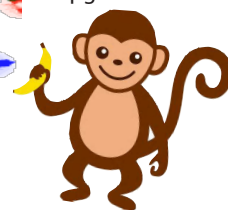




# BEAR FACTS



VOL. 28 NO. 3

BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

DECEMBER 2015

## 'Tis the season at BCS

By Mary Womack

It is truly the most wonderful time of the year at Brentwood Christian, with cherished traditions from the Christmas pageant to donning tacky sweaters. Teachers and students alike are now eager to conclude the semester and spread the Christmas cheer beyond the campus.

“Christmas at Brentwood gets exciting energy in the air and gets us out of routine,” secondary librarian Danielle McGhee said. “I like the joyful energy and spirit at this time.”

With all of this Christmas spirit filling the hallways, Brentwood has conducted numerous events to spread the joy even more. These events include long-standing traditions like the elementary Christmas pageant, Breakfast with Santa, Angel Tree, and the NHS Rosedale trip, as well as new features like Winter Schminter and the Don Irwin Christmas concert.

According to sixth-grade teacher Becky Stewart, the elementary Christmas pageant has been a cherished tradition at Brentwood for 52 years. As always, the pageant takes place on the final Thursday before the holidays, at 7 p.m. in the church auditorium. Elementary

music teacher Amanda Stanglin is enjoying her first year as the director following many years in which the event was led by now-retired teacher Sondra Strietelmeier.

“I cannot wait to see the faces of my students as they sing, for their parents, the songs we have worked so hard on,” Stanglin said.

Another musical holiday event that took place at Brentwood was the Don Irwin Christmas concert. During the school day before his concert on the evening of Dec. 1 (see story, pg. 8), Irwin spoke to students of all ages about his life, and played a few songs.

One of the most treasured and exciting field trips in lower elementary is the first-grade field trip to Elgin Christmas Tree Farm. On Dec. 3 the first graders hiked through the farm to find the “perfect” Christmas tree, chop it down, and lug it back to their classrooms.

“Since it was the first time for us to use a bus for a field trip, the kids were really excited and sang Christmas songs the whole way there,” first-grade teacher Sylvia Burcham said.

Another heralded field trip is the fourth-grade Nutcracker ballet trip. On Dec. 9, students

see BCS, page 8

## STATE CHAMPS

By Joshua Sass

With four seniors owning scholarships to play college volleyball and a third straight state championship game appearance, players stated that “surely” the third time would be the charm.

It was.

The Lady Bears won the first ever athletic state championship for a BCS team on Nov.

14 in San Antonio. They are the TAPPS 3A volleyball champions.

“It’s an unreal feeling,” senior Blair Westerlund said. “It’s indescribable to finally do it. Out of all the teams that tried so hard, us bringing the first state championship to the school is such a huge honor.”

After losing in the state championship

see BCS, page 7



photo: Mark Merkord

**Dogpile!** The Lady Bears celebrate winning Brentwood Christian’s first athletic state title after a 3-0 sweep over Houston St. Thomas on Nov. 14 in San Antonio.

## First-ever fall Jog-a-fun a ‘jingling’ success

By Kaitlyn Baird

Jingle bells, cozy Christmas sweaters, and running shorts were common sights on Dec. 2 at Brentwood Christian’s first ever Jingle Bell Run.

School administrators had already decided Jog-a-fun would be held in the fall instead of the spring this year, and the annual fundraiser was scheduled for Nov. 5. But when bad weather pushed the event into December, the idea arose that Jog-a-fun should have a Christmas theme.

High school and middle school students ran in the annual “color-run,” but with a few changes. Middle school students joined them on what amounted to about a 2.6-mile run, instead of running a separate race like they did last year. Students also had the option of wearing Christmas attire during the run.

The course, which had to be adjusted during the week of the jog due to lingering mud on the

see ‘Jingle’, page 4



photo: Oriana Gonzalez

**Purple haze** Students run through a cloud of starch and food coloring during the Jingle Bell Run, aka Jog-a-fun, on Dec. 2. It turned out to be a beautiful day to run.

### Skylar Haws 1991-2015

BCS graduate Skylar Haws (2010) passed away in Nashville on Dec. 12, after battling cancer since April 2014.

Haws graduated from Vanderbilt University in 2014 with a degree in biomedical engineering and was accepted to medical school. He leaves behind a wife, Rachel.

At BCS, Haws was involved in Student Council, band, and debate, and was editor of The Bear Facts. He was known for his intelligence, his peaceful spirit, his generosity, and his commitment to serving God. His interest in community volunteer work and in missions continued to grow in college.

Haws faced his struggle with cancer, and eventually his impending death, as he faced any challenge: with optimism, humor, and an abiding faith.



**Read It And Weep:** Nick Bergeron

# Editor dishes out advice to fictitious inquirers

Since the last Bear Facts went to the presses, your editor-in-chief has busied himself fielding questions for his advice column. They ranged from heart-warming to repugnant, but he tried his best to dutifully respond to each one. This issue's questions were exclusively from fictitious Bear Facts readers, but living, breathing humans who are so inclined can send inquiries to [nicholas.bergeron@bcsbears.org](mailto:nicholas.bergeron@bcsbears.org), where they will neither be read nor replied to.

**Dear Nick,**

**I am in the forth grade. I got an eitey on my math test. I no the job market is very hard. Colleges and employers will look at my grade and then they will not like it and then they will higher kids who got better grades. I am sunk. I will not get into advanced classes and so then I won't get into a good college and so then I won't get a good job and I will die cold and hungry in poorness. Please advice.**

**Sinsereley,  
Failure**

Dear Failure,

It's true that our economy is experiencing a bit of a lull, but try to put it in perspective. The job market a hundred years ago was much less inviting: most people made a living shoveling manure in Oklahoma or operating sewing machines for fourteen hours a day, risking their fingers doing so. Five hundred years ago, you'd almost certainly have been struggling to

eke out enough potatoes to appease the lord (the lord, not the Lord) and not get cholera in the process. Chin up, little fella. Sure, it was probably easier to find work in the '90s, but there's still room for someone with determination, a good attitude, and bad grades to carve out his own piece of the pie. And besides, colleges only really scrutinize your upperclassman grades, and employers only care about where you went to college and to whom you offered free labor to "get your foot in the door." So cheer up, my young friend. It's not all over for you yet.

Study long, study wrong,  
Nick

**Dear Nick,**

**My girlfriend and I are going through a serious rough patch. For three nights in a row, she's texted me "I love you" without adding a "<3." Without that little heart at the end, her "I love you," came off as so bland and matter-of-fact that I can only assume she actually doesn't care for me anymore. She hasn't posted a single picture of me to her Snapchat story in four days and eight hours. What's more, she didn't even call me on our six weeks anniversary, 1½ months after my mom first dropped us off at The Domain. Is there any way I can save our relationship?**

**Sincerely,  
Spurned**

Dear Spurned,

First of all, congratulations on your six weeks anniversary! I've seen many couples fail to make it that far – it shows dedication not demonstrated by much of our generation. Secondly, I offer my sympathies. It's true that relationships become more difficult with time. I'm sure you experienced that when the honeymoon period of your first week – alack! how short it is – ended, exposing the jading reality of a serious relationship such as yours, bitter like the dregs at the bottom of a cup of Starbucks coffee.

I recommend persistence. Don't be dismayed, for as a storm gives way to clear skies and the irritating advertisements at the beginning of YouTube videos give way to the newest Drake song, your troubles too shall pass and give way to even greater joy. Think of the blissful times ahead of you, the selfies you'll post together on Instagram, and the incessant references to your relationship you'll be able to bring up around your friends (who are no doubt keenly interested in it. Why wouldn't they be?). The singles, cynical bunch they are, may seem to be having more fun, dancing with each other indiscriminately at the Junior/Senior after party (which is unofficial and not a function of Brentwood Christian School) and making sardonic comments about Valentine's Day cheesiness, but pay them no mind. Stay by your lady through thick and thin.

Love's laborer,  
Nick

**Dear Nick,**

**I write to you not in expectation that you can sufficiently answer my inquiry, but merely in anticipation of the amusement the reading of your response shall bring me. The dilemma I face is this: I have no more to learn from my instructors. Having read multitudinous articles regarding metaphysics, science, mathematics, and the humanities through the great intangible library called the Internet, I find that I am considerably more informed than my fellow pupils and (yea!) even my teachers. On the one occasion I deigned to relay this fact to my father, he merely smiled and remained tacet, for no doubt he failed to understand even that he failed to understand the voluminous wisdom I've acquired. Having completed the expository portion of my inquiry, I move to my ultimate query: How might I pass the remaining three years of my secondary education whilst avoiding the deep ennui sure to torment one of such great comprehension as myself? *Ad altiora tendo!* Doubtlessly even**

**you can grasp how one of my immense sagacity would find himself overcome with lassitude at spending three years engaged in the most elementary of trifles.**

**Rather insincerely,  
Too cool for school**

Dear Cool,

How difficult your position must be. Though I myself am not nearly on your apparent level of enlightenment, allow me overstep my standing and offer you some advice. I certainly recommend you don't do any more reading or study. If you do that, you may find that the certainty you have that you understand the world around you may fade; it may actually become more complicated if you look at it closer, so I advise against doing that. Since you already have a more than adequate knowledge of pretty much every discipline, there's naturally no point in exploring them any further. You may find that over time those around you grow smarter. I know it's startling, but entertain me. The authority figures and peers who now are so boneheaded may become much smarter if you give them time.

In prayer for your teachers and parents,  
Nick

## THE BEAR FACTS

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

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photo: Kristen Jang

**Holly jolly** Senior Sarah Arbuckle operates the cookie decoration booth while senior Areti Cami looks on. BCS NHS members visited Rosedale on Dec. 11 for their annual Christmas Sing-Along. The BCS band played jazz renditions of carols.

# Spring one-act to be ‘Little Women’

By Camille Sunshine

The Brentwood Christian theater department will perform a one-night Christmas special of *Little Women* as a one-act play on Tuesday, Jan. 12, at 7 p.m. The cast will take the play to the TCSIT one-act competition that weekend in Abilene.

*Little Women* tells the classic story of four young women – feminine Meg, boyish Jo, angelic Beth, and childish Amy – who come of age and grow closer together through life’s amusements, romances, joys, and tragedies.

The four “little women” will be played by senior Laura Doyle, juniors Hope Hutson and Camille Sunshine, and sophomore Lauren Weilemann. The play also stars seniors Hope Kronke as Aunt March, Andrew Armstrong as old Mr. Laurence, and Margelid Baez as Hannah; juniors Charlie Vazquez as Laurie and Kristyn Chambers as Marmee; sophomore Austin Biegert as John Brooke; and freshman Whit Allee as Father.

Louisa May Alcott wrote the original version of *Little Women* as a novel in the late 1860s. It was loosely based on her life, with Jo modeled after Alcott. It was made into seven movies, four TV series, several plays, an opera, a musical, and a ballet.

The one-act version, written by Marisha Chamberlain, had to cut many classic scenes, but still succeeded in capturing the gist of the

story in 40 minutes, the time maximum for TCSIT.

“It was sad to find out it was just a one-act,” Hutson said. “The last part of the story is when things really start to get better for the girls. They all really mature, and relationships between characters grow. For me it was sad that the audience couldn’t see Amy grow and become a more mature woman.”

Practice began in early November, after a long and harrowing audition process. Director Michelle Alexander intended to have auditions for two days, followed by callbacks, but one of the days was rained out, causing callbacks to be mixed in with regular auditions the following week. Afterward, there were two rounds of callbacks.

For both regular auditions and callbacks, Alexander gave groups of students sections of the play to work on, and then had them performed. As she had a character narrowed down, she would send all the students trying out for that part home. Some students stayed for a total of five hours of callbacks.

“Callbacks were crazy,” Weilemann said. “I’ve never experienced anything like it before. It was nerve wracking because it seemed to take forever, and we didn’t get any hints as to the results. I wanted the part so bad.”

The play was originally set for Dec. 15, but for the three weeks before the performance, the theater was occupied by various other groups:

band concerts, elementary choir concerts, and a piano concert. The cast said they were thankful for the extra time, but the schedule was still tight. They began to practice in mid-November, and those who were in town practiced over Thanksgiving break.

“We have some really talented kids at this school, and it’s been hard to showcase those talents with a lack of time in the theater space,” Alexander said. “But we’ve had fun exploring different places to rehearse and playing games to grow as a cast.”

The cast said one of the biggest challenges was working with new leaders. Cindy Singleton, who had been directing at Brentwood for 23 years, and art teacher Lori Morin, who had been helping with set design, both left at the end of last year. Also, many seniors who had been leaders in the theater department graduated last year.

“Being a new director has been an awesome challenge,” Alexander said. “I’ve learned a lot of my strengths and weaknesses, and I’m learning to be flexible.”

*Little Women* will be taken to the TCSIT one-act competition on Jan. 16.

“Theater here mainly shines through competition,” Alexander said. “Sometimes we just want to play for fun. But we’re going to give a really awesome performance.”

# Finals moved to January

By Benjamin Helyer

The week before Christmas break has been easier on secondary students than in previous years, since final exams have been rescheduled until Jan. 20-22, 2016, due to a later start at the beginning of the school year.

Before finals, students will have two weeks of first semester classes. Review days are scheduled for Friday, Jan. 16, and Tuesday, Jan. 19, following the Martin Luther King Day holiday.

It will be the first time in eight years that BCS has held finals after the holidays.

According to secondary principal Carol Johnson, the schedule change will give teachers and students more time to complete material during the first semester. Due to the hectic schedule of spring, Johnson hopes that this will allow more learning to happen during the first semester, which will in turn gives the second semester more room for events such as TCSIT and TAPPS competitions.

Many years ago, BCS regularly held finals after Christmas. When the start of the school year was moved to an earlier date, it became easier to fit in a full semester before Christmas.

Johnson noted that teachers tend to be very concerned about how well students do, and the schedule change might cause them to have anxiety.

see **Finals**, page 8

# Bands entertain packed theater with Christmas concert

By Andrew Schmitz

For the first time in band director Travis Pollard’s 10 years at BCS, the high school and middle school bands presented a Christmas concert, which was held on Thursday, Dec. 10, in the Iva Lea Worley Barton Theater, with Christmas lights lining the front of the stage.

From the opening act by the jazz band to the finale, which featured guest musicians in the aisles and the high school choir in the back, Pollard said he was very pleased with the students’ performance.

“It’s always rewarding to see how focused the band students are on performance night,” Pollard said. “Every group performed above my expectations.”

The jazz band took the floor to start the show by playing some non-Christmas music, including *The Blues Brothers Rockin’ Soul Revue*. They were followed by the sixth-grade band, which performed three different Christmas songs. Then the seventh- and eighth-

grade band performed four holiday tunes.

Finally, the high school band took the stage, playing a set that included a song called *Bells of Fire*, which Pollard said is very different from the kind of music they usually play.

“The performance could have used more polish, but it was a fun experience putting it together,” Pollard said.

For the finale, *O Come All Ye Faithful*, the band was joined by some of the high school choir, which sang from the rear of the theater. There were also antiphonal brass players on the sides of the theater, including teacher Mel Witcher and three of Pollard’s friends from the National Guard.

Brentwood’s fall band concert is usually in November, but with a later date, it was decided that they would play only Christmas music. It was, however, a struggle to find enough Christmas band music, Pollard said. If they do a similar concert next year, he said it will be necessary to purchase some new music.

While the band concert was a success, it did come with some challenges. This included the

extra planning and organization of making the final song work without much rehearsal. But Pollard said that he has learned to let go of stress before a concert.

“I just take things as they come. I know that

we’ll eventually make it on stage and have a good performance,” Pollard said. “Performing is a lot of fun, but it always feels great to be done and know that your students have accomplished something.”



photo: Quinn Brothers

**Christmas tunes** High school band members both charmed and rocked the theater, playing a variety of holiday songs during the Christmas concert on Dec. 10.



# Gifted actress blesses lives with laughter, love

By Camille Sunshine

Singer, actress, comedian, class officer, and good friend, Laura Doyle lights up the room with a laugh and a song.

Laura is well-loved by all around her for her sweet and encouraging spirit and her contagious laugh.

"She has this calm, sweet vibe she gives off to people," junior and fellow Encore member Morgan George says. "I've never seen her be mean. She constantly uplifts others, and she's had a really great impact on my life. I know she's going to do really amazing things (in college)."

Classmate Hannah Hutton says that when she first met Laura as a new student, she instinctively knew that Laura was a good person just by meeting her.

"Laura Doyle is one of the best people I know," Hutton says. "She is smart, funny, talented, and kind. It is a blessing to have her as a friend."

Laura performs in Encore and choir, and has been acting since kindergarten, when she played Little Eponine in *Les Misérables*. She said her favorite role that she has played was Gertrude

McFuzz in *Seussical*. "My biggest dream was to be the lead in a musical," says Laura, who loves Broadway musicals. "Acting and singing: my two favorite things in one. It moves me, man."

Laura says she has been performing all her life. Her sister Amber (BCS '09) dressed her up when she was a child and she would perform for her grandparents. She also played a version of *American Idol* with her friends.

Laura says she feels the same way about music as Victor Hugo, who said, "Music expresses that which cannot remain silent and that which cannot be put into words."

She has been in choir all three of her BCS high school years, made Encore for the first time this year, and

has been class secretary for the past two years. She also plays the flute and currently plays the bass drum in Brentwood's pep band. Laura said she knows nearly every word of *Les Misérables* the musical, loves Captain America, and owns 11 pairs of Toms.

"Laura's a really caring person," senior Emily Wagner says. "She loves and genuinely cares about everyone she comes into contact with. Basically she's my best friend, I love her forever, and she's going to be in my wedding. Laura makes me happy."

Wagner remembers fondly when she and Laura cried in a closet at Way Off Broadway last year for several minutes because they loved the seniors who were graduating so much. And to show another side of

Laura, Wagner remembers when she, Laura, and Hannah had just finished taking pictures in a bluebonnet field when Laura suddenly cried out, "Candid!" and began to take reverse camera pictures of the three of them walking.

"Her constant love and positivity are a blessing in my life," senior Hope Kronke says. "She is a light to everyone around her, and she makes me want to be the best version of myself."

Laura was born in Texas and attended Brentwood from preschool through seventh grade. That summer her family moved to Missouri for family reasons. She attended another Christian school there for eighth and ninth grade, and moved back to Texas and Brentwood three weeks into her sophomore year.

Laura says that when she moved back to Austin, she felt like "every day was *deja vu*," and she struggled with making friends again. Moving helped her to get out of her shell and let her personality shine.

"Changing schools helped me see who I am. It helped me break out of myself," Laura says. "Brentwood has allowed me to pursue many different types of activities that have shaped me and given me the opportunity to meet many different people."

One thing Laura feels she struggles with the most is self-confidence. She says she didn't have any confidence in herself until this year.

Choir director John McMeen says Laura works very hard in choir, and her sincerity makes him feel like he's known her a long time.

"She lights up the room, and her personality invites people in," McMeen says. "She's goofy in a smart way. Everyone picks on her because they like her; she's a delight to work with."

Laura has been accepted to Harding University, and she wants to be a physician assistant.

"God's creation is a magnificent thing," says Laura, who feels her mission is to serve others through the health profession. "The way He created humans is incredible, and the medical field gives me the opportunity to explore God's handiwork while helping people in practical ways."

Laura has also volunteered for the past two summers at Seton Medical Center and St. David's Medical Center.

"I love volunteering," Laura said. "(Volunteering) affirmed my love for the medical field and made me excited about pursuing it."

Laura's friends enjoy finding Laura's embarrassing moments to laugh about. Hannah remembers one time in band class last year when she looked at Laura and rubbed her stomach to indicate that she was hungry. Laura misinterpreted this motion and replied, "You're my best friend, too."

Sophomore Austin Biegert summed up his friend well:

"Anyone who knows Laura understands what a blessing and an honor it is to know her and get to spend any little bit of time with her, because the memories and moments that you get to share with Laura will truly stay with you for a lifetime."

## 'Jingle' Jog brings fun, funds

continued from page 1

traditional route, began on the baseball field and took runners through the upper elementary playground and behind the CSA. Colored corn starch was thrown at them along the way by Student Council members and elementary students. Secondary students ran the course five times.

Most students seemed to enjoy the run, while a few shared concerns.

"Being in cross country, I never liked when we did a two-loop course or more, especially if it was boring. I thought it was just too repetitive," said sophomore MaeAnne Herring, who was the top female finisher.

Running laps on the baseball outfield this year, kindergarten kicked off Jog-a-fun at 8:10 a.m. and was followed by each elementary grade running for 30 minutes. Once they finished running, bouncy castles and hot chocolate were waiting for them nearby.

Secondary students enjoyed a variety of

fun activities before the color run. There was a trivia game, a powder puff volleyball game with junior and senior boys, as well as a motivational speaker and Christian rapper to keep students entertained throughout the day.

The top lap runner in elementary was fifth-grader Brecken Lee, who ran 39 laps. He was followed by fourth-graders Renne Cooper with 37 laps, and Colton McLain and Foster Snell, each with 34 laps.

The top three male finishers for secondary were junior Graham Marks, sophomore Alec Shelby, and junior Brandon Patterson. The top three female finishers were Herring, seventh-grader Katie Rzepniewski, and senior Kayla Lane.

The overall consensus was that Brentwood's first Jingle Bell Run was a success.

"It was super fun making it a Jingle Bell Run," said development assistant Sarah Wilson, who helped organize the event.

The amount of money raised is currently about \$150,000.



THE BEAR FACTS DECEMBER 2015

# Playful science teacher understands students

By Michelle Emmel and Isabel Harris

“Go, monkey, go!”

Known for her love of monkeys – which she claims are funny and can make you smile no matter what – for her energetic attitude, and scrubs she always wears, science teacher Michelle Mallett is loved by many students for her humor and creativity in the classroom.

“It is never a boring day in her class,” senior Bella Spills says.

Mallett, who is in her fourth year of teaching AP Biology, Biology, and Forensics at BCS, is always finding ways to scare or prank her classes. Screams can often be heard next door in seventh-period Physics, meaning she has probably scared someone with the air horn or thrown a screaming monkey across the room.

Mallett keeps her students engaged in class by keeping things fun with her hilarious personal stories and her amusing pranks. She uses the air horn when she catches a student nodding off. This keeps the class paying attention due to fear of being pranked.

“I was scared,” says junior Alex Matthew, describing the time he was busted for dozing off two months ago. “I was trembling with fear, and I fell out of my chair.”

Mallett has a unique way of teaching the students. She arranges everything from lab partners, to seating, to note taking based on a student’s individual learning style.

“She understands the visual students, which is a unique trait,” fellow science teacher Diann Sloan says.

For example, visual students are taught to draw pictures in their notes to help them understand better. Kinesthetic students are given a stress-relief ball so they can focus better.

“Everything is based on learning style,” Mallett says, “so you can learn better and in college you can do well so you understand and succeed.”

Students find this helpful because everyone learns in a different way, and to have a teacher that organizes the class that way is greatly appreciated.

“Mrs. Mallett is a wonderful teacher,” senior Emily Wagner says. “She knows how to cater to everyone’s learning needs, and her Forensics

class helped me decide what to study in college.”

With this year’s senior class being mostly visual learners, Mallett has helped Sloan with teaching in a way that they better understand.

“She is caring, sensitive, and amazing,” Sloan says. “She knows what she’s doing and understands the students.”

After graduating from Oklahoma Christian University with a medical biology degree, Mallett served as a research technician at the University of Oklahoma Health and Science Center for two and a half years helping patients, drawing blood, and being a doctor’s assistant. She continued being helpful, but instead of helping in the medical field, she switched to helping in the education field, where she has been for 24 years.

She began at Oklahoma Christian Academy, where she taught many different science

classes. Along with bringing her help from the medical field into the education field, she also brought her scrubs, which is the most common clothing she is found wearing at school.

“I have many, many clothes that have little chemical burn holes in them from doing labs,” she explains. “I wear the scrubs so I don’t ruin any more clothes.”

Mallett claims prayer and two people, Kalleen Graessle and Dr. Libby Weed, led her to leave OCA to become a teacher at Brentwood.

“I like how we try to put God first in everything we do,” Mallett says.

Married to Jevon Mallett, she and her husband have two kids – sophomore Merideth and sixth grader Harrison – who both attend Brentwood.

Danielle McGhee, the secondary librarian, has been working with Mallett since both started at BCS in 2012.

“She’s witty and loves her students with all her heart,” McGhee says. “She’s also a loving mother. She is passionate about them and about

being an educator.”

Mallett says she hopes to add a few more classes in the science department in the future, including Anatomy and Physiology, and AP Chemistry. She also hopes to add more labs to her classes. The hardest part of her job is grading, and Mallett spends many hours outside of school grading labs and homework assignments, creating lesson plans, and designing labs.

“I would lose my mind without my aides,” Mallett says.

Through the years, she has taught 10 different subjects in the science category, but she has no favorite.

“They are all hard, and I like to watch students struggle and then understand it,” she says.

As for the future, Mallett says she plans on staying at BCS for as long as the Lord wants her to. So for all the students who will have Mallett in the future, there is a lot to look forward to. But watch out for her pranks, and if you’re ever feeling drowsy, don’t fall asleep!

## Positivity board introduced

By Benjamin Helyer

After each long week of school, when some students are barely dragging themselves into the weekend, positive vibes penetrate throughout the middle and high school classrooms with the delivery of encouraging notes to various students.

The notes are due to a new feature in the high school and middle school hallways, the “Positive Vibes” board. Each of these bulletin boards contains weekly a new set of about six or seven students’ names on envelopes in which students and teachers can place encouraging notes. The many notes are delivered to the specific students after that week is over.

“There has been a huge improvement of school spirit, and I think it has spread to supporting each other, and that includes the Positive Vibes board,” said senior Chandler Alberda, who is the Student Council president. “I am very proud to have started this at the school.”

Alberda and junior Addy Hardin were inspired at the Presidential Leadership Institute at York College in July, where Brentwood sent a group of students for

a week-long camp. Throughout the week, a board was available to write notes to other students attending the camp.

At the beginning of the year, Alberda removed the StuCo board and put up the Positive Vibes board. Since then, the plan has taken off, with teachers and students alike utilizing it as an opportunity to spread encouragement throughout the student body.

Alberda said the board fulfills the mission statement that was formed by the BCS group who attended the camp, which was to “improve the amount of respect and encouragement in the Brentwood community in order to create a positive morale on campus.”

“Being able to see my friends’ opinions of me made me feel more appreciated,” sophomore Elijah Cunningham said.

Younger students seem to agree.

“It made me feel really confident that many people I didn’t know would give me notes,” sixth-grader Nathaniel Fogle said.

The notes can also cause the recipient to think more graciously about the senders.

“It had a positive impact on my life, and it made me think positively about people that I usually wasn’t positive,” sophomore Hunter Burcham said.

Notes have not only given students encouragement, but also provided a relief from the grind of school.

“It was really fun to receive all the notes after a hard week at school,” senior Sarah Connor said.





# Lady Bears win tournament, show toughness

By Joshua Sass

The Lady Bears basketball team began district play with a blowout at home against Round Rock Concordia 57-14 on Dec. 7. The girls are



photo: Madison Bailey

**Focused** Freshman Nyna Vazquez heads up court during a BCS tournament game.

9-6 overall and riding a huge wave of momentum from taking first place in the Brookshire Classic tournament and then dominating their first district game.

The girls came out fast against Concordia, going up 25-4 during the second quarter. Junior Alicia Dixon led Brentwood with 15 points and eight rebounds.

In Tyler the previous weekend, the Lady Bears won the Brookshire Classic for the third straight year. Playing against private schools in the TAPPS tournament on Dec. 3-5, BCS opened with a 41-16 victory over John Cooper. The Lady Bears played strong defense, and Dixon led the way with 14 points.

Playing Tyler All-Saints in the second round, BCS ran into trouble when they were told to switch their green jerseys to white due to a mix-up. Some players had to return to the hotel to get the whites. Emotionally high-strung from the incident but ready to play, the Lady Bears eventually settled in and won 46-36.

Brentwood's opponent in the championship game was Cypress Christian. BCS dominated the boards against a smaller team, and combined with a strong defensive outing they won 40-28. Dixon led Brentwood with 15 points, and senior Keely Hardin had eight rebounds.

In the past five years, BCS is 5-0 against Cypress Christian. Despite Brentwood's domination of the series, each game is described by senior Cailin McDaniel as intense and full of

emotion, and this game was no exception.

Players have said they are glad to have participated in so many tournament games so far, saying that chemistry has improved as a result. Head coach Devan Loftis agrees.

"It has been a challenge to jump right into such a tough schedule without the normal practice time," Loftis said. "But the kids play hard and are really starting to believe in each other. That is part of the toughness we need to win a district championship."

Dixon leads the team with 12.9 points per game, followed by Hardin with 11.7. Dixon also leads with 8.3 rebounds per game.

Following are other recent game results:

**11/10: Savio 50-26 L**

With three key players still playing volleyball, it was a rough game. Brentwood struggled to convert offensively and found that they couldn't stop Savio's multidimensional attack.

**11/17: Vandegrift 54-24 L**

Volleyball players were back, but BCS still struggled to convert offensively against a tough public school team, and they had trouble with both turnovers and rebounding.

**11/19-21: Bestpack Invitational W L L**

The Lady Bears began their own tournament beating Boerne Geneva 56-37. A strong defensive outing combined with strong multi-faceted attack from sharpshooters and drivers led Brentwood to victory.

Dixon scored 20 points and Hardin grabbed

nine rebounds.

In the second game against Regents, the Lady Bears fell 54-28 against a tough 4A squad. With offensive catalyst Hardin sick and unable to play, the Lady Bears struggled to convert offensively. Dixon and junior Kayleigh Lawrence led the way with eight points each.

Brentwood then played Savio in a rematch, and this time they were at full strength. Defense kept them in the game, but turnovers ended up costing Brentwood the victory, 54-49.

Dixon led scoring with 18, followed by Hardin with 15.

**11/23-24: @Eagles Classic Tourn. W L W W**

The Lady Bears began the tournament with a win against the previously beaten John Cooper 46-23. A tough shooting day was alleviated by hot three-point sharpshooting by Keely Hardin and junior Addy Hardin.

Keely Hardin led with 13 points.

BCS dropped the next game against Birdville 42-25. They struggled with turnovers and shot poorly. Hardin had 13 points, and Dixon had 11 rebounds.

Brentwood took a 39-33 win against a tough Burleson team in their third game, scoring most of their points inside the paint.

In the final game, BCS earned a narrow victory over Brewer, again dominating inside.

**12/1: Reicher 51-26 W**

Despite cold shooting, the Lady Bears pulled away, led by Hardin with 14 points.

# Soccer team strong on goal scoring, chemistry

By Diego Escobedo

The BCS girls' varsity soccer team has a 3-2 record after playing their last home non-district game on Dec. 7. They will play their first district game on Monday, Jan. 4.

"I think the biggest takeaway so far this year has been team chemistry," head coach Cash Miller said. "All of the girls work hard and support one another and are a true team."

Miller said the season so far has not brought any setbacks such as injuries. He has been able to focus on improving their level of play.

"We are working on being a possession and movement based team, not kick and run," Miller said. "We are also working on being more consistent and improving our decision making both on and off the ball."

Senior Hailey Miller leads the team with 10 goals, and freshman Madison Mosely has eight. Sophomore Rebekah Connor has six goals and 10 assists. Goalkeeper Alex Sass, a sophomore, has recorded two shutouts.

Following are the most recent game results:

**11/12: San Marcos Academy 12-1 W**

Brentwood had possession of the ball most

of the game. Miller led with four goals and Mosely had three.

**11/17: St. Andrew's 5-3 L**

St. Andrew's came out fast with two quick goals, sophomore Avery Miller scored a goal for BCS, followed by a goal by Connor to tie the score at halftime. Falling behind early in the second half, Brentwood again got a quick goal from Miller to tie the game 3-3. With only two subs, the Bears eventually slowed down and gave up two goals near the end of the game.

**11/20: St. Dominic Savio 2-0 W**

Both teams played well, and the score was 0-0 at halftime. Coach Miller made adjustments, and the Bears got a goal by sophomore Nicole Petrik midway through the second half. Savio went down offensively and couldn't convert plays, and 10 minutes later Connor got a goal to finish the scoring.

**12/7: St. Dominic Savio 6-2 L**

In this rematch with Savio, Brentwood was missing a key starter. Savio grabbed the momentum early and was able to make plays offensively. With only one sub, BCS got tired but still made a lot of saves and scored two goals by senior Rebekah Legband.



photo: Laura Miller

**Determined** Sophomore Avery Miller beats her opponent to the ball during a recent soccer game for the Lady Bears, who will begin district play on Jan. 4.

THE BEAR FACTS DECEMBER 2015

# BCS has its first athletic state championship

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game two years in a row, Brentwood's clean 3-0 sweep of Houston St. Thomas Episcopal demonstrated their worthiness of the state title. Playing at South San Antonio High School, the Lady Bears went out ahead early, winning the first set 25-11. This gave the large group of Brentwood fans reason to think that a state championship would be won easily.

But the opponents surged back in the second set, taking a 23-19 lead before the Lady Bears stormed back to win 25-23. This was mentally "back-breaking" to their opponent, according to senior Keely Hardin. Momentum swung to Brentwood, and their opponent "just gave up," according to senior Kara Teal.

The third set went by in a flash, Teal said, as the girls kept inching one point closer to the now inevitable state championship. The Lady Bears quickly finished the game in one final blowout, 25-13.

"I am unbelievably proud of this team's accomplishments," head coach Veronica Lee said. "These young women showed heart and perseverance."

Before matching off in the state championship,

BCS first had to beat last year's state champions, Arlington Grace Prep. Brentwood coasted to an easy 3-1 victory, avenging last year's loss.

The Lady Bears lost their only set of the tournament against Arlington Grace after jumping out to a 2-0 lead (25-19 and 25-17). Coach Lee rested starters during the next game, and BCS took a 25-23 loss. But they stormed to a 25-13 win after that, sending them to the next day's final.

Approximately 40 students rode the fan van down to San Antonio for the Friday game, missing school to support their Lady Bears. At both games, the Claw Crew's presence was overwhelming in relation to the opposition's fan base. Led by senior Jake Velasco, the Claw Crew's cheers were heard throughout the games.

After the game, the team remained focused despite all of the emotions, senior Jami Lee said. The girls went out to dinner and spent the rest of the evening watching scouting reports in preparation for the state championship game.

Students cheered for the Lady Bears at a pep rally on Thursday, Nov. 12, as the volleyball team was preparing to embark on Brentwood and spend the night at a hotel in San Antonio.

The day before leaving, four seniors took the

spotlight at a Signing Day event in the Athletic Center. With a reporter and photographer from the Austin American-Statesman present, athletic director Brian Thrift spoke about each senior before they signed to play for their

respective universities: Hardin will attend Belmont University, Lee will attend George Washington University, Teal will attend UT-San Antonio, and Westerlund will attend the University of Texas.



photo: Mark Merkov

**Number one** The Lady Bears are the TAPPS 3A volleyball state champions.

## Battle-tested boys enter rest before heart of district

By Joshua Sass

After enduring a tough stretch of pre-district tournament games, the varsity boys' basketball team has a 4-8 record. But with a 1-0 record in district, the team's upperclassmen say there is no reason for alarm.

Seniors Diego Batlle and Robert Lesko said they are thankful for their experience from tournaments in Houston, Tyler, and at BCS. They said that by playing tough teams, they have become stronger.

After such a difficult stretch of games, the team is ready for a breather, as they have nearly three weeks to rest and prepare for the remainder of their district schedule.

"This break will really help us build and get better," Batlle said.

Their first game back will be at home against TSD on Jan. 5 in a district matchup.

Brentwood's biggest weakness so far has been its inexperience. With two seniors and three juniors, the Bears rely on JV/varsity "floaters" who lack experience. Related to that is what head coach Brian Thrift called a lack of "internal leadership."

"I wanted someone to step up and take ownership of our team from the player side of things," Thrift said. "This area continues to be an area of concern."

Thrift also said he continues to work on getting a consistent effort in games.

"We talk a lot about our energy and effort with our team, and we want to see it improve every day," he said.

Batlle said he has seen a lack enthusiasm from the bench when the Bears are fighting back from a deficit, and Lesko agreed.

"Our energy really gets down sometimes," Lesko said.

On the other hand, the seniors agreed that the Bears are strong in the shooting category and in the strength of the coaching staff.

"Knowing that our coaches are so experienced gives us an edge over other teams," Batlle said.

Juniors Graham Marks and Jordan Johnson lead the Bears in scoring with 11.5 points per game each. Junior Michael Hickl and Lesko lead in rebounds per game with 6.9 and 6.3, respectively.

One more point the two seniors agreed on is that the team is expecting the students of BCS to provide a better home-game environment.

"More people need to come to the games," Lesko said.

Following are the team's most recent results:

**12/1: OLH-Kerrville 47-39 W**

Brentwood's strong defensive play won the day against a balanced attack from the opposition. Effective defense limited the

effectiveness of Kerrville's 6-9 post player. Marks scored 18 points for the Bears.

**12/3-5: @ All Saints Tourn. L W L**

Brentwood struggled offensively in their opening game, losing to Red Oak Ovilla Christian 67-60. Their 26 turnovers are what ultimately led to their defeat. Marks scored 26 points and set a tournament record with seven three-pointers. Hickl scored 11 points and had 12 rebounds.

The Bears jumped out to a 13-4 lead in their game against Kings Academy and never looked back. Johnson had 15 points, and Marks had 14.

The Bears came out flat against Cypress Christian in their final game of the tournament and lost 65-35. Marks was the lone bright spot, scoring 14 points and earning all-tournament honors.

**12/8: Concordia 77-52 W**

BCS jumped out to a 17-2 lead and stayed on the attack the entire game to open up district play. The Bears had four players reach double-digit scoring: Marks (18), Batlle (16), Lesko (15), and Johnson (11).



photo: Madison Bailey

**Can't touch this** Junior Jordan Johnson scores against Legacy at the BCS Invitational last month.



THE BEAR FACTS DECEMBER 2015

# BCS celebrates the season with ballet, charity, sweaters, breakfast

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traveled to the Long Center to watch the first act of *The Nutcracker*. Afterward students gathered back at campus in a festively decorated room for a fancy dinner to test table manners they had been studying. Those who earned a perfect score received the famed Silver Spoon Award.

"They really took ownership of the challenge and worked hard to remember all of the manners they were taught," fourth-grade teacher Abbie Boyd said. "It was a good opportunity for them to have fun as a class community, but still work hard to show what they had learned."

Along with all of these elementary traditions, high school has a few precious Christmas events also. This year StuCo planned numerous events, new and old, to put students in the Christmas spirit. One of the new events was Winter Schminter on Dec. 5, at 4 p.m. for middle school and 7 p.m. for high school. Students celebrated by doing crafts, eating cookies, and singing carols.

Winter Schminter was one more idea from the mind of StuCo president Chandler Alberda, and it all started when she simply wanted to find the school a Christmas tree.

"Going to Brentwood for 13 years, I had always thought that we needed a tree," she explained. "The CSA lobby is a beautiful space for a giant tree."

After contacting several local churches, she found one that had a 12-foot tree available.

"But there's no fun in having a Christmas tree without a party to go with it," Alberda said. "We wanted to get the school together and do some Christmas traditions and just spend time together."

StuCo also managed to retain the lively traditions from years past such as tacky Christmas sweater days and locker decorating.

The junior class was also eager to have their fair share of the holiday antics with the fundraiser Breakfast with Santa. On Dec. 12 from 9-11 a.m. in the FLC, children and parents alike were invited to enjoy breakfast with the "one and only" Santa Claus. After breakfast, everyone rotated to different stations where they visited and took pictures with Santa, played Christmas games, and did a festive craft.

Traditionally, juniors have done Santa Shop to raise money for Junior/Senior, but this year they switched to what had formerly been a senior tradition.

Even with all this hustle and bustle, students are provided with opportunities to share Christ during the season through donation and service. One of these opportunities is Angel Tree. Conducted by PTF, Angel Tree raises money to buy Christmas presents for children who have a parent in prison. After donating, elementary

students earn their "angel wings," or a paper cut-out of an angel that will rest on a paper tree outside their classroom.

A major change to the Angel tree program this year was the addition of secondary. But rather than just donating funds in general, each secondary grade was given a specific child to collect money or purchase gifts for.

"I think any service project Brentwood does is important because it is helping the kids to remember they are the hands and feet of Jesus, and anytime we can reach out to others we should," Lange said. "Each child is developing a servant's heart, and the importance of that can't be measured."

High schoolers in National Honor Society are also supplied with an opportunity to share their Christmas joy in Christ. Every year juniors and seniors are able to go to Rosedale School to sing songs and decorate cupcakes with the special-needs students there. This year



photo: Summer Best

**Silver Spoons** Fourth graders practice table manners as they dine after attending *The Nutcracker* ballet on Dec. 9.

band members also got to perform some songs for the students after the sing-along.

"It's a really great chance to serve our community and show the world the love of Jesus," NHS president Martha Hughes said. "Our goal is to help the students have a fun day and give the teachers a little break."

## Don Irwin performs third annual concert at BCS

By Nicholas Bergeron

Renowned pianist Don Irwin returned to BCS for the third year in a row at 7 p.m. on Dec. 1 to perform a free concert in the Center for Science and the Arts.

Irwin played an eclectic mix of jazz, classical, show tunes, country, and gospel, melding songs into medleys and amusing the audience with a country/honky tonk reinterpretation of famous hymns. He also accompanied elementary music teacher Amanda Stanglin, who sang

*O Holy Night*.

After intermission, Encore joined him to perform a trio of Christmas carols. Between songs, Irwin entertained the audience with tales of touring with Willie Nelson, writing music for Nelson Mandela, and performing Beethoven's ninth symphony backwards.

Irwin, a Steinway artist with a bachelor of music in piano performance from the University of Illinois, has toured Europe, America, Africa, and beyond, and recorded as a session musician for Prince and Donna Summer. He has recorded 22 solo albums and 10 orchestrated albums.

The piano on which Irwin performed, a nine-foot Chickering grand over 100 years old that he once owned, was donated to the school three years ago by BOCC members Ron and Ali Knight, friends of Irwin who bought the piano from him. The Knights have said they plan to bring Irwin back to BCS every year.

Choir director John McMeen said he expects the trend of bringing non-BCS performers to Brentwood to continue.

"I think every year it's going to keep getting bigger," McMeen said. "The BCS fine arts program can branch out."

## Finals moved to January

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ety that students will not remember material.

"I think it's harder for teachers than students," Johnson said.

But some students have expressed concern. "I feel upset because we have two weeks of Christmas break to forget everything and then come back and are expected to remember it all," junior Daniel Ayala said.

On the other hand, moving the finals will also alleviate stress before Christmas break for some students.

"At first I was upset, but now that (Christmas break) is closer I'm glad that I don't have to study," junior Hannah Odom said.

At least one student has experienced finals both before and after Christmas break.

"Lake Travis changed (finals schedules) a lot," senior Rebecca Tilley said. "It doesn't affect me much because I'm used to it."

However, Tilley noted that she prefers finals to be taken before Christmas break because "It gives you a sense of closure."

Due to the various shifts in scheduling, although not a direct consequence of moving finals, this school year will have five fewer days than previous years' schedules.



photo: Oriana Gonzalez

**Play it again** Don Irwin delights BCS concertgoers with a mix of show tunes, jazz, and other styles at his third-annual free holiday concert in the theater on Dec. 1.