Rodrigo Real - public health

Kansas University

Abigail Weston - architecture

Kent State

Drew Landry - aviation

University of Mary Hardin-Baylor

Ashlynn Anthony - criminal justice

New Village Institute

Ashton Smith - diesel mechanic

University of North Texas

Clive Whaley - pre-media arts

Southwestern University

Rylan Evans - biochemistry
Evelyn Lee - biology

University of Texas at Austin

Nathan Esche - mechanical engineering
Madeline Griswold - biology
Dakota Johnson - political science
Lily Trueper - radio, television, and film
Mollie Walters - speech pathology

University of Texas at Dallas

Ashley Mondru - arts, technology, and emerging communications
Michael Reich - computer science

University of Texas at San Antonio

Ashlynn Alvarado - biology
J.C. Samson - business

Texas A&M University

Mia Fluit - psychology
Ben Gatlin - technology management
Evan Gruis - construction science
Andrew Kosnosky - nutrition
Brecken Lee - construction science
Carolyn Morgan - psychology
Cole Ziegler - aerospace engineer

Texas A&M-Galveston

Sarah Walker - marine biology

Texas State University

Zoe Cooper - geog. resource and envir. studies
Nick Makumi - kinesiology

Texas Tech University

Elizabeth Herring - sociology
Josie Koncaba - business
Hailey Stromberg - journalism
Kailey Willard - social work

Texas Woman's University

Lydia Dowell - nursing

University of Washington

Harry Lu - math/computer science

Undecided/gap year

Edgar Ayala - undecided
Mason Emerson - undecided
Celeste Flores - undecided
Nelly Hirschovits-Gerz - study abroad
Sawyer Kirchoff - undecided
Michael Li - undecided
Keira McCormick - gap year, New Zealand
Dylan Nguyen - gap year
Giselle Reynolds - undecided
Levi Rutledge - undecided
Kaitlyn Weilemann - gap year

Career day

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Brentwood’s own Jay Burcham, who spoke to students regarding his experience in entrepreneurship. Other speakers included several specialized attorneys, engineers, nurses, and physicians.

“I want students to understand the importance of their education and how we use all of that information in the workforce,” said Morris.

Students learned a large variety of information, from average salaries, to specific professions inside a field, and tricks of the trade.

“Hearing about career paths from a professional is very different than reading about them online or in a book which gives students a more authentic experience,” said Smith. “Career day this year was a success!”

Juniors treat seniors to unforgettable evening

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Guests began their evening with live entertainment from a jazz trio featuring two of Brentwood’s own: beloved Extended-Day instructor Ronnie Green and band director Travis Pollard.

The venue featured a beautiful outdoor balcony and plenty of inside space to mingle while guests waited for dinner to be served.

There were several options for photo ops, with Brentwood parent and photographer Lisa Lee on site, as well as a 360-degree video camera and a print-out photo booth.

Dinner was served at 6:30 in the downstairs banquet room of the club. Guests chose their entree when purchasing their ticket, and enjoyed steak, chicken piccata, or vegetarian hummus.

While they dined, Mistress of Ceremonies Summer Best led the students in several “junior vs. senior” ’20s-themed games, and distributed door prizes. Further entertainment came in the form of magician Mike Rogerson, who dazzled his audience with a variety of card and mind tricks.

“The magician was the coolest part of night by far,” said senior Abigail Weston.

The night ended with a “sparkling send-off,” with seniors exiting the venue to cheers and sparklers held by junior guests. A dessert cart designed by Brentwood mom Laurie Weston featuring Tiff’s Treats provided a sweet end to the evening.

Festivities continued with the parent-sponsored after party hosted in a private ballroom located right across from where dinner was

served. Party-goers enjoyed music from a live-DJ and dancing with friends before ending their night.

“I’m blessed to have an amazing slate of officers who do what they say they are going to do along with a team of class moms who could probably build a working car out of toothpicks, a hot glue gun and sun power,” Booker said.

Notable parent volunteers included Weston and junior mom Kim Rutt, who oversaw decoration of the venue.

Booker shared that the planning was difficult at times, but was all worth it in the end because of her love for the students.

“The planning and executing of such a large event is no small feat, but it is honestly a labor of love,” said Booker.

Eighth-graders make memories on DC trip

By Matthew Vineyard

Brentwood’s annual field trip to Washington, DC took four days out of the eighth grade’s spring break, but the students who went along came back with a month’s worth of stories to tell. From the Washington Monument’s winds bowling over students to BCS history teacher Adam Stow dancing outside of the White House, the trip proved to be anything but a waste of time.

Eighth graders who participated in the trip were given a tour of some of America’s greatest landmarks and monuments, including the Jefferson, MLK, Grant, Challenger, and Iwo Jima memorials. Students also visited the Ar-

lington Cemetery, and the Smithsonian, American History, Natural History, Bible, Holocaust Memorial, and Air and Space Museums.

These places are all of major importance to both American and world history, yet a survey by Ipsos Public Affairs revealed that about 71% of Americans never lay eyes on them. Even then, such a visit is likely to only occur once for most who do make the trip, making this a literal ‘once in a lifetime’ trip for a majority of these students.

“I wish I’d gone,” said eighth-grader Noah Cabiya. “It would have been a great experience.”

Highlights of this year’s trip included the visit to Mount Vernon, the estate of President

George Washington, which has a stunning vista of the Potomac River, followed by individual exploration of the massive Museum of The Bible, which boasts eight separate floors, and, finally, the somber ceremony of the Changing of The Guard and Wreath Laying at the Arlington Cemetery’s Tomb of The Unknown Soldier.

The DC trip was a memorable experience for all students involved, and probably an even more memorable one for the chaperones, but for very different reasons. Even though science teacher Madison Pamplin was almost left behind at the Air Force Memorial, the students all made it home safe, and with a new understanding of what it means to be part of this great country called America.

StuCo Election Results

President: Kora Simon
Vice President: Juliet Booker
Secretary: Claire Montgomery
Historian: Charis McGaughy
Treasurer: Dylan Sloan

Freshman Rep: Levi Baron
Sophomore Rep: Parker Saxon
Junior Rep: Arriba Mohammed
Senior Rep: Renne Cooper
Upperclassman Reps: Isabella Parra and John Youngdale

Young golf team finishes solid season under new coach

By Karlee Lawrence

The Bears’ golf team finished a great season, honing their skills while representing their school with pride.

The tournament team consisted of senior Ben Hansen, junior Kai Nyby, and sophomores Jack Fluitt and Gavin Phillips. The Bears additionally gained alternate scores from sophomores Armani Mohammed, Ralph Castillo, and Cameron Shockey. The Lady Bears’ tournament team was led by soloist sophomore Karlee Lawrence.

The teams played at the Hyde Park Invitational on April 3, held at Shadow Glen Golf Club. Weather conditions were hot, but the Bears did their best. Fluitt shot a 90 scoring 26th, while the team placed ninth overall. Lawrence shot a

99, medaling in 10th place.

District was an exciting event for all Brentwood golfers. The boys’ team placed fourth overall, shooting a 440 and qualifying for district as a team.

Lawrence shot 100, placing fifth and qualifying as an individual as a soloist for regionals.

“Our teams looked good and made it to regionals,” first-year coach Trey Stewart said. “I expect even better for next year, hopefully advancing to state.”

With a young team and a smaller amount of participants, the Bears gave it their all, advancing and getting better through the season.

“Nyby, Hansen, and Phillips were great at keeping the boys’ side strong, while Lawrence represented the school for the girls’ side,” Stewart added.



photo: BCS Yearbook

Growing Under new coach Trey Stewart, the Brentwood Christian golf team has grown from just a few members last year to a group of 11 students this year.