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THE BEAR FACTS

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VOL. 28 NO. 2

BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

NOVEMBER 2015

IN SHORT

Food needed

The annual Thanksgiving food drive, sponsored by StuCo, is in full swing with just one week left until the food is taken to the Round Rock Area Serving Center. The drive concludes at all-school chapel on Thursday, Nov. 19.

'Little Women' coming

The Brentwood Christian theater department will perform a one-night Christmas special of *Little Women* as a one-act play on Dec. 15 at 7 p.m. The cast will take the play to the TCSIT one-act competition in January.

The four "little women" will be played by senior Laura Doyle, juniors Hope Hutson and Camille Sunshine, and sophomore Lauren Weilemann. The play will also star 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.

Jog postponed

Jog-a-fun, originally set for Thursday, Nov. 5, was rescheduled to Wednesday, Dec. 2, due to bad weather. Sponsors may be added until Nov. 29, and money may be collected until Feb. 1.

Blood drive success

Starting with secondary principal Carol Johnson, 20 BCS students and faculty donated their blood on Oct. 28, in a blood drive with Blood Center of Central Texas, sponsored by StuCo. There will be another drive in the spring.

Third time's a charm?

BCS volleyball in Final Four this weekend

By Jonathan Weed

This is the weekend we've been waiting for. After falling just short of winning the state championship twice – losing in the championship game the past two years – the high school volleyball team is playing in the state tournament this weekend in San Antonio. Their opponent today at noon is Arlington Grace Prep, the team that beat BCS in the championship game last year. The winner advances to the state title game tomorrow, Nov. 14, at 11:30 a.m.

With five seniors – four of whom have signed to play volleyball at NCAA Division I schools (see pg. 7) – this would appear to be the best chance to win Brentwood's first state championship in athletics. Earlier this week the seniors expressed calm confidence, and they pointed out that everyone on the team is finally healthy.

"It just feels right this time," senior Jami Lee said.

Second-year head coach Veronica Lee shares the team's excitement over what they have accomplished and what they are capable of doing this weekend.

"Our team has climbed many hills to get to this point," she said. "We will have to play at or near our best volleyball on Friday. Every team still playing is very good."

Brentwood's playoff route included a first-round bye, a three-set win over Dallas The Covenant at BCS on Nov. 3, and a hard-fought win over Rockwall Heritage Christian in Temple on Nov. 7. Typically placed in the South bracket, BCS was put in the North

see **Volleyball**, page 6



photo: Mark Merkord

Sky high Senior Jami Lee sets the ball for a teammate in the Bears' 3-0 playoff win on Nov. 7 in Temple.

Book Week inspires reading, writing

By Benjamin Helyer

On a typical day, elementary students would receive a reprimand resulting in a trip to the principal's office for dressing up as adventurers from faraway lands. But on Friday, Oct.

30, kindergartners through fifth graders were allowed to come to school as their favorite character from a story to conclude the school's annual week centered on reading.

During elementary Book Week, which lasted from Oct. 26 to Oct. 30, classes celebrated the joy of reading. They relaxed during book-ins for reading time by themselves, listened to celebrity readers visiting their class, and mused through stories with their older chapel buddies.

"Our class reads every day, but it was great to have a week devoted to reading and writing books just for the fun of it," first-grade teacher Suzy Benton said.

Many elementary students even became authors, with nearly 110 writing their own stories and entering them into the annual Young Authors' Contest. Each of the students' stories was judged by a committee of parents,

and all of the students received a reward party on Oct. 29 featuring a magician and snacks. The contest concluded with an awards assembly on Oct. 30 in which one student from each grade was given the "Overall Excellence" award.

Many elementary students were thrilled when their chapel buddies or other secondary students came to read with them. Tere Hager, the elementary librarian, said one of her favorite things about Book Week is the connections made between secondary and elementary students.

"It is exciting for the younger students, and I hope the big kids will recognize what a huge positive influence they can have on our youngest students when they interact with them – even for just a few minutes," Hager said.

Celebrity readers who shared stories with classes included authors Monique Berggren, Lindsey Lane, and Tom and Janice Sheffelman. Other readers included Roger Wallace from KXAN, Cedric Golden from the Austin American-Statesman, and Steve Sunshine from radio station Spirit 105.9.

The elementary school wasn't the only part of BCS to celebrate reading in October. During the week of Oct. 19, the secondary library hosted a middle school book fair.



photo: Dorothy Walters

Building character Second-graders Parker Kemsley (Ash Ketchum), Kylie Snell (Annie from "Magic Treehouse"), Vanessa Roa (Supergirl), and Ethan Withrow (a Minion) enjoy Character Day during Book Week on Oct. 30.

Read It And Weep: Nick Bergeron

Spooky hoaxes cause needless fear, alienation

It seems Halloween spooks more adults than kids. Every year, parents around the country check their children’s newly acquired candy stashes for razors embedded in apples, needles in Twizzlers, and cyanide in Hershey’s. Every year, local news outlets will warn parents to check unsealed treats lest their bedsheet-clad child turn into a real ghost.

The surprising truth is no child has ever died from tampered-with Halloween candy; no, not one. Every alleged case of a candy-related poisoning has been proven a hoax; sharp objects found in Halloween treats are a slightly different story. There have been several instances of a relative or friend embedding razors or needles in apples or candy bars as a very ill-thought-out practical joke, resulting in stitches and a lifelong mistrust of chocolate bars for the victim. But there have been no recorded instances of the common fear – of some demented outsider handing out tack Twizzlers and hypodermic Hershey’s to children. The widespread fear originated in the ’80s, a time when a sociologist would point out that increasing urbanization meant people no longer knew all of

their neighbors, and anyone who lived through the ’80s would point out the Chicago Tylenol murders occurred.

This is only one example of the macabre, cautionary, and totally nonfactual stories we tell ourselves. Criminals drugging unsuspecting

We’re raising the next generation in a claustrophobic atmosphere of unnecessary paranoia.

travelers to steal their internal organs? Never happened. The widespread claims of Satanist conspiracies to abuse, murder, and sacrifice in the ’80s and ’90s? Just a moral panic. If you have gullible friends or relatives who know your email address, you’ve probably been sent chain letters detailing “true stories,” that “actually happened” to the originator’s friend’s commanding officer’s hairdresser, ranging from amusing to legitimately unsettling.

Even though fact-checking is now easier than ever, urban legends are still widespread. Parents will keep scrupulously inspecting their child’s Halloween candy haul, even if you show them this article. Why do we spread these stories? What motivates otherwise reasonable people to forward emails and repeat hearsay detailing fantastic stories that can be disproved by a few seconds of Internet research?

Urban legends are the industrial world’s form of moral tales. The public is too well-informed to believe in literal witches and bogymen, but Satanists running a preschool or sickos handing out drugs at playgrounds are still considered plausible occurrences. Urban legends serve the same function of old folklore. Hansel and Gretel, for example, is a story often told to chil-

dren to teach them not to stray from the path, not to trust strangers, and so on. The boy who cried wolf illustrates why you should not ruin your credibility by saying there is danger when there is none.

Hopefully, few parents today are willing to warn their child that, if he wanders off, a cannibalistic witch will attempt to lure him into an oven, or that if they raise a false alarm they will be eaten by a wolf while nobody bats an eye. But we still have a need for stories that confirm our suspicions that the world is Big, Bad, and Out to Get Them, which is where urban legends come in.

That’s not to suggest that urban legends are by definition untrue. Sadly there are dozens of examples of real-life kidnappings, random murders, and other disturbing crimes. But when these events are passed into the public consciousness through evening news, forwarded emails, and after-dinner small talk, they become legendary and serve the same function a totally fabricated story does.

We tell ourselves stories that scare us not only for the entertainment value, for the sheer it’s-so-bad-but-I-can’t-look-away intrigue, but also because they confirm our values. We want our children to be wary of strangers, so we tell ourselves the legend of the Tampered Halloween Candy. We value thorough background checks so we tell ourselves the legend of the Lucifer-loving daycare attendants.

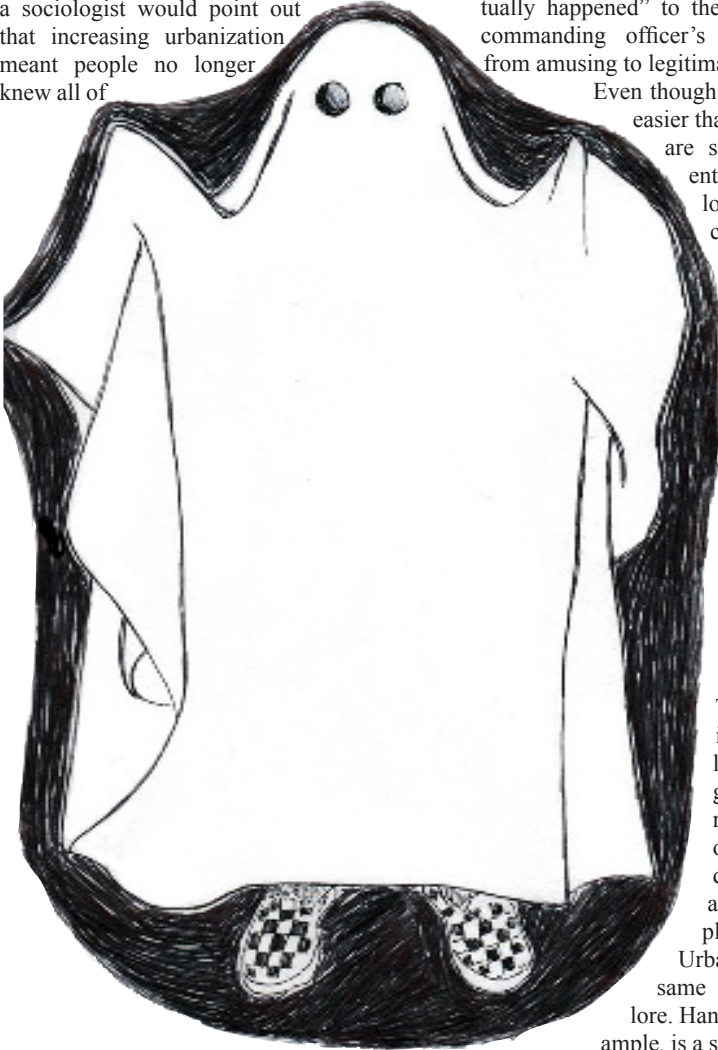
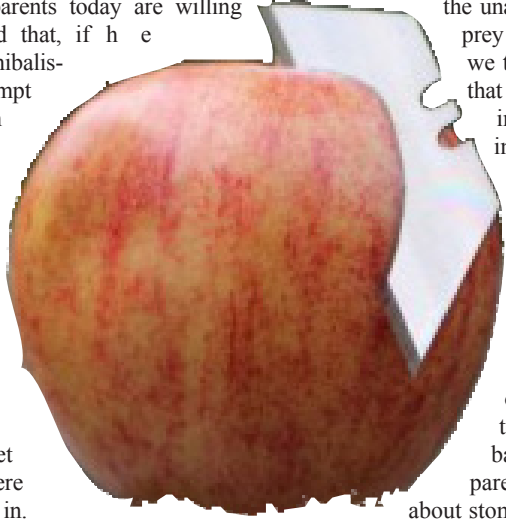
The fact that urban legends serve to reinforce common sense values like “be careful around strangers” may seem to suggest they’re harmless, but they’re not. These exaggerated macabre tales give us a picture of a world that is much more dangerous than it actually is. If parents think the world is so dangerous that their child cannot walk down the street without risking being kidnapped, then we’re raising the next generation in a claustrophobic atmosphere of unnecessary paranoia.

“But the world actually is a very dangerous place!” the concerned parent may say. Maybe so, but it’s safer than you might think. The Department of Justice reports that, out of 800,000 missing children, only 115 were snatched off the street by a stranger; 90 percent of abductees are back home within one day. Rates of violent crime dipped to a low in 2012 that they hadn’t

reached since 1963, when an average new car cost \$3,233 and JFK was president (for most of the year).

Fear sells. It works in the best interests of the media to run stories about dangers the unaware American can fall prey to, and the urban legends we tell each other work like that as well. But by circulating false, sensationalist information, we portray the world as much more scary than it is, and it encourages us to withdraw into smaller communities and not trust strangers.

I’d like to live in a world where a harmless old man can say hello to a little boy playing baseball in the street and parents have to worry more about stomach aches than cyanide poisoning as a result of their child’s Halloween candy haul. The fact of the matter is we do live in such a world. Twenty-first century middle-class America is one of the safest places in history, we just don’t realize it.



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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Fall Fest brings in \$15,160 with cakes, dunks, inflatables

By Mary Womack

Squeals of happiness, the smell of cotton candy, and the feeling of fall filled the air at BCS on Saturday, Oct. 17.

Fall Festival was carried out without a hitch despite the fact that the last two presentations of the fall musical, *Seussical*, were scheduled for the same day. To adjust, planners shortened the festival by 30 minutes and started an hour earlier than usual, but the event still accomplished its role once more as a highly anticipated and treasured tradition.

This year's Fall Festival was a big success for PTF and high school class fundraising, with the total ticket and donation income amounting to \$15,160. PTF treasurer Ann Hughes said that is nearly \$2,000 more than the last year's total, which satisfied event producer Maryam Fernandez.

"Our goal was definitely to sell more tickets and raise more sponsor money, both of which we accomplished," Fernandez said.

Hughes said that although ticket sales were down this year at \$11,260, donations and

sponsorships brought in \$3,900. Secondary classes earned a total of \$3,578, and after all expenses were paid, PTF had \$3,615 to donate to the school to spend on teachers' wish lists.

The top booth in ticket sales was Summer Best's fourth-grade Petting Zoo with \$711, followed by the sophomores' Ring a Drink with \$655 and Carolyn B'Smith's third-grade Cake Walk with \$645.

According to Fernandez some changes were made to the Fest this year, with the addition of several booths including a Video Game Theater, inflatable football toss, and soccer kick. The inflatable balls for the football toss and soccer kick were provided by Bounce Around Austin. Animals such as bunnies and goats were also brought from Wild Things Zoofari. The hamster balls were also revised with the attachment of inflatable tracks rather than letting them roll freely on the soccer field, to make the activity safer for participants.

Longtime favorites were still around, like the dunk tank, where teachers sign up for different time slots to get dunked.

"I went just to see Mr. Witcher in the dunk

tank," sophomore Lauren Weilemann said. "It was just a priceless moment."

The food options were altered to cater lunch through US Foods, who also provides for the BCS cafeteria. Fernandez said this change saved 40 percent compared to the previous year, when food was delivered from nearby restaurants. Fernandez said she worked with food service director Kristen Eadie from San Miguel Management to provide 100 percent all-beef hot dogs, nachos, and BBQ sandwiches.



photo: Dorothy Walters

Marsupial mate Second-grader Caroline Nagle spends some quality time with a kangaroo at Fall Fest on Oct. 17.

NHS induction brings group to record number of members

By Michelle Emmel

Making Brentwood history with the school's largest National Honor Society group, 105 new and returning members celebrated, along with parents and faculty, the induction of the 44 new members on Oct. 15 at Abel's Steakhouse.

About a week later, on Oct. 21, National Junior Honor Society held their ceremony in the school theater, adding 30 new inductees to 32 returning members for a total of 62 members. On stage welcoming new members were the eighth-grade NJHS officers: president Cade Young, vice president Addison Alberda, secretary Carson Davis, treasurer Genevieve Graessle, and historian Natalie Barry.

At the NHS event students and parents entered the room to first enjoy their lunch of steak, chicken, or pasta. The induction began with a welcome and a prayer from secondary principal Carol Johnson, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a performance by Encore.

Adviser Kaleen Graessle introduced the speaker, Lt. Col. Travis Walters, who spoke about leadership. Walters, the husband of BCS teacher Dorothy Walters, referred to the card at each person's seat which showed steps to achieve good leadership, and used this to interact with the audience.

Before the induction, the returning members were introduced along with this year's new of-

ficers. Then the NHS officers performed the candle lighting ritual. Officers include president Martha Hughes, vice president Kristyn Chambers, secretary Sarah Connor, treasurer Andrew Armstrong, and historian Kristen Jang. The new members were then called by their grade levels individually and signed their name in a registry which includes all the past members and officers since 2009, the first year Graessle worked with NHS at Brentwood.

The ceremony ended with the National Honor Society Pledge and a prayer by Armstrong.

NHS students came to school in their dress clothes, leaving before fifth period and returning during eighth.

The requirements for becoming an NHS member include a grade average of 92 or above, having no more than two "S minuses," and written evidence of characteristics such as leadership and service.

The newly inducted members are now part of a society that is involved in many activities including serving at Rosedale several times during the school year. Rosedale is a school for the disabled where NHS members bring joy and happiness among the students. Members also do other community service and are expected to set a good example to others; as a reward they are able to go off campus on Fridays, a day specifically allotted to NHS members.

Graessle said she is very excited to have a

record number of qualified NHS members, but she is also concerned.

"It will be harder to provide service and leadership opportunities for each member, since every member will not be able to participate in

every activity," she said. "It will be more important for members to seek opportunities for individual service, preferably pointing them toward lifelong service."



photo: Dorothy Walters

Wise words Lt. Col. Travis Walters speaks to NHS members on leadership during the induction at Abel's Steakhouse on Oct. 15. NHS inducted 44 new members.

(Math + music + drama) ÷ humility = Andrew

By Joshua Sass

An elephant that can hear the tiniest of things, a brilliant mathematician, an award winning musician, a president, and a Dance Moms fanatic. What do these have in common? They all represent BCS senior Andrew Armstrong.

"The weird thing about Andrew," senior Nick Bergeron says, "is that he's into poetry reading, classical music, and math, yet he's still a fun guy to be around."

Andrew has been attending Brentwood Christian since preschool. As his talent for Math Command became more well known among his peers, many people came to know him as "the math guy." But Andrew's involvement in school activities has been extremely diverse. His interest in drama began during his sophomore year when he had

his theater debut in *Annie*. Recently he played Horton in *Seussical*.

"Andrew always looked to improve the show and would always ask questions," *Seussical* director John McMeen says. "He was meant to be on the stage."

Among Andrew's multitude of talents, one might be called an over-analytical mind, which was put to great use in the choreographing of the musical. Andrew came up with many helpful suggestions regarding the "blocking," or where and when characters should move. Furthermore Andrew always went out of his way to help his friends and fellow actors better understand their characters. The crew, actors, and producers of the play soon started to affectionately state, "When in doubt, ask Andrew."

You might not think of Andrew first when you imagine a "president," but he is, in fact, the student leader of both choir and band. He is also treasurer for National Honor Society.

His leadership ability was put on display on Oct. 16, when the choir was directorless, and many might have imagined it to be a blow-off day. But Andrew rose to the challenge and focused on guiding his peers through rehearsal despite a relatively chaotic atmosphere given that there was not a teacher. Leading 60-plus students through routines is no easy accomplishment, and on top of that Andrew was working on extremely short notice. Band director Travis Pollard says that from his room next door they sounded "really good," and Andrew was doing an excellent job leading them through their routine.

Most don't realize this, but Andrew is one of the three students in BCS history to ever qualify for the public school all-state band, and he consistently makes all-state choir.

Andrew has played the trombone ever since fifth grade, when he started his band career.

"Band is lots of fun," Andrew says. "I enjoy developing the talent, spending time with awesome people, and playing instrumental music."

In spite of all of his awards, Andrew is respectful and humble. McMeen has noticed that when Andrew is recognized for the incredible amount of prestigious awards he receives, Andrew seems a little uncomfortable. His humbleness expressed is undeniable as he prefers to focus on the achievements of others.

Classmate John Hollingsworth commented on the immense respect Andrew has for his fellow students and his teachers. Hollingsworth says that whenever Andrew walks down the hallways, he respectfully nods his head at fellow students and faculty as he passes by them. And as he exits the classroom he always says "thank you" to the teacher.

Math teacher Kaleen Graessle expanded further on this topic by stating that Andrew always expresses gratitude, even when it could be seen that he might have "surpassed" the teacher's understanding of a topic.

"In almost 30 years of teaching bright students," Graessle says, "Andrew is the strongest math student I have ever been privileged to teach."

One place this has been evident is the annual Texas State Math League competition. Last year he finished third in the state, missing only one question all year.

One of Graessle's memories of Andrew is from when he was in the seventh grade and was the only one to show up for calculator practice after school one day. Graessle asked Andrew what he would like to learn about that day, given that he had already achieved an almost complete understanding of the entire test. Andrew tentatively asked if he could learn about calculus, a twelfth-grade class, and for that hour and a half Andrew received his first calculus lecture in a broad overview of which, Graessle stated, he seemed to understand a great portion.

Along with Andrew's fame at Brentwood comes a certain amount of infamy all over the state of Texas for his math abilities at TAPPS,

TCSIT, and TMSA competitions. Students from other schools at academic meets would sigh in disbelief and despair whenever he walked into their classroom, knowing that he would crush his competition. Then they would compare their scores to his and not fully comprehend how he could be so good.

But in TCSIT his sophomore year, everything changed. Awards for the math events had come and passed, and it was now time to announce winners for the speaking events. Andrew had swept through the math events, taking multiple first places. As the speaker announced the poetry finalists, Andrew nervously walked onto the stage and the crowd was met with shock and astonishment as Andrew, the math genius, had won third place in poetry. Competitors groaned when they realized that Andrew would not only dominate the math, but the speaking too.

Andrew has expressed interest in an assortment of colleges, from MIT to Texas A&M. Although he has not yet picked his school, he says he plans on majoring in actuarial sciences, essentially assessing the risks of an event.

"Math is the way we understand the world," Andrew says. "It's amazing how much it applies to our lives and how cool it is."



Spoils of war Andrew Armstrong and fellow "mathletes" Joshua Sass and Hyunjin Park pose with trophies won in competition three years ago.

photo: submitted

'Natural' teacher encourages kids as coach

By Camille Sunshine

This year she teaches more than 450 students and will coach four sports teams. In her 16 years at BCS, she has coached nearly 50 different teams.

Coach and teacher Katie Smith has been one of the most active members of the BCS community. She teaches pre-K through eighth grade PE and coaches high school track, middle and high school cross country, and middle school basketball.

"It has made our lives very busy," she says, "but I enjoy it."

Smith first came to Brentwood as Katie Fant in 2000 and taught first grade until 2006. During this time she was also coaching track and basketball. She left in 2006 to have her first son, Griffin, but continued coaching and working in the preschool. She returned to her full-time PE position in 2013.

Born in Arkansas, but living in St. Louis during high school, Smith began running track as off-season for basketball. When coaches found that she lagged behind in sprints, they moved her to longer distances. She finished second in the mile runs, and so her cross country career began.

Smith then began to fulfill her childhood dream of being an elementary teacher by getting a degree in elementary and special education from Harding University. While there, she ran on the cross country team.

Smith heard about Brentwood at a teacher job fair at Harding. She had her first interview with former president Marquita Moss, and Smith said Moss was "really tough"; this had been the first serious interview she had had that went beyond "casual get to know you" questions. There were positions available in kindergarten through second grade.

"I was ready to move away and do something kind of different," Smith says.

She had been certified in kindergarten and had student-taught second grade, so she said she wanted anything but first grade, which she felt inexperienced

in. But when former elementary principal Libby Weed called her to offer her the job in first grade, Smith said she was "sold."

"Katie began teaching fresh out of college in first grade with me," former first-grade teacher and current K4 teacher Geri Archer says. "She was a natural-born teacher from day one. She was one of the best first-year teachers I've ever had the privilege to work with."

Smith says most of the memories from teaching first grade that stick out in her mind consist of embarrassing stories about misbehavior and accidents, which the culprits would probably not want shared.

As the varsity girls' cross country coach, she says she would love to win a state championship someday. Regardless, her runners continue to benefit from their time with Smith.

"She encourages everybody at every race, even if we aren't doing as great as we think we can," junior Macy Kidwell says.

In track, she says she is looking forward to the new coaches and all the young runners the team has. New boys' cross country coach Jeffery Bates will be helping with organization and middle distance running, and football coach Correy Washington will help with sprints and jumps.

"(My favorite part about coaching is) watching us go from the beginning of the season to the end," says Smith, who feels the hardest part of her job is knowing enough to continue to help the runners as they improve.

"She's really organized, and I think that helps our team be successful," senior Martha Hughes says.

During the school day, Smith deals with the very different challenge of teaching PE. She and softball coach Paul Sladek partner to teach PE. Smith heads kindergarten through second grade, and Sladek heads third through fifth.



photo: McKenzie Gatlin

Runners Coach Katie Smith, who has worked at BCS since 2000, stands with her middle school cross country runners, who recently completed their season. In 16 seasons at BCS, Smith has coached nearly 50 different teams. Athletes say she stresses that they glorify God with their effort.

"Coach Smith is very nice and she's fun when we're doing football," sixth-grader Lola Ohlhaber says. "She lets us have fun when we run, and when we run we listen to music."

Coach Sladek expressed his appreciation for Smith as well.

"Katie is so organized, and just a special person," he says. "The way she treats her PE classes and athletic teams with all her heart and soul ... making sure they are not only fun, but develop character and Christianity."

Smith says the hardest part is managing so many kids – about 50 per class, but she enjoys teaching PE because she gets to interact with all the students up until high school. The PE class gives the kids a snippet of many sports, and Smith says she enjoys giving them baseline levels of everything.

"I love introducing them to all kinds of new stuff and getting them excited about being fit," Smith says.

Smith and her husband Nathan have three children: third-grader Griffin, first-grader Tucker, and Reese, who is in pre-K. When asked about her hobbies, Smith says taking care of and spending time with her kids are the two activities that most occupy her life, besides coaching.

Archer, who taught with Smith for six years,

says she admires her parenting as well as her teaching.

"It has been a wonderful thing to watch her grow in her teaching, to watch her marry Nathan, and to watch them parent their kids," Archer says. "I was blessed to teach their oldest two, and watching them in my class proved to me that she parents as well as she teaches – with intentionality and purpose. I'm proud to have her as a friend as well as a colleague."

Smith met her husband at Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ, and says Brentwood has impacted her life greatly.

"Brentwood is a great place for our family," she says. "I came here by myself, not knowing anybody. It's been a big part of our lives. I just want to continue to be a part of the mission of the school."

Senior Lauren Lewis has been coached by Smith since seventh grade, and she says she loves how Smith tells the runners to run for the glory of God, not to win first place.

"She always keeps her priorities in order," Lewis says.

While Lewis was talking, senior Ope Okupe was sitting nearby and seemed unable to help joining in to talk about her track coach.

"She's the sweetest person," Okupe says.



Volleyball vies for title

continued from page 1

bracket this year, which team members said has much stronger squads.

After a grueling pre-district schedule, the Bears rolled to their third straight district championship last month. They have not lost a game since Sep. 18, and they have not lost a district game – or even a set – in three years.

A large and noisy crowd showed up last week for the girls' final home game, when they easily defeated The Covenant 3-0 in the area championship. Their much smaller opponents had no answer for Brentwood's powerful front line.

Their victory over Heritage Christian last Saturday was more challenging, at least in the second set. After winning the first set 25-9, Brentwood soon found themselves facing a crucial point. That's when the seniors stepped up.

"I was especially proud of my seniors for taking over in set two where we were down 24-20, coming back and winning that set," Coach Lee said. "Their maturity emerged."

BCS won the set 27-25 before cruising to a 25-13 win to complete the sweep. Fans who made the trip to Temple celebrated with the team.

"I was impressed (with our fans)," senior Kara Teal said. "They were very supportive."

Students gathered in the Athletic Cen-



photo: Mark Merkord

Look out below Senior Kara Teal prepares to crush one in Brentwood's playoff victory over Rockwall Heritage on Nov. 7.

ter Thursday afternoon for a pep rally, and on Friday morning, nearly 40 high school students boarded a bus to San Antonio after first period, eager to cheer on their classmates.

Boys soccer falls short

State title remains elusive; coach still proud

By Joshua Sass

The soccer season that some thought was destined for the record books got cut short when BCS lost in the second round of playoffs 3-2 against McAllen South Texas Christian on Oct. 16 in San Antonio.

Brentwood started the game with a quick goal from junior Will Moncure on a cross from senior Joshua Sass, but the offense was held silent for almost the rest of the day. McAllen scored a goal to even the game at 1-1 by half-time.

The Bears scored a goal five minutes into the second half after Sass stole the ball from a defender and proceeded to score, putting the Bears up 2-1. After that Brentwood held tempo as the teams competed in the midfield for possession of the ball, but when McAllen scored on a penalty kick, the momentum swung in their favor, and they were able to break the tie for the game's final goal.

More than 20 students got out of school to make the journey on a sunny day with clear skies. While they were small in number, the Brentwood student section dominated the environment, cheering wildly until the bitter end.

"In 15 years of coaching soccer, I have never had a team that was as prolific at scoring as this group was this year," head coach Cash Miller said. "I know that some may feel that because we didn't make it to state that the season was a disappointment, but I don't see it that way

at all."

Brentwood began the playoffs at home against Brownsville First Baptist on Oct. 12 with a 9-0 rout. Brentwood started off fast and never looked back, completely demolishing a defensive team with five defenders instead of the usual four. Sass led scoring with six goals.

The Bears finished the season with a record of 12-2, completing their fourth consecutive district title. Miller said the seniors finished their careers with a record of 49-9.

"Even if we were a 9-49 team I would still be pleased because it's always about the character of the people in the program," he said.

Sass led scoring for the season with 46, and senior Mason McCormick had 42. Patterson led with 25 assists, followed by Sass with 18. Senior goalkeeper Mason Miller ended the year with 74 saves.

Sass finished his career with 160 goals, 52 more than the previous scoring record of 108.

"These players are part of something bigger than themselves and are selfless in their pursuit of perfection," Coach Miller said. "No, I'm not upset because we didn't go as far as we had hoped to, but I am proud to have been a part of it all."

The Bears will be returning seven starters with an enormous amount of talent from off the bench that will be filling in for the four exiting seniors. Brentwood will be moving back to 4A winter soccer next year, competing against old rivals in Savio, Regents, and Hyde Park.

First tackle football season concludes with win; future looks bright

By Jackson Baird

The Brentwood Bears football team wrapped up its first season with a dominating road win, 62-12 over Our Lady of the Hills in Kerrville on Nov. 6. The Bears built some late season momentum by winning two of their last three games to finish with a 3-5 overall record.

"Our final game was a great win for us and a great way to end our season," head coach Stan Caffey said. He added that the best thing about his first season at Brentwood Christian is the quality of people that are connected with the football team and school.

Against the OLH Hawks, junior quarterback Jordan Johnson passed for four touchdowns and rushed for two more to lead the Bears to victory. Freshman Blake Benton passed for one touchdown and caught another while finishing with 115 yards receiving.

Sophomore Hunter Burcham had two touchdowns in the game – one rushing and one re-

ceiving – as did senior Jake Dillard, playing in his final game as a Bear. Dillard scored the final touchdown of the game to stretch the Bears' lead to 45 points late in the third quarter, causing the "mercy rule" to take effect.

In earlier action, the Bears set a school record for points in defeating the Living Rock Academy Bobcats 103-79 at home on Oct. 10 before an enthusiastic crowd at Brentwood. The team rolled up 595 yards of offense thanks to a huge day from Johnson, who passed for nine touchdowns and ran for three more.

Freshman Micah Best led the receiving unit in that game with three touchdown grabs, followed by two for freshman Chase Blackman, two for Dillard, and two for sophomore Andrew Schmitz. Junior Keaton Drenner also had a score.

Johnson also led the defense with 16 tackles and three forced turnovers. Best also had an

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photo: J.D. Mack

Bursting through Sophomore Hunter Burcham finds some yardage as senior Robert Lesko looks on in Brentwood's game against Veritas.

Signing day

Wednesday was a historic day for BCS athletics as four seniors – Keely Hardin, Kara Teal, Blair Westurlund, and Jami Lee – signed to play NCAA Div. I volleyball at Belmont, UTSA, UT-Austin, and George Washington University, respectively. One side of the Athletic Center was filled with students, teachers, parents, and friends, as athletic director Brian Thrift spoke about each player.



photo: Amy Westerlund

Basketball cranks up

By Diego Escobedo

Basketball season has started for the varsity boys and girls, who have both played games this week. The teams have been missing several players and are eager to play full-strength.

Last year the boys' and girls' varsities finished second in district. The girls were 27-9 overall and 10-2 in district. Their season ended with a 45-32 loss against Houston Lutheran North in the second round of the playoffs.

The boys finished with a 9-4 district record and a 16-16 overall. They lost the bi-district game 67-65 against Katy Faith West Academy in the first round of the playoffs, on a last-second shot from behind half court.

Both teams lost four seniors, but they also have strong players returning. The girls have four players who earned all-district honors last year: senior Keely Hardin and juniors Alicia Dixon, Addy Hardin, and Kayleigh Lawrence. Returning all-district players for the boys are senior Robert Lesko and junior Jordan Johnson.

The teams began after-school practice on Oct. 19, but they have been playing without several team members who play football or volleyball.

“Our strategy until we get our football play-

ers is to get better every game and practice,” boys' head coach Brian Thrift said.

Thrift will be assisted by J.D. Robson, who has returned after a year in England to coach the BCS JV team. Wayne Marks and Robson will assist with varsity.

The girls are coached by Devan Loftis, who is starting his 16th year as head coach, and his wife Kaylee.

“This is a growing team, a young team that is working hard,” Loftis said. “We hope to have a successful season like in previous years.”

Loftis said he hopes to return to being district champs this year, and the girls know that it will take a lot of work to do that.

“We hope to grow as a team,” junior Kaleigh Lawrence said, “because right now we are not there yet.”

For the boys, Coach Thrift said that his expectations won't change from last year.

“We will be the hardest playing team in our district,” Thrift said. “Our kids have a great reputation for our intensity during games.”

Players agreed that they will miss the scoring of Cody Hunt, who scored nearly 17 points per game last season.

“We are young and inexperienced,” Thrift said. “We will go through some growing pains.”

niors: Sarah Connor, Rebekah Legband, Hailey Miller, Bella Spills, and Natalie Williams.

There are also six sophomores and two freshmen. Miller said the freshmen, Lauren Rzepniewski and Madison Moseley, “bring a lot of experience and have made a big impact on the team.”

The team has been practicing after school every day for an hour to an hour and a half. Miller said he trains every team he coaches – boys or girls, elementary or high school – the

Runners meet muddy end

By Mary Womack

Runners trudged through the marshy course, each step becoming more and more difficult. Not one contestant could escape the mud unmarked, and everyone finished with their slowest times of the season.

Brentwood Christian competed in the state cross country meet on Oct. 31 in Waco, despite the historic flooding the day before. The girls ran at 1:30 p.m., and the boys followed 30 minutes later. The meet had already been delayed two hours the day before, only to be delayed again for about an hour after the runners arrived due to the weekend's record-setting rainfall.

The girls' cross country team placed fifth overall in the 3A 3200 meters, and the boys' team placed 13th overall in the 3A 5000 meters.

“The weather had such an impact on everything: attitudes, confidence, and demeanor,” boys' head coach Jeffery Bates said. “The meet wasn't about speed, it was who could stay standing and was mentally strong.”

Sophomore David Tiner led the BCS boys, finishing 26th with a time of 22:27. He was followed by freshman Paul Stanglin and sophomore Derek Lilya, in 64th and 91st place.

Sophomore Mae Anne Herring led the way for the girls, finishing 25th with a time of 16:55. Freshman Lauren Rzepniewski and junior Hope Hutson followed, in 29th and 34th place.

Runners' times increased by two or three minutes due to the soggy course.

“It was unlike anything I had ever seen,” girls' coach Katie Smith said. “The winner was who could stand and who had the most fortitude.”

Senior Kayla Lane had a positive outlook on the meet despite the disappointing times.

“It was definitely an adventure for me that I'll never forget from senior year,” she said. “I was incredibly proud of all my teammates for pushing through and having a good attitude. I mean I'm sure if we saw ourselves attempting to run through six inches or more of mud we would've laughed so hard.”



photo: Katie Smith

Rain or shine The boys' cross country team is all grins – and mud – after finishing a very difficult run at the state meet in Waco on Oct. 31. From left: freshmen Nathan Ging, Daniel Lane, Paul Stanglin, and Mitchell Johnson; coach Jeffery Bates; and sophomores Derek Lilya and David Tiner.

Varsity girls bring more experience into new soccer season

By Isabel Harris

The varsity girls' soccer team had their first scrimmage on Nov. 2 against San Juan Diego and won 10-0. They began after-school practice on Oct. 19 and had their first official game on Nov. 11 against San Marcos Academy just after the Bear Facts print deadline.

Like last year, the team is coached by Cash Miller, who also coaches the varsity boys. The team is composed of 13 girls, including five se-

same way, getting them to focus on position and control.

Miller said the girls' biggest competition this year is going to be Veritas, who won the state championship two years ago. He said they will play many good teams this year, but he added that the best team does not always win, and wins or losses don't define the individual team. But he added that the girls are capable of doing very well.

“Making it to state would be a big accom-

plishment for the team, and the team has a possibility to make it to the final game of the year,” Miller said.

Many girls have been looking forward to the season – being able to grow as a team and just having fun.

“Coach Cash is going to be working with a lot more experience this year, it being his second year with the girls, and he has been pushing us to work together as a team,” Connor said.

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Seventh-grade retreat features climbing, swinging, bonding

By Andrew Schmitz

Leap of Faith, rock walls, and a giant swing were just a few of the bonding activities at this year's seventh-grade retreat. Fifty-one energetic, excited students left BCS for Camp Buckner at about 8:30 a.m. on Oct. 19 for two days to bond with classmates.

When they arrived, students were divided into six groups, with each led by one of six BCS seniors who came along: Sarah Connor, Brenna Decker, Laura Doyle, John Hollingsworth, Martha Hughes, and Jake Velasco.

After arriving at their destination in a bus and two vans, the students began their activities, with the seniors and their groups getting to know each other. After lunch, they hiked to the ropes course, where students put on harnesses and took turns on five different activities.

These included a rock wall, a giant swing, and the challenging "Leap of Faith."

Free time was next, when students could play things like basketball, football, and gaga ball. Then students became hungry and went to eat dinner. After dinner the students played group games like dodgeball. It was then time for a devotional by the fire with s'mores.

Finally, they went back to their cabins to

prepare to go to sleep. The seniors were given a big responsibility because the teachers were separated from the students, so it was just the students and the seniors in the cabins. Seniors led cabin devotionals, which sponsor Travis Pollard called "a very meaningful time for the students."

"I was impressed with the preparation that the seniors put into the retreat," said Pollard, who was once again in charge of this retreat.

Pollard was accompanied by teachers Chloe Campbell, Evan Johnson, and Jonathan Weed; secondary principal Carol Johnson; and counselor Karyn Morris. Morris said she really enjoyed her time on the retreat and got to know the students better.

"The kids were very good at encouraging each other, and it was very cool to see different students hanging out with people they haven't talked to before," she said.

Sponsors had a couple of retreat goals in mind for students, including bonding among the class and strengthening their faith in Christ. From the students', teachers', and administrators' feedback, this year's retreat was a huge success.

"The retreat was a great experience because we were all together, and that helped us bond as a group," seventh-grader Abi Walker said.



photo: Dorothy Walters

Fun and games Seventh graders enjoy a game of football with counselor Jake Velasco. While most students had fun wearing harnesses and braving heights, all appreciated the chance to run and play games with their friends and senior counselors.



photo: Kaleen Graessle

Dressed as crew members of the USS Enterprise, Minions, and Jedi, Brentwood Christian NHS members braved inclement weather to drive to Rosedale School on Oct. 30 to celebrate Halloween with the students. Most of the morning was spent huddled in the hallways because a tornado touched down in Austin during a day of record-setting rainfall. When it was safe to come out, NHS entertained Rosedale with wheelchair races, cupcake decorating, and face painting. The day culminated in a dance party in the cafeteria.

Football ends on winner

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interception.

"It was a record setting day for us with strong offensive performances all around," Caffey said.

On Oct. 16, the Bears traveled to Waco to take on the Vikings of Vanguard College Preparatory School. The Bears controlled the contest early in rushing out to a 40-24 halftime lead. But a sloppy third quarter by the Bears allowed the Vikings to move ahead on the scoreboard. The feisty Bears were forced to play catch up in the fourth quarter, and the team ultimately fell short with the Vikings defeating the Bears 79-70.

In that game, Johnson reached the end zone seven times on the ground while rushing for a team high 250 yards. Sophomore Hunter Burcham grabbed 5 catches for 108 yards and two scores. Drenner rounded out the scoring with a touchdown catch, while Best caught 10 balls for 187 yards.

The Bears actually outgained their opponent on offense with 673 yards to their 505.

"We could not get our extra points consistently, and that proved to be the difference," Caffey explained.

For the season the Bears averaged 56 points per game along with 468 yards of total offense; 312 yards per game through the air and 156 yards per game rushing.

Johnson led the squad in passing with 2,377 yards and 30 touchdowns; he also led in rushing with 1,089 yards and 25 touchdowns.

Best led all receivers with 50 total catches, including 10 touchdowns.

A total of 10 different players scored touchdowns during the season.

Johnson led the Bears on defense with 69 tackles; other leading tacklers were Dillard, Burcham, and Benton.

Benton also paced the defense with four interceptions on the year.

Brentwood's home game scheduled for Oct. 31 was canceled due to rain and flooding.

While players battled the physical challenges of a difficult sport, they found the season fulfilling.

"This was a tough year because it was the first year," Best said, "but we improved a lot and had fun as a team."

Caffey added that with the Bears' strong finish, the team will be heading into next year looking to use their experience to build a winning season.