



THE BEAR FACTS



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BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 2014

IN SHORT

Prayers requested

Craig Moore, a former BCS teacher and frequent substitute, suffered a heart attack on Feb. 1 and has been in critical condition at North Austin Medical Center. The family asks for prayers; you may check his status at caring-bridge.org under "T. Craig Moore."

Math success

The BCS high school math team won second-place sweepstakes at San Antonio MacArthur High on Jan. 25. They placed well enough in the four math and science events to overcome not having entries in the other 13 UIL events. Coached by parent David Armstrong, the team has also excelled in its three "virtual meets" against 4A schools 10 times as large as BCS. Armstrong says he often wonders what could happen if BCS students also competed in the other UIL events.

Musicians recognized

Five students were named to the TPS-MEA All-State Band and Choir: sophomore Andrew Armstrong (trombone), and juniors Kate Zipperer (flute), Tyler Clark (choir), Youngwoo Kim (choir), and Matthew Scarborough (choir). Students are rehearsing at Texas State University today and will perform a concert there on Feb. 8.

Open house

Brentwood Christian's fourth-annual Admissions Open House on Feb. 2 was "very successful," according to admissions director Kimberly McLain. Despite the cold weather, McLain said there was a steady stream of visitors from the 2 p.m. start time until well after the 4 p.m. close. Many people commented on the beauty of the campus and gave "fabulous feedback" on their student volunteer escorts.

Witcher named NCSA Teacher of the Year

By Camille Sunshine

High school teacher Mel Witcher has been named the 2014 Teacher of the Year by the National Christian School Association.

Last August, he won the same award from the Texas Christian Schools Association.

Witcher will be honored at a banquet on March 7 in Nashville, Tenn., at the annual NCSA conference. He is the fifth member of BCS faculty and administration to be recognized by the NCSA; former librarian Sandra Morrow, BCS president Marquita Moss, elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed, and former English teacher Linda Pimentel have been recognized over the past 13 years. Pimentel is the only other Teacher of the Year, which she was named in 2009.

Last fall, Witcher was asked by Moss to put together his "philosophy of education"

see **Witcher**, page 5

Basketball renaissance

Varsity boys close in on first hoops title since 1999

By MJ Sung

The varsity boys are on an 11-game winning streak and are first in district with a 10-0 record. The Bears have not lost since early December and will win their first district championship since 1999.

Brentwood has a game at San Juan Diego today at 7:30 p.m. and a final district game Feb. 11 at Concordia. Playoffs begin on Feb. 18.

"We're playing really hard, and I can see it's paying off," senior Mike Taylor said. "We want to be undefeated in district."

Last year, the team finished tied for second in district with a 9-4 record. Their season ended with a bi-district playoff loss against Keystone Christian in San Antonio.

Head coach Brian Thrift said he is very pleased with the progress the boys have made this season and with the leadership from upperclassmen. During the summer, the team played in a Georgetown league, which was an opportunity to help the freshmen and new varsity members get used to playing with the older athletes.

Last week after beating Round Rock Christian by more than 30 points, Thrift expressed confidence in his team.

"The entire team played their best game of the season, which is a good sign as we near the playoffs," he said. "If we can keep that momentum going, we will be able to go into the playoffs playing our best basketball."

Thrift said his team needs to remain grounded and focused as they play their final games.

"If we can do that, things will be in place to make a deep run in the playoffs," he said.

Junior Cody Hunt leads the team with 15 points per game. He is followed by senior Kent Howell with 10 and Taylor with 9.5. Senior Wesley Mory leads in rebounding with an average of 6.5 per game, followed by sophomore Robert Lesko with 4.5. Junior Aaron Garcia leads with 2.3 assists per game.

"I think the dedication of the entire team is coming to light," Mory said. "We have positioned ourselves for a great shot at the district championship, and advancing in the playoffs,

see **Boys**, page 6

Middle school one-act play opens tonight

By Camille Sunshine

The seventh- and eighth-grade drama classes will perform two one-act plays tonight and tomorrow night at 7 p.m. Tickets can be purchased either at the box office beginning at 6 p.m. both nights.

The first play, "The Ugly Duckling," was written by A.A. Milne in 1941, and, contrary to what the name seems to imply, it has absolutely nothing to do with ducks. It is the story of a princess named Camilla who is put under a spell that makes her so ugly that no one will marry her. But one day, a prince who has never seen her before comes to town. Could this be the chance for the ugly princess to get a husband?

This play stars eighth-grader Paris Bowman as Princess Camilla, with seventh-grader Whit Allee and eighth-grader Merideth Mallett playing her parents. The Prince is played by eighth-grader Patrick Hanrahan.

The second play, written by Lindsay Price in 2004, is a more modern play called "School Daze." It is a vignette play, made up of little epi-

sodes, frozen poses, and tableaux, and is played by an ensemble rather than main characters.

It is the story of middle school – all the woes, challenges, fun, and humor it brings. Each of the actors plays about six parts, changing only small articles of clothing such as a hat.

Students received their scripts right before the Christmas holidays, and they have been practicing since the spring semester began. Director Cindy Singleton said elementary librarian Tere Hager has been helping out a lot.

For Singleton, this year has been particularly challenging to juggle, starting with the musical in the fall and going through the TAPPS one-act for high school. She has not taught middle school drama since 1999.

"It's just a complicated year," Singleton said.

Singleton began teaching at Brentwood in 1992. Since then, she has gone back and forth between teaching speech, theater, Spanish, health, and even some Texas History. She currently teaches middle school and high school theater, speech, and study hall.



photo: Grace Cammack

Growing up MaeAnne Herring (front), Madison Bailey, Jaclyn Wishard, and Daniel Lane practice "School Daze."

Big News from Little China: Grace Cammack

We all deserve equal respect, but does this mean equal treatment?

I do not believe in equal treatment. I think it is the most impersonal, rude, and apathetic way to treat humanity.

Everyone pause and take a breath.

Now let me explain.

My biggest issue against a push for equality among any group, teen or adult, is that people should not all be treated the same. That's not what people really need, or even want, for that matter. People want to be commended for their accomplishments and motivated when they fall short. People deserve to be avoided when you've decided their presence is not good for you. Friends should treat each other as if they've lived their entire life together because, at least at Brentwood, you probably have. Moms should be treated like they can ground you in a minute but they are also your backup best friend if your actual best friend decides to take a break. All people deserve to be treated as if they are a completely different individual from the person sitting next to them.

So equal treatment? No. Equal respect? Yes.

What people don't deserve but want and need the most is equal respect. Not the respect that manifests itself in "Yes, ma'am," and "No, sir," but the respect that takes place in the mind: the respect that says, "Whether I like you or not, you're still a person who has valid opinions and feelings. So I'll listen to you." That's what people really need, and that's what we ought to give them.

Let's take a look at the life of Jesus. The disciples and the Pharisees received extremely different treatment, but are we going to conclude that Jesus was disrespectful to either party? I should hope not.

Even though my best friend and my mom have two completely different personalities, that doesn't mean one ought to have more respect than the other. I shouldn't degrade one and uphold the other. I give them my full attention and care when something is wrong. I defend them when they are being accused. But

I'm not going to mention an inside joke to my mom. That's the difference between making a distinction and showing disrespect.

Many adults might be hitting the brakes at this point, exclaiming that, "You shouldn't have inside jokes because they exclude others and make them feel bad for not being included!"

Take another breath.

You will be closer to some people than to others. You will unintentionally exclude others, and sometimes (actually a lot of the time) this is OK. But today's adults seem so focused on teens being involved constantly and making sure no one is ever left out of anything that those who are not comfortable socializing with a certain group feel as if they are stuck in an awkward "friendship limbo" somewhere between "our moms are friends" and "we are actually best friends." This doesn't mean exclusion is always OK, but it's not something to be completely expunged. This might just be me, but I do not want to live in a world that al-

ways accepts me. I want to be accepted, but not by all. I want to be challenged by people's inevitable hatred towards me. Exclusion doesn't equal disrespect, and inclusion doesn't equal respect.

And this brings me to my insinuated point: Treatment and respect are different things that do not have to correlate. If I am being torn down by my peers, or if I just don't like being around them for some reason, and the feeling is mutual, I ought to have the freedom to stay away for both our sakes without being told I am a "bully," not a "team player," or being "rude." I ought to be able to do what is best for that class, my family, or the people around me by not getting involved with someone with whom I have a mutual dislike. This does not mean I am disrespecting them. In fact, it could be seen as a form of respect. If I share a mutual dislike with someone, forcing us to interact be-

see **Editor**, page 8

Letters From Lady MacBeth: Elizabeth McKinney

Senior looks back, sees drastic changes, God's love

I vividly remember my first day at Brentwood when I came in third grade. We arrived on campus at 7:28 a.m., and my dad waited outside with me until the bell rang because I did not know anyone. Later that day, I met Grace Cammack. Our first conversation went a little like this:

Grace: "So tell me about yourself."

Me: "There's not really much to tell."

Word of advice to people trying to make friends: Try a little harder than I did.

Ten years later, however, I can now confidently say that I have much to tell. I have accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior; I have published a book and am working on editing the second; I have developed an interest in photography; my brother is married; and I am attending Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va., this fall.

Yes, my life has changed drastically since my tentative arrival at BCS, and I truly believe my time here has blessed me in an extraordinary way. I have made friends with whom I know I will keep in contact long after graduation. I have learned more about God than I thought there was to learn, and many of the lessons have come from my peers. I have seen God's forgiveness, mercy, love, sense of humor, and majesty reflected in the people around me, and I have become a much stronger Christian and better person because of the lessons I have learned.

So how will I cope with college next year? How will I be able to form new friendships as strong as the ones I've forged here? Brentwood has been my home for ten years, and the thought of never attending school here again is a very strange one indeed. This school, these

people, these hallways – they're basically all I have ever known. August will bring new faces, new places, new hallways, and new lessons. A new chapter in my life will begin, one that will not be as long as the Brentwood chapter, but hopefully just as rich and blessed.

Because one thing will not change when I graduate and drive the two 14-hour days to Virginia: God. My friends will all go their separate ways, my parents will remain in Texas, my brother and sister-in-law will probably be in Germany, and I will be on my own for the first time in my life. But God has been the one constant in my life; He has never changed, nor given up on me, nor been farther than a whispered word away. He knows what lessons are waiting for me in Virginia. He knows in what ways I still need to grow. He knows who will make the best roommates for me. And so I can rest assured that no matter what happens, He will be by my side.

I will miss my friends dearly. I will miss Brentwood and all its oddities that only fellow BCS students can understand. I will miss my teachers. I might even be able to bring myself to miss Texas and its bipolar weather.

But I am excited for Liberty. I am thrilled at the thought of living on my own and being able to leave my shoes lying around wherever I want. I am eager

to gain more amazing friends and learn from knowledgeable professors.

More than all that, however, I am impatient to grow as a person, to seek and study and nurture the woman God intends me to be.

When I come back and visit, I'm convinced I will have amazing stories to tell about my friends and my professors and all the misadventures at Liberty. And I hope I will be wiser, more patient, more passionate, more bold, more creative, and more in love with my God than ever before.

Thanks for everything, Brentwood.



photo: Libby Weed

Getting friendly The Zoo Man made his annual stop at BCS on Jan. 27. He brought Julius Squeezer, the boa constrictor, who got to meet fifth-grader Gia Kidwell and fourth-grader David Ayala.

THE BEAR FACTS

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

Sixth grade gets sneak peek at mission control room

By Deirdre Smith

Not that long ago in a galaxy not so far, far away, Brentwood Christian's sixth-grade classes traveled to a place where many a sixth-grader has gone before. They embarked on a journey to experience the final frontier and learn about the enigma that is space.

Sixth-grade teachers Michelle Mohrmann, Kay Taylor, Amber Kidd, and Becky Stewart took their classes on the NASA field trip to Challenger Centers, Space Center Houston, and Johnson Space Center by a fleet of parent sponsor vehicles on Jan. 16. This annual trip accompanies the space-themed history lessons taught in class.

This was Stewart's 29th year organizing and going on the annual NASA field trip.

"I know my way around Space Center Houston and Johnson Space Center," Stewart said. "Sometimes when I am directing our students and giving them specifics about where to meet and answering their questions, regular visitors

will come up to me to ask questions too."

The group departed from BCS at 5:45 a.m. Arriving in Houston, they divided, and students with Mohrmann and Kidd experienced either a simulated session as an astronaut or a session as a mission controller from home base at the George Observatory in Brazos Bend State Park.

"In my session I was the mission controller with Adrie (Gruis), and even though we were together it was hard to hear each other," Kirsten Morgan said. "At one point, we ran across a solar flare, and we had 10 seconds to get away before it blew up. It was really realistic!"

While that group was at the George Observatory, students with Stewart and Taylor joined up at Challenger Center in the Houston Museum of Natural Science to complete a similar simulated mission.

After some activities at Space Center Houston and a tram tour to NASA's Johnson Space Center, the sixth graders saw the mission control room which is currently in preparation for

the Orion spacecraft missions that will visit asteroids and Mars, its first mission being in the fall.

"The control room was brand new, and (the crew) told us that no paper would ever be in that room because they would only be using electronics," Kelli Tindel said.

Finally the trip ended with an IMAX movie about space travel and kids had the chance to touch a moon rock and see the actual Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo Capsules.

"The moon rock was really cool because it felt like tile," Taylor Warner said. "Everyone got to feel it."

The students also got to go inside a duplicate space shuttle and see the mock control panel used to control the ship.



Beam me up Sixth-graders Peyton Sparks and Cash Urban work in mission control at Challenger Center in the Houston Museum of Natural Science on Jan. 16.

photo: Kay Taylor

After seeing the new control room, the lot left for Brentwood and arrived back at 9:45 p.m.

BCS students join college choir in special show

By Tony Lee

Brentwood Christian's high school choir enjoyed the unique opportunity to join with the York College Concert Choir on stage for a collaboration at a special concert on Jan. 9 in the theater.

York, a Christian college in Nebraska, was visiting Austin as part of their Winter Tour.

"They usually go to places where there are alumni, and there are several people at BCS who are York alumni," BCS choir director Missy Weaver explained.

The BCS choir practiced two songs they were

going to sing together with the college choir on the day of the concert. The concert started with both choirs singing "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus." Then the York choir presented other songs such as "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go" and "The Lord is the Everlasting God." They finally ended with the college choir's version of "The Lord Bless You and Keep You" with the BCS choir.

"They are a very professional-sounding group, and I thought it was a great concert," Weaver said. "They did a variety of music that was challenging, yet enjoyable for the audience."

BCS singers were really proud and glad to harmonize with a college group with more involvement and maturity. It was a new kind of experience for them in that they had to follow instructions of the York choir's director, singing along to their edition of the songs.

"It was a great chance to watch a college choir performing, and we could find out about our potential," junior Haley Hutson said.

Students found other things to enjoy besides the singing.

"I really liked the harmonies going on, and I thought the conductor of the York choir was hilarious!" senior Alex Singleton said.

Some even learned lessons from the show.

"The tenors were really good at pulling the sound from their stomach, not from inside their neck," senior Chris Lee said. "The sound was really pretty, and I thought I should try to make sounds with my stomach, too."

Elementary students read, pray in chapel

By Lauren Petrik

Many fifth and second graders have been stepping up into leadership positions in their weekly chapel services this year.

Children in fifth grade have been volunteering all year to read a scripture that complements the devotional message, or to say a prayer. Students who initially volunteered had their names sent to elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed, who formed a schedule of participation. Each week a different student is given a scripture reference by the person who is scheduled to give a lesson.

"The students who participate really enjoy it and look forward to it each week," fifth-grade teacher Cynthia Davis said.

It's a similar story with the second graders, who started their participation more recently. Alphabetically, they are asked if they want to participate, and many have volunteered willingly. They, too, are given a scripture reference, and since they are younger, a written prayer is provided.

"Everybody that has already done it likes it," said second-grader Natalie Petrik, who is eagerly awaiting her turn.



photo: Dorothy Walters

Standout Junior Yara Qussad solos in "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" during the York College Concert Choir's performance at BCS on Jan. 9. Brentwood students enjoyed the unique opportunity to sing along with their college counterparts.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: Jackson Hager

Seniors featured in the Bear Facts were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS Class of 2014.

StuCo president meets passionate history buff

By Nicholas Bergeron

Jackson Hager is bespectacled, soft-spoken, and smiles readily; something in his appearance makes you comfortable talking with him. His persona gives an air of ready attention.

Jackson shifts seamlessly between two aspects of his personality. BCS students and faculty see him about the campus whether singing tenor in the choir; working as stage manager for the theater, as he did alongside senior Grace Cammack for Brentwood's production of "Annie" earlier this year; sparking challenging discussion in Bible class – for which he's garnered the academics award three years running (he admits he's hoping for a fourth this year); or planning and preparing for school-wide events as Student Council president.

However, Jackson is also perfectly comfortable when not busy with the résumé-nourishing work for which he is known here-

abouts. When extra-curricular activities don't require his time, Jackson can often be found reading, especially his favorite subject, history. Sometimes he'll choose Plutarch or Conrad, but he might go with a "guilty pleasure," such as the series of "cheesy science-fiction" novels, "Warhammer 40,000." He describes himself as one who loves to learn, even outside the classroom.

"Jackson is one who challenges the barriers," Bible teacher Mel Witcher says, while noting that, in class discussion, Jackson can elicit discussion and "disagree while validating the other people."

Witcher says Jackson's style of learning recalls the prophets of the Old Testament, who continuously pushed and questioned to uncover the truth.

Jackson remembers how, when he first came to Brentwood as a fourth-grade student in '06, the community made him feel welcomed and valuable. Though everything didn't click immediately, it wasn't long before he became the heavily-involved man of the campus he is now. Specifically, he cites an incident in '08 when his father was victim to a hit-and-run car accident.

"There was an outpouring of love," Jackson recalls. "We got food from teachers and cards from students we didn't even know."

The Hager family consists of Jackson, Josh (junior), Corrie (seventh grade) and his parents, Mark, the school's finance committee chair, and Tere, the elementary librarian. They have two dogs: May and Uno.

Senior Natalie Bergeron remembers an incident during freshman-year English. The class was studying "Romeo and Juliet," and Jackson was assigned to act out one of the play's many swordfights to the death. Using a cardboard

weapon the class made from their earlier study of "The Odyssey" and donning the hat used to hold clothespins for calling names, Jackson acted out his scene with Bryce Morin ... just as the substitute teacher walked in.

Another humorous anecdote is recalled by senior Jamie Messinger. In eighth-grade Bible, teacher David Peyton was describing the birth of his first son. At the mention of blood, Jackson "mentioned something about fainting" and promptly fainted. The class rushed over as one to see if he was OK, and he was.

Jackson's career in Student Council started when he was elected treasurer as a sophomore. The subsequent year he was elected vice president, running "Jackson & Jackson" with then-senior Jackson Graessle.

"(It's) such a good opportunity to grow in leadership skills and in other areas," Jackson says.

Working as stage manager for this year's musical was another great achievement for Jackson. Having been a theater tech student for some time, he this year has climbed "up to the top of the ladder." He was in charge mainly of directing the building and painting of props for the production.

Another element of Jackson's personality to which anybody who knows him can testify is his passion for politics and current events. From Ukraine to Uganda to the USA, Jackson is one who is deeply concerned about injustice.

"He likes to talk about politics and stuff that he believes in," Corrie says.

He does the reading and thinking to maintain and develop his views of social issues and the world around him. He brings his views with him to discussions too, whether in class or free time, along with, of course, the respect and courtesy productive discourse requires. His

views on politics, social issues, and religion began to seriously develop during his freshman year.

While earlier in life Jackson had adhered to the conservative views of his parents, around ninth grade he began the ongoing process of reevaluating his beliefs. Hand-in-hand with his second look at biblical hermeneutics, Jackson took in volumes of science, politics, and theology, finding that, on many socio-political issues, his stance is "more left-wing."

"(It was) a lot of serious reading and thinking," he says.

Even now, Jackson is still in the process of rethinking and questioning his beliefs on politics and social issues, keeping an open mind.

After high school, Jackson plans to major in history at ACU and work "wherever that (degree) takes me" – even possibly overseas.



photo: submitted

Ankutse goes 12 rounds, wins Spelling Bee

By Samantha Mack

Seventh-grader Emmanuel Ankutse won the 2014 Brentwood Spelling Bee on Jan. 17 in the auditorium. He walked out with a trophy, a medal, and only one misspelled word in the entire bee.

In round 12, Ankutse and sixth-grader Cade Young were the last two contestants standing. Young misspelled his word before Ankutse then spelled "detrimental" correctly. He went on to seal his victory by correctly spelling "infirmary."

All of the finalists received medals, and four special awards were given to the competitors with the best sportsmanship, poise, enunciation

of letters, and spirit.

This year, 21 students were eligible for the bee, but illness kept one from participating. First through sixth grade each had two representatives, and seventh and eighth each had four.

The first round began with the word "rug." No one missed their word in the first round, but the words gradually got harder throughout the competition, and by the end of round six only nine contestants remained.

In round 10, all five of the remaining contestants misspelled their words, so all five were allowed to remain.

Parent Sharonda Cooper was the main coordinator of the event, and three teachers helped judge. Secondary teacher Dr. Brooke Holling-

sworth pronounced the words for each student to spell, third-grade teacher Evelyn Ellis told the competitors if they spelled their words correctly or not, and elementary librarian Tere Hager answered any questions they had about their words.

Ankutse will move on to compete in the regional bee on Feb. 7 at the Harmony Science School in Austin. He also has the chance to compete in district, state, and national levels for a \$40,000 grand prize.



photo: Dorothy Walters

S-u-c-c-e-s-s Seventh-grader Emmanuel Ankutse won Brentwood's fourth-annual Spelling Bee, in which his sister Leah, a third grader, also competed.

A 'whole new world' of learning, giving, and recess!

By Claire Nestor

When you first enter Cynthia Hutson's second-grade class, you are impressed by the fun group of different personalities that are eager to learn.

Many students are sitting in their small chairs at their tables focused on their work, while some are talking quietly to their neighbors, and a few are waiting to ask Mrs. Hutson a question. Their patient teacher keeps them focused and on task all day until their dismissal at 2:30.

Brentwood Christian's second-grade classes learn a lot. Throughout the year they study about bats, reptiles, plants, pioneers, and even how to square dance. They talk about Jesus' miracles, like when He healed the blind man and when He raised Lazarus from the dead. Around Christmas time, they learn about Jesus' different names.

"They're enthusiastic about learning new things," Hutson said.

They work at tables with large blue dividers between them to control eyes from wandering onto someone else's paper. Their supplies are still kept in plastic pencil boxes with additional things in a tub next to their seat.

Hutson said if the class wants something they'll work for it and get it. This became evident when the class brought in more than 14

items per student – the most generous offering in the entire school – during Brentwood's Thanksgiving food drive.

Hutson's class is hardworking and full of laughter. One moment they're focused on their work; the next, they're laughing at Lauren Rutt's contagious giggle.

Rutt and classmate Riley Shellenberger both said Hutson is their favorite teacher because she is always so nice.

"I like everything about her," Lyla Kate

Jackson said.

Hutson helps her students apply and build upon the fundamentals they learned in first grade and kindergarten. For example, now that they have basic addition down, they are working on how to borrow and regroup. Math problems might include $73 - 46$ or $87 + 63$. They continue adding bricks to their houses of knowledge.

"I think it's fun for them because it opens them up to a whole new world," Hutson said.

The class goes on four field trips throughout the year to learn more and experience the things they have learned about.

In the first semester the second grade went to the Austin Nature and Science Center twice, once to learn about reptiles and the other to learn about bats. This semester, they plan to go on a trip to Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center to explore more about plants, and go to Pioneer Farms when they read Laura Ingalls Wilder's "Little House in the Big Woods."

Many students say their favorite part of the day is recess, and several of them make sure to remind their teacher so she won't forget. The boys are eager to get out in the field next to the lower elementary playground and play football. The girls can't wait to swing, play on jungle gyms, or just run around and talk with their friends.

Mrs. Hutson's class is busy learning the fun new ideas of second grade. They are eager to learn and enjoy each other's company.

photo: Hannah Kwon



McCully wins Geography Bee

By Samantha Mack

Eighth-grader Mason McCully won Brentwood Christian's National Geographic Bee on Jan. 13, beating sixth-grader Isaac Copeland in the championship round. Teachers and students from third through eighth grade attended the bee held in the auditorium and watched as the 10 students sitting in chairs on the stage battled it out for the Geography Bee medal.

McCully won the bee by correctly answering all three of the final questions, one of which asked about Portland being in what New England state. The answer was Maine, which only McCully answered correctly.

The bee started a week earlier with the classroom-level questions asked to fourth through eighth graders. Students who correctly answered all seven of the questions automatically qualified as a finalist, and those with six correct went on to compete in a written tie-breaker. The only one to answer all seven correctly this year was seventh-grader Alex Kemsley.

The competition among the 10 finalists only

took four rounds and a championship round. The finalists included four sixth graders, two seventh graders, and four eighth graders. Nine out of the ten students missed their first question, and only McCully, who answered the question about which US state Big Bend National Park is located in, responded accurately.

In the second round the finalists wrote down the name of the river on which Hoover Dam is located. The correct answer was the Colorado River. In the third round, the remaining contestants were given a US map, and each was asked a different question. After the fourth round, only McCully and Copeland remained.

Jonathan Weed was the moderator for the bee, while Becky Stewart kept the score. Fifth-grade teacher Cynthia Davis acted as the time keeper, and elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed held the microphone for the competitors.

After the bee, McCully took a written test to qualify for the state-level competition. He will find out in a few weeks if he scored in the state's top 100 and can compete in the state bee held on April 4 near Dallas.

Witcher recognized for excellence

continued from page 1

because she was going to nominate him. Moss informed him that he won the award between classes on Jan. 27.

When asked how he felt about it, he said that he felt both shock and humility.

"I kept thinking, 'These people haven't walked into my classroom and seen my file cabinets standing open,'" Witcher said, referring to his organizational challenges.



When Witcher started at Brentwood in 1989, he was a part-time band teacher who was studying to be a preacher. But as Moss describes it, he soon "caught the vision" of BCS. Since then, he is known by all for

his diverse academic interests, and for demonstrating that in all things, God's creative power can be observed.

Witcher has taught many courses through the years; his current schedule includes senior boys' Bible, World History, and Humanities.

Year after year, he remains a favorite with students. Senior Erin Atchley calls him "the most passionate teacher I've ever had."

"He loves all that he does, and he loves his students even more," she said. "My favorite thing about Mr. Witcher is when he gets so excited about a topic; he can't contain his smiles and laughter, and he even sometimes forgets to breathe!"

Moss said his influence with his students remains long after they graduate, pointing to the fact that alumni return to campus each year seeking his wisdom.

"No student who emerges from a year with Mr. Witcher leaves without a deeper understanding of the love of God and His plan for mankind that infuses all of life," Moss said.

Tough district has soccer girls fighting for playoff spot

By Joshua Sass

After starting the season 1-5, the Lady Bears bounced back to go undefeated in their first three games in district play. They are 1-1-2 in district through last week's games and are on track to qualify for playoffs.

The girls' next game is Feb. 13 against New Braunfels Christian at home. That game will

likely reveal which team will finish third in district and thus advance to playoffs, which begin Feb. 25.

"I expect us to do a lot better than last year," said sophomore team captain Hailey Miller, who leads the team with six district goals. "We have the potential to make it a few rounds into playoffs this year."

The offense has taken a hard hit since senior

goalkeeper Jasmine Selman has been out with a concussion. Junior Rachel Dixon was taken from the offensive side of the field and has been playing the role of goalkeeper.

"She has done an awesome job in that new role," head coach Stephen Colwell said, "but it's a major adjustment for our game plan."

The girls are a really tight-knit group, with some of them having played on the same team before coming to Brentwood. This allows them to communicate especially well on the field with one another. Six of the girls are planning to go on the Honduras mission trip in the summer, another indication of team unity.

"This team is pretty close," Colwell said. "They all just want to be successful and leave the drama behind."

The Lady Bears went to the Ft. Worth Christian Tournament on Dec. 13-14 and finished 0-3, but the girls played all of the games with only 13 out of the 16 on the roster.

"It was tough on our team physically and mentally," Colwell said. "But I think the adversity was good for us too."

Following are the team's recent results:

1/9: Gateway 2-0 W

The girls won their first game of the new year with their first goals of the season, scored by Miller and senior Molly McCormick.

"This win was huge for us," Colwell said.

"It's the first non-district victory in my three years of coaching. It was really good to get this win before district begins."

1/16: John Paul II 0-0 T

In their first district game, BCS could not score against a strong defense, in spite of numerous shots by Miller and freshman Lauren Petrik.

1/21: Our Lady of the Hills 5-0 W

The Lady Bears dominated in their first district win. Miller had four goals, and McCormick had one. Brentwood started fast with a 3-0 lead in the first half.

1/27: @ New Braunfels Christian 2-2 T

The girls struggled defensively in the second half, allowing New Braunfels to come back from an early 2-0 deficit. But with two goals from Miller, the game ended in a draw.

"This was a hard one to swallow," Colwell said. "This is a team I felt we should have controlled easily, but we had one area where they were able to beat us, and they took advantage."

1/31: @ Veritas 6-0 L

BCS fought hard against the 13-0 Veritas squad that has outscored its opponents 66-0 this season. Veritas scored five goals on runs, and Dixon blocked one of their two penalty kicks.

"I'm really proud of the way the girls played," Colwell said. "They showed a lot of determination and worked hard together. The teamwork I saw was really encouraging."



photo: Rose Miller

Attacking Sophomores Hailey Miller, Natalie Williams, and Rebekah Legband move toward the goal in a recent game. Brentwood is in a struggle for a spot in playoffs.

Boys still undefeated in district at 10-0

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(due in large part to) the great coaching staff."

Following are the team's recent results:

12/16: @ Round Rock Christian 59-44 W

This was a tight game for three quarters until Brentwood's offense exploded for 20 points in the fourth quarter, outscoring RRCA 20-8. The BCS defense took over in the fourth quarter forcing RRCA into nine turnovers. Both Howell and Hunt led the team with 11 points. Mory chipped in nine points and 11 rebounds.

1/7: Giddings State School 66-33 W

The Bears built a 30-13 lead going into half-time. Their defense overpowered Giddings as BCS forced 25 turnovers in the game. Howell was the top scorer with 17 points, followed by Hunt with 13 and Taylor with 10.

1/9: @ TSD 26-19 W

TSD was without three starting players due to disciplinary reasons, so they stalled as much as possible as they were outmatched at every position. Again, the BCS defense was too much.

1/10: Temple Central TX 67-44 W

The Bears were ready to put on a show for the capacity homecoming crowd. They built a commanding lead going into halftime by outscoring CTCS 33-23. Garcia led the Bears in

the first half, connecting on four three-point baskets. In the second half, the boys built their lead to 30 points before finally winning by 23. Howell had a career-high 19 points, including three 3-pointers. Garcia finished with 16 points, followed by Lesko with 12 and Hunt with 10.

1/14: San Juan Diego 57-12 W

BCS built an early lead, going up 20-3 at the end of the first quarter. Everyone who played scored at least two points. Taylor led all scorers with 13, followed by Howell with 11. Hunt and freshman Jordan Johnson each had nine points.

1/17: Concordia 52-39 W

After a slow start in the first two quarters, the Bears scored 34 in the second half. Their defense was once again the deciding factor in the game. Hunt scored 16 points, while Taylor added 13 playing with a bad cold. Mory dominated inside with a season-high 11 rebounds. Lesko had eight points and 10 rebounds.

1/24: @ Temple Central TX 47-35 W

This game was tied 20-20 at halftime, but with defense and better execution, Brentwood pulled away. Hunt scored 20.

1/28: RR Christian 77-46 W

After a close first period where the Bears carried a 16-14 lead, the boys took control of the game in a 22-point second quarter that gave

them a 13-point lead at half-time. BCS then began to dominate in all facets of the game, as their lead swelled as high as 37 points. Hunt led the way with 18 points, followed by Taylor with 14. Mory chipped in 12 points to go along with 12 rebounds, and Garcia netted 11 points.

1/31: Giddings 80-70 W

Even though it was a home game, the Bears overcame a tough crowd of about 40 cowboys from a UT student group cheering for their opponent. BCS took a big lead before a Giddings player made six three-pointers in the second half and scored 38 points. Hunt led the Bears with 25 points, followed by Taylor's 18.

2/4: TSD 66-39 W

Brentwood's full-court pressure and outside shooting were too much for TSD, as they clinched their first district title in 15 years.



photo: Mark Merkord

Hunting for points Junior Cody Hunt heads for the basket in his team's victory over San Juan Diego.

Soccer boys close in on district title

By Jin Ha Jeong

Through Monday's 1-0 victory, the varsity boys are undefeated in district and expecting to host an area playoff game on Feb. 25.

"Each game we have controlled possession and dictated the flow of the game," head coach Cash Miller said.

Currently the team is 5-0 in district, with an overall record of 9-5. The Bears have scored 25 goals in district games and only allowed four goals. BCS has had multiple players scoring, from strikers to defensive midfielders. They have won games with better ball control and many ready players on the bench.

Sophomore Joshua Sass leads the team with 16 goals. Sophomore goalkeeper Mason Miller has recorded three shutouts and nine saves.

Before the semester break, the varsity team took the first place trophy in the Fort Worth Christian Cardinal Cup, winning all three of their games. Brentwood, a TAPPS 3A team, competed against schools ranging from 3A to 5A. Through these games the BCS soccer team

gained confidence for future games.

"Our teamwork has greatly improved, and I think we can compete for state," Sass said.

Coach Miller said the team's goal continues to be to reach the state tournament. After their 10 district games, the Bears would need to win two playoff games to reach the state tournament, which has the top four teams.

"We achieve this goal by training hard, better ball control in games, and playing smart," Miller said. "When we do these things we are difficult to beat."

Following are results of their district games:

1/12: @ San Juan Diego 3-2 W

Early in the first half the Bears fell behind, but junior Christian Montgomery tied it with a goal. In the second half, Brentwood fell behind again before Sass scored a goal, and then freshman Brandon Patterson scored the winning goal.

"It was a very physical and emotional game," senior Skylar Treut-Shaffer said. "We could feel the rivalry between us."

1/16: @ Waco Vanguard 2-0 W

Missing Sass and junior Jae Hwang, Brent-

wood still dominated. Sophomore Mason McCormick scored two goals.

1/27: St. Joseph 9-2 W

According to Treut-Shaffer, the first half was difficult because the wind was against them, so the Bears gave up the first goal. But they made up three goals, taking a 3-1 halftime lead over the Lions. In the second half, with the wind at their back, the Bears dominated. Ahead 7-2, Coach Miller moved up some of defense to the front line and made them attack. Sass

scored three and junior Brodie Brown scored two; Montgomery, Hwang, Treut-Shaffer, and junior Evan Herring also scored.

1/30: @ Holy Trinity 10-0 W

On this cold and windy day, Miller anticipated a victory, so he played more freshmen to give them more experience for the future. Sass



photo: Tina Treut

Unloading Senior Skylar Treut-Shaffer is one of the reasons BCS is undefeated in district and aiming for state.

scored four, Hwang scored two, McCormick scored two, and Montgomery scored two.

2/3: San Juan Diego 1-0 W

The rivalry continued with their closest competitor in district, as the Bears pulled out an important victory on a cold afternoon. Sass had the game's only goal early in the first half.

Lady Bears win district, continue quest for biggest prize

By Maria Harris

Brentwood's varsity girls' basketball team has clinched its fourth straight district title. They are undefeated in district at 8-0 and are 23-5 overall, looking forward to the start of playoffs on Feb. 22.

"The girls' challenge is to stay focused and keep working hard, and not to get complacent in the blowout wins," head coach Devan Loftis said. "We really have to practice harder and really compete in practice. Hopefully our tougher preseason schedule will help for playoffs."

Players are excited about getting the chance to make all the hard work pay off.

"Whether it's running until we want to puke, getting up early in order to make it to practice, or driving to College Station the day after Christmas, our team is dedicated to succeeding," junior Megan Burcham said.

Senior Ariana Marks, who leads the team with 20.5 points and 6.1 rebounds per game, said she has full confidence in her teammates and believes they can win state.

"Our main goal has always been to give 110 percent effort all the time, and if we continue to keep that up, we'll get some hardware."

Junior Nicole Glenn is scoring 11.2 points per game to go with 6.0 rebounds, 3.1 steals, and 2.1 blocks.

Junior Christina Onabajo has 5.4 rebounds and 2.4 steals per game, and sophomore Keely Hardin leads with 3.0 assists per game.

After some challenging tournament games during the Christmas break, the Lady Bears have had no trouble with their district opponents. Following are recent results:

12/26-28: McDonald's All-Star Classic

This tournament in Bryan over the Christmas break included 28 teams in the small school bracket, mostly 1-3A public schools. BCS started out with a 51-27 loss to 3A Fairfield, which took second in the tournament.

Later that day the Bears defeated Iola 55-40, led by 26 points from Marks. The girls won both of its games the next day: a 52-49 win over Wortham and a 59-40 win over Zavalla. Marks set a school record making 16 free throws in the first game. In the second, she made 7 of 11 three pointers and finished with 35 points.

Brentwood lost the final game to Paradise, 37-23. In that game, Marks scored her 1,000th point as a Lady Bear. She joins Stacie Hall ('06), Ashley Clement ('10) and Brittany Brunson ('12) as the only 1,000-point scorers during Loftis's 14 years as coach.

1/4: @ St. Andrew's 57-45 W

Brentwood led 20-7 after the first quarter. Four girls scored in double figures: Marks (18), Hardin (13), Glenn (12), and Onabajo (10).

1/9: @ TSD 48-24 W

The Lady Bears overcame poor shooting for their second district win. Marks scored 17

points with five assists, and Glenn had nine points and 11 rebounds.

1/10: CTC 70-30 W

In front of a large homecoming crowd, the girls had a hot shooting night, making 12 of 23 three-point shots. Freshman Alicia Dixon had 10 points off the bench, while Onabajo had eight points and eight rebounds.

1/14: San Juan Diego 76-9 W

Glenn led the way with 17 points and 11 rebounds, while Onabajo had 10 points and 10 rebounds. Marks had 14 points, and Hardin had seven assists. Eleven Bears scored.

1/17: @ Concordia 56-26 W

It was another quick start for the girls, as they scored 26 points in the first quarter and led 45-9 at halftime. Marks led the way with 17 points and broke the BCS career three-point record with her 150th three-point shot – in only two seasons at Brentwood.

1/24: @ Central Texas Christian 67-27 W

The Bears crushed their host by 40 points again. Brentwood scored 17 points in the first quarter and led 20-6 at halftime. Marks led with 22 points and six rebounds.

1/28: @ Round Rock Christian 83-19 W

BCS led 56-10 at the half, and Marks finished with 25 points, eight steals, and five assists. Glenn had 17 points and six steals.

2/4: TSD 55-29 W

After taking a 19-3 lead in the first quarter, the girls let off the gas. Marks had 26.

Loftis honored after 300 victories

By Mary Womack

Coach Devan Loftis was honored after his game on Tuesday, Jan. 14, with a surprise party to celebrate his 300 wins with the varsity girls' basketball program.

"The kids, families, faculty, and administration make this an amazing community," Loftis said afterward. "I feel very blessed."

The party started after the girls beat their district opponent San Juan Diego 76-9, and was a short but sweet celebration of Loftis's 14 years coaching. The night featured a ball dedication, video, and of course, cake.

When the game ended, athletic director Bri-

an Thrift spoke about Loftis's accomplishments. Then a projector screen was rolled out and a video was played with past and present players telling Loftis what he has meant to them.

"I was really honored by all the people who stayed around and all those who sent their messages," Loftis said.

With his players surrounding Loftis on the court and a crowd of about 200 people cheering him on, it was indeed a good night.

"I'm really grateful to all the players who have invested their time, energy, and devotion into our program. They really go out and win the games," Loftis said.

Jog-a-fun now easier for all

By Jonathon Reich

Jog-a-fun is only a month away, and this lap around it is bringing systematic changes to increase ease for students and administrators and raise the revenue from this fundraiser substantially.

Director of development Kevin Claypool said one of this year's goals is to raise at least \$150,000, which would be much more than the Jog has ever raised.

With the renovation of BCS's webpage, Brentwood administrators have been able to utilize the Internet to give students the choice of sending out sponsor letters by email. This new system also gives each student his or her own "Jog dashboard," which is linked to their BCS Bears email accounts and shows students the fruits of their fundraising efforts.

Going online means saving time and money, which Claypool said increases the expectation that the fundraiser can double its proceeds this year.

And with the capabilities of an online system, students have heftier expectations of them as well. While students are still required to enter at least 20 names into the online system, which is the same number of letters that has always been required, school officials are also aiming to bring in an average of \$150 per student. For families with more than one student, this number drops by \$25 per child up to four students, making the lowest family average \$75 per student.

Claypool said another major goal is to have 90 percent of students raise this requested average, which he said he believes can be done.

"Last year's numbers did not meet that goal," Claypool admitted. "But we're confident that with the new system and incentives offered, we can reach that goal (this year)."

Students who enter legitimate sponsor information for 20 people and have at least one paying sponsor will receive a Jog-a-fun T-shirt. Any students who do this and also bring in the average amount expected of them will have their names added to a prize drawing – ranging from a MacBook Air to a half-day water skiing trip, depending on the student's grade level. For every \$25 over their expected average, students will have their names added five more times to the drawing.

Students who reach the average will also be eligible for the "Jog free day" holiday on May 9; juniors and seniors taking AP tests that day will receive a make-up free day. In the past, this day was offered to any secondary student who sent out 20 letters, ran, and had at least one paying sponsor.

Homecoming brings smiles

'Golden Years' theme reviews 20th century

By Hannah Odom

Last month's homecoming week resulted in three wins for the Bears, some awesome costumes of different eras, and Bryce Morin and Joanna Stewart being selected king and queen.

For middle and high school students the week's theme was The Golden Years. The week started off on Jan. 6 with '20s and '30s Day, during which many girls dressed up as flappers and a handful of boys wore suits. Tuesday was '40s and '50s Day, when many of the girls dressed like the "We can do it!" poster from WWII, and most of the male population chose to opt out of dressing up.

Wednesday was '60s and '70s Day, which meant one thing: lots of hippies. Peace signs were all the rage, and bell bottoms came back in style with most of the student population. Thursday was '80s and '90s Day, and this meant big hair, leg warmers, basketball pants, and backwards hats. The finale of the week was Brentwood's annual Spirit Day. There was ample green hair and face paint and tons of enthusiasm which turned into flat-out screaming at the pep rally.

During Friday's afternoon pep rally, the cheerleaders started off by warming up the crowd, class by class. While most students seemed especially thrilled about getting loud, the freshmen and sophomores had other ideas.

"We exercised our right to remain silent," freshman Claire Polasek said.

Varsity soccer and basketball teams were introduced, and Brentwood's boys basketball team entered doing cartwheels. But they ended up bumping into each other and knocking their teammates over, forming a pile of players on

the court. Following their "big entrance" was more cheers and the announcing of the homecoming court by secondary principal Carol Johnson.

First came Lord Daniel Ayala and Lady Alicia Dixon. Then Lauren Lewis, who was wearing the Bear mascot costume, and Jonny Clifford, who was lifted up by his teammates, were named duke and duchess. Rachel Dixon was announced as princess, and Aaron Garcia, who was also lifted up by his teammates, was made prince. After a drumroll, Morin was revealed as king, edging out classmates Mike Taylor and Skylar Treut-Shaffer. It wasn't until that evening that Stewart was made queen.

The pep rally ended with a dance party, which included "The Cupid Shuffle," a favorite of many students. Many of the elementary students didn't know the dance so they substituted it with a dog pile.

That evening, Jan. 10, after the girls' varsity game, the entire court was formally introduced to the homecoming crowd. The nominees for queen, escorted by their fathers, included Erin Atchley, Avery Westerlund, and Stewart. Morin was able to ditch his wheelchair for a cane at this special occasion.

The Bears won all three of their games against Central Texas Christian School that



photo: Dorothy Walters

Bless the queen Junior Isabelle Graessle congratulates new Homecoming Queen Joanna Stewart on Jan. 10.

evening. Encore sang the national anthem before the varsity girls won 70-30, and the varsity boys later won 67-44.

Before the week began, StuCo members planned out the hallway decor. They made much of the C building into a timeline starting with high school office. They also made middle school into a "spirit hallway."

"I felt like a time traveler as I walked through the halls," freshman Mary Ruiz said.

StuCo members and cheerleaders worked on the hallways for a total of 20 hours.

Editor pokes holes in equality movement

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yond our norm could be the most unloving and disrespectful thing someone could do.

A mutual dislike is not a decision that will be made quickly. This isn't some petty decision based on an argument over "he said, she said." This is a decision subconsciously made by both parties based on personality compatibility. It's one that will happen after you've spent a long period of time with each other, like at school.

Nearly every adult you come across will tell you that there will be people whose personalities will not mesh with yours on any level, and both of you will understand that, sometimes without even realizing it. Can you have a civilized conversation without ripping each other apart? Of course you can – on a daily basis, even. But you

probably won't be choosing to spend your free time with each other, and that is OK.

Another favorite line I hear from adults is, "You could be missing out on so many friendships, though!"

I understand that, and one day your "friendship status" might change. But you don't have to make it change now. That's the thing about mutual dislikes: They don't have to be permanent, and very rarely are. Just as you naturally stay apart, you may naturally drift closer. Even though some people may seem annoying now, they can still be your friend later on after they've matured. Many people I thought would never be my friends and had always treated as such have turned out to be the exact opposite. Everyone wins in a mutual dislike: Neither of you end up hating each other due to prolonged

exposure, and you may end up friends.

In Romans 12, Paul says to "live at peace with everyone" as long as that status is within our control. "Peace" is not intruding where you are not welcome or comfortable. "Peace" is not staying put when you do not feel emotionally or physically safe. "Peace" is peaceful for everyone involved. Peace is agreeing to disagree and leaving it alone. Equal respect: seeing people's value, but leaving them alone.

So, no. I do not support equal treatment. Treating people in such a "cookie cutter" fashion is not healthy, nor does it reflect the real world. But just because I treat people differently doesn't mean they don't all have my respect. I'll be polite, I'll listen if you want to talk, and I'll even laugh at your jokes. But I won't treat you like someone you aren't.