



# THE BEAR FACTS



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BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

MAY 2015

see pg. 7

## IN SHORT

### Upcoming graduations

Commencement for the BCS Class of 2015 is Saturday, May 30, at 6 p.m. in the auditorium. Kindergarten graduation is at 9 a.m. on May 29, while fifth and eighth graders receive their diplomas Tuesday, June 2.

### Top students honored

Tyler Clark and Haley Hutson were named Mr. and Miss BCS at the academic awards banquet, held in the CSA theater on May 15.

Citizenship award winners for each class were freshmen Benjamin Helyer and Tara Whitaker, sophomore Camille Sunshine, junior Andrew Armstrong, and seniors Kaylie Angello and Clark.

Other notable award winners included Kate Zipperer (John Philip Sousa), Brodie Brown and Angello (Most Dedicated Actor and Actress), and Clark (Best Thespian). BCS parent and long-time school supporter James Baros was given the President's Spirit Award.

### StuCo election results

**President:** Chandler Alberda  
**Vice president:** Alicia Dixon  
**Secretary:** Louie Heilweil  
**Treasurer:** Nyna Vazquez  
**Historian:** Addy Hardin  
**Sr. class rep:** Emily Wagner  
**Jr. class rep:** Lindsey Scarborough  
**So. class rep:** Nicole Petrik  
**Fr. class rep:** Adrian Battle  
**At-large rep:** Brenna Decker  
**Upper rep:** Charlie Vazquez  
**Lower rep:** Brayden George

# Moss era draws to close

By Camille Sunshine

As the 2014-15 school year draws to a close, a major era is ending with Marquita Moss concluding her role as Brentwood Christian School's president. After serving as an administrator at Brentwood for more than 40 years, Moss will retire at the end of this month.

A dinner party will be held in her honor on June 4 in the Family Life Center at 6 p.m.

Ever since Gerald Ford was the U.S. President, Moss has been leading Brentwood into a closer walk with God.

"Marquita has been the driving force behind keeping Brentwood Christian focused on its

mission," said elementary music teacher Sondra Strietelmeier, who is also retiring after 18 years at BCS. "Because of her consistent love and prayers for the school, the teachers, the administration, and the staff, Brentwood Christian has maintained its excellent standing through thick or thin, rocky or smooth years."

Finding teachers who agree with Strietelmeier is an easy task.

"I appreciate Marquita's wisdom and vision," math teacher Kaleen Graessle said. "She makes every decision with the big picture in mind. Her big picture is one of eternity."

Moss has long been known for her unwavering commitment to developing a Christian view of the world in the minds of the students.

"I appreciate Marquita's depth in understanding how training students to think from a Christian perspective shapes their lives to become who God wants them to be," fifth-grade teacher Cynthia Davis said. "I will miss her guidance to BCS and to me personally."

BCS parent, former board member, and current chief operating officer Jay Burcham is stepping into the president's role. For the first

see Moss, page 3



photo: submitted

Servant's heart Moss in Honduras, 2014

**Moss at BCS**  
1975-1978: Chair, Board of Trustees  
1979-1984: Principal  
1984-1997: Executive Director  
1997-2015: President

## Bears fall in state semis

*Baseball team wins two playoff games*

By Joshua Sass

In its first 21 years as a program, the Bears' baseball team had never won a playoff game. But this month alone, they won two.

The climactic season came to an end in a 2-0 loss in the TAPPS 3A state semifinal game against Sugarland Logos Prep on May 14 in Houston.

The Bears finished the regular season with a 9-1 district record (17-2 overall), taking their second straight district title. After their only district loss, Brentwood gave up only seven runs in the final eight district games while scoring 116.

"Making it to the final four was incredible," head coach Brian Thrift said. "The guys on the team were able to make lifelong memories. I couldn't have been more proud of our effort and enthusiasm all season."

In their final game, sophomore pitcher Garrison Ryberg silenced the bats of the opponent, holding them scoreless through the first five innings. Unfortunately, the Bears could not convert offensively either. Despite having the bases loaded in the fifth, Brentwood left all three runners on base.

Then disaster struck, as BCS gave up two runs in the sixth, which was the difference in the game.

"We left our bats at home," senior Aaron Garcia said. "But they had a good pitcher - you've got to give him credit."

The Bears advanced to the state tournament with a decisive 9-3 victory over Bay Area Christian on May 7 in the regional championships, a level unreached by any Brentwood baseball team in the past. Playing in Sealy,

see Bears, page 7

## Long-time teachers say farewell to BCS

By Mary Womack

Cherished theater director Cindy Singleton announced last week that she would be stepping down after 23 years at BCS.

Earlier in the semester, two other long-time teachers also announced that they would be beginning a new chapter in life: elementary music teacher Sondra Strietelmeier and art teacher Lori Morin.

Retiring president Marquita Moss said that while losing these three teachers at once is "staggering," it is no cause for discouragement.

"Each of these ladies is leaving a tremendous heritage for the arts at BCS," Moss said. "But I know that God will not leave us stranded."

Other teachers leaving after a shorter stay are Adam Brown, Amber Kidd, and Sissy Pierce. Secondary librarian Danielle McGhee and guidance counselor Sandy Wiles will also depart.

Singleton taught Theater, Theater Arts, and Speech, but in the past has taught Spanish and

see Veteran, page 5

*Notes from the Underground:* Nicholas Bergeron

## New editor contemplates lure of late-night AM radio

I'll be the editor of The Bear Facts next year, and as such I'm expected to write a few sentences introducing myself. You may know me from Encore, from this newspaper, or maybe I'm in one of your classes. I've wanted to edit this paper since I came here as a freshman, and I'm looking forward to bringing you the news next year. That's really all there is to say about me; let's move on to something more interesting, or, at least, weirder.

In the 21st century, there's not a whole lot of uncharted cultural territory. You can learn almost any fact instantly. There is actually so much publicly available knowledge that, since nobody could possibly read all of it, there are discoveries that can be made just by connecting information. This phenomenon, called "undiscovered public knowledge," has led to several scientific breakthroughs that required no research proper from the scientists; all they had to do was sift through the wide river of existing data.

We can do this on a smaller scale, too. Want to know what became of a long-lost childhood friend? (Want a comprehensive picture of their political views?) Facebook has you covered. In fact, when we come upon something that can't be readily accessed, it has a sense of intrigue and excitement about it.

It could be said that all this instantly available knowledge (which I, by the way, consider to be an enormous asset to humanity) has made mystery harder to come by. It could be said that lighting the world with knowledge has made it harder to play hide-and-seek. A pity, really – hide-and-seek is fun.

It's this line of thinking that sparked my recent interest in AM radio. No doubt, the FM dial comes through much clearer, but after a while it gets predictable. I spend 40 minutes driving every school day, and that's ample time to hear Uptown Funk so many

times that I don't like it anymore, listen to our local off-brand Howard Stern straining endlessly, futilely to say anything actually funny, and, of course, hear lots of commercials, good and loud.

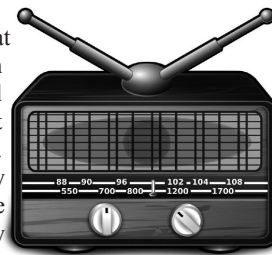
Enter the crazy uncle: AM radio. AM radio was developed in the 1870s, and it sounds like it. It's grainy, hard to make out, and stations bleed into each other. Sure, during the day you'll hear sports commentary, lots of sermons, lots of mariachi, but when the moon comes up and the listener count comes down, things get a little more interesting. Listening to AM radio after midnight is a little like the sensation you get when you look at a time on the clock, say 4:12 a.m., and wonder how many times in your life you've actually seen that time. How many people in Austin do you think are listening to AM 1430 at one in the morning? At most dozens, and no-

body's recording. Aliens could come interrupt whatever late-night program you're listening to, and it wouldn't even make morning news.

Speaking of aliens, many are the talk show hosts who like to play Fox Mulder. I've heard late night DJs rail against government mind control waves, ghosts, and extraterrestrials, hidden away comfortably by Washington.

Of course, after a few weeks of curiously scanning the scratchy AM dial, you'll start to recognize patterns. After all, there's only so many fiery end-of-the-world sermons you can hear before they start to sound the same. Eventually you'll end up back in the shark-free waters of FM radio. I have. It's a neat feeling, I think, to explore something that takes some digging to find, that can't be recorded and catalogued. You become a member of a small, exclusive group, for better or worse.

That said, your editor still prefers Taylor Swift to Serbian folk music and Netflix to public access TV.



*Being ForthReich:* Jonathon Reich

## Departing editor has recipe for strong finishes

More likely than not you've heard the phrase "It doesn't matter how you start something; it matters how you finish it" at least once in your life. If not, feel free to re-read the previous sentence before proceeding; but regardless, this is advice that I've been hearing exponentially more as the days tick down to graduation. Interestingly, this saying is something I've been able to relate to more as well. As a soccer player, editor, and simply as a high school student, I've wanted to end the year in a good way, in part because I know that the end is what will be remembered.

When reaching the end of a journey, sometimes it's hard to keep this in mind. We naturally want to rest after a long period of work – hence the growth of "senioritis." It seems that we all catch this disease of laziness sometime during high school or later. In fact, I'd be surprised if there is a student who hasn't joked about getting senioritis at least once during their high school career.

As any end draws nearer, it gets harder and harder not to get comfortable and settle for senioritis. Yet finishing strong is more than keeping senioritis at bay. Instead, the outcome of certain events also depends on the quality of your daily life. Here any good coach could use the age-old practice formula, which goes something like this: If you want to be good at the sport you play you should practice the sport you play a lot.

In this case, everything is like sports. However, the training of your mind and conscience is also important. To do well on a final, you

shouldn't only study the night before; instead, you need to pay attention in class, take good notes, and review well beforehand. To make moral decisions in difficult situations, you should take care during "smaller" moral issues, like cheating on a test, or lying to a family member about a bad grade.

A coach would also emphasize that practice should be daily. Coach Cash, the varsity soccer coach, strongly recommends that each member of the team should practice for at least 20 minutes a day, all year long. If physical practice is this important, shouldn't moral and mental practice be even more so?

I don't mean to preach here. This advice is meant for me as much as anyone else, and part of the reason I want to end on this note is so that this message will serve as a personal reminder. I don't only want to finish my senior year strong, but whatever else I may be involved in throughout my life; and to do that, I have to remember to strive to be better daily.

The most recent and final senior Bible blog post, an open letter to college freshmen, helped me understand the personal importance this message holds for me. Upon reflection of the blog, one senior pointed out that after graduation, we won't be obligated to take part in spiritual discussions that are necessary for a growing faith, which for so long we have been immersed in. It will be up to each of us individually to fit in "deep thinking" in addition to school, work, and life, instead of being a part of the school routine.

Fortunately, I think Brentwood has armed me

for life's fight. My time here has not been insignificant, and I'm more than thankful for the mentors who have blessed my life, the discussions which have enriched it, and the friends who have filled it. My involvement in so many extra-curriculars has prepared me to have the work ethic and endurance for real-world work, and the character and support I've seen from teachers and students is something that not many other places can boast.

As graduation approaches and passes, I can only wait to begin the next part of my life. But I can do it at ease, knowing that Brentwood has prepared me to live my daily life in such a way that I believe I can finish the race.



photo: Michele Broadway

**Cold cash** Senior Travis Teeter counts some of the \$7,124.36 that BCS students donated to Zambians last month.

### THE BEAR FACTS

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

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.

#### Editor-in-Chief

Jonathon Reich

#### Photo Editor

Maria Harris

#### Reporters

Kaitlyn Baird	Joshua Sass
Jenna Beggs	Emily Shields
Nicholas Bergeron	Camille Sunshine
Elijah Cunningham	Lila Therrell
Kira Juraneck	Rebecca Tilley
Tony Lee	Mary Womack
Grace Rogge	Thomas Yates

#### Adviser

Jonathan Weed

The Bear Facts is available online at  
[www.brentwoodchristian.org](http://www.brentwoodchristian.org).



# Seniors favor medical, engineering fields

By Rebecca Tilley

All but five of Brentwood Christian's 43 seniors have decided to stay in Texas for their freshman year of college. Austin Community College is the most common choice among the class, with seven seniors attending there in the fall. The University of Texas follows with six students.

Five seniors will leave the state, heading mostly to the east. Cody Hunt will be going the farthest away to attend Gordon College in Massachusetts – 1,977 miles away from Brentwood Christian School. Zachary Marsh and Karen Yang will also be far from home. Marsh will be attending York in Nebraska, 766 miles from BCS, and Yang will be attending New York University, 1,733 miles from BCS.

Twelve seniors will move on to a Christian university. These are ACU, Mary Hardin-Baylor, Hardin-Simmons, Lubbock Christian, St. Ed-

wards, Gordon, Oklahoma Christian, and York.

The most common majors include those in medical fields such as biology, biochemistry, pharmacy, and nursing, and those in various engineering fields. Seven seniors will be going into medical fields; five have chosen engineering.

Joshua Hager will major in Wildlife Conservation at Lubbock Christian.

"I wanted to do something outdoors and that didn't involve sitting all day," Hager said.

Hager said he likes to stay active, and that working in the mountains would be a perfect fit. He hopes to find a career as a ranger or another similar job, possibly in Idaho.

Kenzie Merkord will not be going to college this fall. The next nine months of her life will be spent in Guatemala, Malaysia, and Botswana, working with special needs orphanages and sex trafficking victims, doing prayer walks, building churches and homes, and living out of a 65 L backpack. She said it will be a time to

recharge and find what God wants for her life.

"He put it in my path because he knew it was the right moment in my life that I really needed him and (to) seek exactly who he wants me to be," she said.

She has still not decided what to study in the fall of 2016, but she does take an interest in kids and non-profit work.

"This gap year will help me see what God has in store for me," Merkord said.

Hunt will study political science, but he said he hopes to play professional basketball overseas before eventually becoming a lobbyist.

Since Gordon sends players to the Euro League every year, Hunt said he is confident that they can help him reach that goal. As for lobbying, that seems to fit with other interests he has.

"I like traveling and talking with people, and I argue all the time and try to convince people of my ideas, so that interests me," he said.

# Moss retires; will remain on campus

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two years that Burcham is president, Moss will work as president emeritus, which will involve communicating with alumni, building relationships with donors, and other projects involving the big picture of the school.

After retiring fully, Moss said she may write children's books and is definitely looking forward to spending more time with her family.

*"Marquita has been the driving force behind keeping BCS focused on its mission."*

She may also work as a consultant in Christian schools to build a Christian perspective.

Moss has been a leader with the National Christian School Association for about 30 years. Up until the 1980s, Brentwood had been accredited by the Texas Education Agency. But when TEA stopped accrediting private schools, a group of Christian educators across the state of Texas, including Moss, established what later became the National Christian School Association to accredit Christian schools. Since then, Moss has served as a board member and the secretary of the board, and is now vice chair of the accreditation commission.

Moss said she has countless beloved memories at Brentwood, and one of her favorites is the first day of school in 1981, when the campus was moved to its current location. The rain came down in torrents, and parents' cars got stuck in the mud. Everyone got wet, but Moss loved how everyone pitched in to clear the road, mopped the hallways, and still had a great time. To Moss, the day was a sign of "the wonderful community spirit that would characterize the school all through the years ahead."

Becky Stewart, who was there on that day in 1981 and has known Moss since the 1970s, says she is thankful for Moss's tireless efforts in leading the entire BCS community to follow the school's mission.

"Her leadership and example in many areas has had the goal of making sure that we are striving to make the BCS environment one that teaches about the Bible and Christianity, that demonstrates Christian love and caring, and that holds us accountable for the things that we do academically and in our lives."

## SENIORS TAKE ON THE BIG WIDE WORLD?

**Abilene Christian University**  
Megan Burcham - education  
Jacob Orick - business accounting / finance

**Austin Community College**  
Aaron Garcia - exercise science  
Abigail Lyons - nursing  
Christian Montgomery - undecided  
Anh Nguyen - pharmacy  
Yara Qussad - undecided  
Charlie Sinclair - business

**Blinn College**  
Ellen Bellis - social work  
Becca Willingham - art

**Gordon College**  
Cody Hunt - political science

**Harding University**  
Brodie Brown - criminal justice  
Mikayla Brinthaup - social work  
Isabelle Graessle - biology or zoology  
Haley Hutson - biochemistry

**Hardin-Simmons University**  
Kaylie Angello - physical therapy

**Lubbock Christian University**  
Joshua Hager - wildlife conservation

**New York University**  
Karen Yang - finance

**Oklahoma Christian University**  
Tyler Clark - school administration

**St. Edward's University**  
Maddie Ashworth - business  
Evan Herring - biology

**Texas A&M-Commerce**  
Nicole Glenn - visual communications

**Texas A&M University**  
Madalyn Garelick - communications  
Logan Hitt - aerospace engineering  
Travis Teeter - electrical engineering

**Texas State University**  
Katelyn Crawford - physical therapy  
Maria Harris - criminal justice  
Duc Minh Phan - biology  
Deirdre Smith - biology

**University of Mary Hardin-Baylor**  
Abbie Baros - nursing

**University of Texas**  
Tony Lee - petroleum engineering  
Gina Huh - petroleum engineering  
Jae Hwang - civil engineering  
Matthew Scarborough - English, linguistics

**University of Texas (cont.)**  
Hyunjin Park - biochemistry  
Kate Zipperer - biology

**University of Texas at Arlington**  
Libin Koyikalathu - undecided  
Christina Onabajo - biomedical sciences

**University of Texas at Dallas**  
Jonathon Reich - undecided

**University of Texas at San Antonio**  
Youngwoo Kim - aero. or pet. engineering  
Haehwan Park - engineering

**York College**  
Zachary Marsh - education

**Gap year:** Mackenzie Merkord (see story)



**SENIOR SPOTLIGHT:** Christina Onabajo

Seniors featured in the Bear Facts were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS Class of 2015.

# From hoops and hymns to helping hands

By Kaitlyn Baird

There seems to be no limit to what Christina Onabajo can do. Whether grabbing rebounds on the basketball court, singing onstage with Encore, or displaying her unique sense of style, she is a woman of many talents.

“There has never been anyone like Tina,” says senior Megan Burcham. “She is someone who will make fun of you mercilessly, but she does it in a way that always makes you smile.”

Burcham also says her unique sense of fashion can only be described as “just Tina.”

“Tina has this one pair of brown boots that she wears to every basketball tournament. They don’t match anything, but she proudly wears them! We all took to calling them her Tina boots.”

Tina’s boots aren’t the only thing that people notice about her.

“‘Nice’ is the first word that comes to my head,” junior Hannah Hutton says when thinking about Christina’s personality. “She’s really caring and giving, nice all the time, and sassy in a funny way.”

Fellow Encore member and friend Haley Hutson remembers a time when she had to play referee between Christina and their classmate Jonathon Reich. Christina kept telling Reich, “No, you’re wrong,” when she knew he was actually right. Hutson says that’s just one example of Christina’s sarcastic sense of humor.

Friends know Christina has a very busy schedule when it comes to extracurricular activities. She began playing basketball in fifth grade and has played throughout her high school career, starting for the varsity in her junior and senior years.

“My team is amazing, and I’ve made so many memories,” Christina says.

Burcham describes one of her favorite memories with Christina as an ongoing one that usually happens during basketball tournaments. Anytime they’re staying at a hotel and someone knocks on the door, Tina always yells, “It’s open,” even though the door is locked.

Her basketball coach Devan Loftis describes Christina as very passionate and hard-working.

“She definitely has an intensity in her personality as a competitor,” Loftis says.

Off the court, Christina is often singing with Encore. She has been a choir member throughout high school and joined Encore her senior year. Christina says Encore is something she really enjoys because she loves singing and praising God.

Choir teacher John McMeen says Christina is hilarious and has a “go with the flow” personality. He describes her as a great leader, whether she’s on the basketball court or in Encore.

In addition to all her extracurricular activities, Christina is also an excellent student. She is a member of the National Honor Society and was elected vice president in her junior year and president for her senior year. Christina describes her experience with NHS as “so much fun,” and she loves the opportunity to connect with the officers and members.

One of her favorite things about being in NHS is going to Rosedale. One little boy she met there, Rex, has become special to her. She says she looks forward to seeing him and making his day better every time they travel there.

Her father, Femi Onabajo, is a pastor at Tower Lake Church of God, so she has been going there since birth. Christina says her faith has

impacted her life in a big way, and her view of life is different because of it.

Christina and her older brother Matthew have been attending BCS since preschool. Her brother, now 20, was BCS Bear of the Year two years ago and is currently attending UT-Arlington. Christina plans to join him there in the fall and major in biology. She wants to go to medical school but is still wavering between career choices.

Another thing she wants to do in the future is set up orphanages in different countries and a hospital in Nigeria. She’s been volunteering at St. David’s Medical Hospital since she was a sophomore, so she really wants to travel and do mission work in other countries.

Christina says she’ll miss the people she made connections with at Brentwood and getting to see her friends every day. She’ll also miss being a senior, which means “being the most experienced on campus and knowing how things work.” She enjoys giving advice to the younger students so they can do things more efficiently and not make the same mistakes she made.

Many people will miss Christina, whether they’re the younger students she helps out or the friends and teachers she’s grown close to over the years. But with her many talents and engaging personality, there is no doubt that Christina’s boots will take her far in life.



## Career Day helps students put faces with careers

By Emily Shields

All the aspiring nurses, actors, photojournalists, and some who were in the dark when it came to their aspirations gathered into the theater on April 14 to begin Career Day, a day composed of three sessions devoted to learning about certain career fields.

The event lasted until 10:45 a.m., and the time frame was split into four sessions. The first of these was an introduction into the other sessions, which were dedicated to learning about certain career fields. Wearing outfits that correlated with their dream jobs, students listened earnestly to the two guest speakers at the introduction: Erin Cargile, a news anchor from KXAN, and BCS alumnus Jay Wiles (’09), a producer of the KXAN news broad-

cast and son of Sandy Wiles, Brentwood’s academic adviser and the coordinator of the event.

Students had filled out choice sheets to select from among 12 career fields they were interested in, and Sandy Wiles said the most popular ones were Health Sciences, Architecture & Engineering, Business, and Scientific Research.

Approximately 50 panelists attended the event, with about four to five speakers per panel. Each of these panels was made up of relatives or family friends of students, other people with connections to Brentwood, and even BCS faculty. These panels were hosted in several classrooms across campus.

During these sessions, the panelists talked to students about what they do and gave an overview of their day on the job. At the end, there was time for questions.

One of the day’s guest speakers, Ryan Crowder, the producing artistic director at the Penfold Theatre in Austin, spoke in the Arts-Visual & Performing panel. Crowder, who went to college with theater director Cindy Singleton’s daughter, said he had a good idea of what he wanted to achieve in the three sessions he did.

“I wasn’t sure what to expect,” Crowder said. “I anticipated that students would be imagining their career paths and making decisions about how to prepare for them. If I had any knowledge, experience, or connections that could be helpful to them in the process, I wanted to make it available to them.”

Some students, such as freshman Elizabeth Aldaco, really enjoyed the event. Aldaco went to Education-Support Services, Arts-Visual &

Performing, and Communications.

“The thing I liked about Career Day,” Aldaco said, “was the fact that there were actual people who came and spoke to us. They helped us with understanding what we want and what we are looking for in a specific career.”

Other students, like senior Deidre Smith, found the event useful in a different way.

“The sessions I was in helped me see more clearly what careers were a negative to me,” Smith said, “which helped me to be able to more easily define the positives.”

Crowder had some parting wisdom.

“Be honest with yourself about what’s important to you,” he said. “Don’t let others’ opinions about what you ‘should’ do cause you to pursue a path you know doesn’t fit – because if it doesn’t fit, it won’t stick.”



# Veteran teachers depart BCS after decades of service

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even Texas History.

“When I started (in 1992) we were so small,” Singleton said. “There were 15 kids in the graduating class that year.”

Singleton directed 40 plays at Brentwood, produced 10 musicals, and led the school to five TCSIT One-Act Grand Champions. She has also coached duets, monologues, and debates for both TCSIT and TAPPS.

“Some of the memories I will treasure are just all the faces and fun times. I love the moments of creating art,” Singleton said.

Known for her dedication, Singleton could often be found on campus working late into the night. She will soon gain some well earned rest and find a job closer to her home in Marble Falls.

Morin, who taught art from fifth grade through high school for the past 15 years, said her plans involve having more time with her children, BCS grads Kayle and Bryce, while they attend Lubbock Christian University.

“One of my most emotional memories is the way (Brentwood) supported Bryce,” Morin said, referring to her son’s health issues.

Morin has spent a great amount of her free time with academic competitions such as TCSIT and TAPPS, and she has shaped art class into an award-winning program. During her time at Brentwood the art room doubled in size, and the facilities and equipment have improved, along with students’ work. Morin has led BCS to high finishes in state competition, something that had earlier seemed impossible.



Morin

“She helps me grow as a person and as an artist,” sophomore Hillarie Carpenter said.

Like Singleton, Morin has spent long hours after school to help with theater.

“Anyone who has worked personally with either of them knows just how much of their hearts they put into it,” said senior Haley Hutson, who has worked with both extensively. “Not just their programs, but the students individually. They genuinely care.”

Sondra Strietelmeier, lower-elementary music teacher, is retiring after 18 years of service to care for her aging parents. Strietelmeier has contributed so many traditions to the school, from third-grade plays to Grandparents’ Day performances.

“I will really miss being around the kids all day,” Strietelmeier said.

Recently retired elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed, who hired Strietelmeier in 1997, said she credits Strietelmeier with much of Brentwood’s success in vocal music on the high school level.

“What she teaches the kindergarten through third graders about reading music, pitch and intonation, musicianship, and performance provides an amazing foundation for singing and appreciating music for the rest of their lives,” Dr.



Strietelmeier

Weed said. “She has graced our school with an early music program of immense strength and value.”

Encore member Charlie Vazquez, a sophomore, is grateful for his former teacher’s influence.

“She motivated me to become a singer and join Encore,” he said.

Elementary principal Mara Ashley said she will miss Strietelmeier’s smile and her servant heart.

“She does things for other people that they may not realize she is doing,” Ashley said.

Spanish II and III teacher Adam Brown is leaving after two years on the faculty. Brown will attend training and then become an associate financial services professional at Charles Schwab.

“The thing I’ll carry with me from Brentwood is meeting my fiance Shannon McDuff right outside my (classroom) door,” Brown remarked.

He is engaged to the sister of former BCS teacher Sierra Pierce. McDuff was visiting Pierce when Brown met her; they will marry on June 13.

Middle school math teacher and sophomore Bible teacher Amber Kidd will also be departing from Brentwood after nearly two years. Kidd already works in ministry with her husband at Westside Church of Christ.

Kidd said she would like to have more time

to spend with her family. Both her children – seventh-grader Jackson and first-grader Lily – will remain at BCS.

Librarian Danielle McGhee will also be leaving to pursue a different path in life. McGhee said she is waiting to see where God will order her steps, but some of the things she is interested in include academic library training and fashion.

McGhee has led StuCo and book clubs for three years, and has built connections with dozens of students.

Sissy Pierce, the varsity girls’ assistant soccer coach, is the only coach leaving Brentwood this year. Pierce will become the head coach at Faulkner University, where she was an assistant last year before being hired by BCS. A BCS graduate (’03), Pierce taught American History and freshman Bible.

Wiles, whose two children are BCS graduates, taught computer at BCS for six years before spending the last three as the guidance counselor. Although she recently earned a master’s degree in school counseling, she said she has not decided whether she will stay in education or return to the corporate world.

Reflecting on the loss of excellent teachers, Moss cautioned against pessimism.

“One thing I have learned and re-learned: This is God’s school, and he always calls a new crop of gifted teachers to lead our students to develop their God-given talents for lives of Christian leadership and service.”



Singleton

## Grandparents’ Day traditions continue as grand as ever

By Jenna Beggs

Grandparents’ Day, held on May 1, included musical performances from all students, breakfast, and classroom activities.

For grandparents with secondary students, the three 25-minute sessions with their grandchildren began with two large group sessions. Grandparents enjoyed sneak peeks of Way Off Broadway, learned about service opportunities at Brentwood, and much more. In the third session, grandparents went to different classrooms, where scientific experiments took place, art was shown, and map games were played.

“It was well organized,” said administrator and grandparent Nancy Tindel. “It made the

grandparents thankful that their grandchildren are part of a program with good Christian principles, which is very important.”

The morning started off with a come-and-go breakfast for the guests at 7:45 a.m., with faculty, teachers, and National Honor Society students assisting and interacting. A few special grandparents were also recognized.

After the breakfast, the grandparents attended an assembly in the auditorium, where they enjoyed songs from all grade levels.

The lower elementary classes came to the stage one at a time, and music teacher Sondra Strietelmeier led each group for one final time, as she is retiring after 18 years at BCS. The K4 class shared a medley of *There’s a Little Wheel A-Turning* and *You Are My Sunshine*, followed

by the kindergartners, who wore their typical cowboy attire while singing trail tunes like *Old Dan Tucker* and *Red River Valley*. First graders donned rabbit ears while singing some familiar bunny songs; second graders sang about birds, and third graders sang safari-themed songs.

After the elementary performances, outgoing president Marquita Moss gave two special awards: the Grandparent Service Award to Carol Adair, and the Grandparents of the Year Award to former elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed and her husband Michael.

First-year choir teacher John McMeen led the fourth and fifth graders singing *Light Up the World with a Song* and *Kusimama*, while the middle school and high school both sang worship songs. The high school choir also gave

a performance of *Esto Les Digo* and *Wana Baraka*.

“When all the secondary students sang together it was like a heavenly chorus,” Tindel said.

After the music, the grandparents visited their grandchildren in classrooms, where some long-time Brentwood customs took place. The kindergarten had their rodeo, first grade watched a video summarizing their year, the second graders square danced and played pioneer games, and third graders flew kites. Meanwhile the fourth graders put on their traditional play called *Historical Hysteria*, while the fifth grade interacted with their grandparents asking about their childhood.

# Hughes defends state vault title; four others compete in Waco

By Elijah Cunningham

Martha Hughes won the state pole vaulting title at the TAPPS state meet in Waco on May 8, with a height of 10-6. The BCS junior won last year as well, and holds the state record in the event.

Junior Keely Hardin placed fifth in discus

and set her personal record with a throw of 89-5. Sophomore Abby White finished eighth in the 300 hurdles (51.10), and sophomore Hope Hutson came in eighth in the 400 (1:05.21).

The 4x400 team, consisting of Hughes, White, Hutson, and junior Ope Okupe, came in sixth at 4:19, their best time all season. Three other schools finished within the same second.

Head coach Katie Smith was proud of the team, and especially of Hughes, now a two-time state champion.

"Martha has worked hard this season and shown a resilience and toughness that I have not seen in many athletes," Smith said. "I am extremely proud of her."

Hughes said she was a little nervous going in because she wanted to defend her state title she set the previous year.

"Winning and setting the record last year was really exciting, but winning this year was almost more special because it really illustrated working hard and being successful even when things weren't going exactly like I had hoped," she said.

Hughes used shorter poles and a shorter approach this year. Her pole vaulting coach thought it would be best to continue with the shorter poles and run in order to stay confident, which Hughes said

is an important factor in vaulting.

At state, rain was off and on during the two-day meet, and when one storm's approach was announced, they evacuated the stadium, just after Hughes finished vaulting.

By winning the TAPPS 3A pole vault, Hughes qualified for the inaugural TTFCA Meet of Champions on May 23 at the Clyde Hart Track & Field Stadium at Baylor. It will feature state champions and high finishers across several divisions of public and private schools.

A week before state, Brentwood had six girls participate at the regional meet at Bastrop Memorial Stadium on April 30, and five progressed to state. Hughes won the pole vault (10-00), but placed fifth in the 400 (1:05.47), just missing state. Hutson earned fourth in both the 400 (1:04.37) and the 800 (2:31.12). White finished fourth in 300 hurdles (50.32), and Okupe placed fifth in the 200 (28.49).

Just missing state was senior Nicole Glenn, who placed seventh in the high jump (4-04). Hardin came in fifth (85-09.5) in discus, but progressed to state with a wildcard entry.

The girls' 4x400 team earned third place (4:22.91) in regionals, qualifying them for state. The 4x200 team was disqualified for a bad handoff.

None of the boys qualified for regionals, but they had some of their best performances, according to Smith.

The girls finished third at the district track meet on Tuesday, April 21, at Bensor Stadium in San Antonio, while the boys finished 11th.

The six girls made it into regionals by finishing in the top four in their events. Hughes qualified for two events, winning the pole vault

(9-00) and placing third in the 400 (1:05.56). Hardin took second in discus (85-10), and Glenn came in third for the high jump (4-03). Okupe placed third in the 200 (28.33), and Hutson placed fourth in both the 400 (1:05.83) and the 800 (2:30.75). White came in fourth in the 300 hurdles (51.19).

Two of the girls' relay teams qualified for regionals. The 4x400 team came in second (4:30.45), and the 4x200 team, made of Glenn, Okupe, Hughes, and White, placed fourth (1:55.37).

Leading the boys was junior Joshua Sass, who competed in five events: 400, 800, high jump, discus, and 4x400 relay. Sass took sixth in the 400 (56.34) and seventh in the high jump (5-06). He set personal records at the meet in the 400, 800, and the high jump.

Sophomore Jordan Johnson placed sixth in the high jump (5-06), and freshman Preston Glenn came in fifth in pole vault (7-00).

Smith said the competition was really strong, but the boys' team is also really young. They have only one junior, and the remaining nine are freshmen and sophomores.

"I don't see the competition getting any easier, but we should get better each year, and hopefully the more kids we get, the better," she said.

Smith said she also hopes that some of the incoming freshmen will run track, and she believes that the new football program could help the boys' track program progress as well.



photo: submitted

**Top of the line** Junior Martha Hughes defended her title as pole vault champion at the TAPPS state meet.

## Losing streak keeps softball team from playoffs

By Kira Juranek

The Lady Bears' softball team ended their season with a 10-5 loss to TSD on April 28, which kept them out of the playoffs for the first time in seven years. It was a disappointing loss to the whole team since they did not expect their season to end so soon.

"I thought we could have played better, we just had a bad inning," head coach Paul Sladek said. "Every game we struggled for an inning or two, and that hurt us in the end."

BCS started district with a 2-1 record before losing their next five games. They finished tied for fourth with a 2-6 record (4-11 overall).

Sladek said it was a frustrating season for many reasons, especially the many rainouts.

"Rainouts cost a lot of experience and preparation time, and everyone changing positions didn't help either," he said. "Only one girl played the same position as last year."

Other team members shared the disappointment but still have high hopes for next year.

"The people were all great this year," junior Madi French said. "We just need to build more chemistry and we can be even better next year."

Sladek said the team was big on defense this year, but they did not focus enough on offense. Next year he said there will be an even focus on both defense and offense.

Junior Sofia Torres made first-team all-district for the girls, while French, senior Yara Qussad, and junior Hope Kronke made second-team. Honorable mention was given to juniors Sam Woolverton and Hailey Miller.

Torres led the team with a .424 batting average, followed by French (.382), Kronke (.375), and Qussad (.367). Torres also led with 14 hits, while French and Torres scored 15 each. Qussad and Torres led the team with nine RBIs each.

"We had a lot of potential to be district champs this year, but we just didn't have a lot of con-

fidence in ourselves," said Qussad, the Bears' only senior. "I'm disappointed we weren't able to make playoffs, but I'm glad I got to play with such a great group of girls my senior year."

Following are the results of their final games:

**4/14: @ St. Andrews 12-4 L**

The Crusaders pulled away with four runs in the fourth inning and four more in the fifth. Kronke hit a triple and scored two runs.

**4/20: @ CTCS 12-7 L**

The Lions started out with a big lead, and although the Lady Bears battled back, they fell short by five runs. Qussad and Miller each got three hits including a double.

**4/21: @ St. Joseph 4-1 L**

The Lady Bears did not score until the last inning and fell short three runs to St. Joseph. Torres struck out eight batters.

**4/28: TSD 10-5 L**

TSD led 9-2 after the fourth inning. French led the Lady Bears with two hits and two runs.

## Golf makes state tourney

BCS came in eighth in the state golf tournament on April 27-28 in Waco. A year after qualifying for state for the first time in school history, the Bears beat last year's score.

Unfortunately for Brentwood, competition was tougher this year after TAPPS realignment. Junior John Hollingsworth, who won the Hyde Park Invitational in April, struggled on the second day after opening with a 76, finishing one stroke out of 10th place among individuals.

"I'm confident he will be motivated to be in the hunt for the individual medalist title next year," head coach John Vandygriff said.

Among BCS scores, following Hollingsworth were freshman David Tiner, sophomore Graham Marks, junior Mason Miller, and freshman Louie Heilweil.

"Our team knows what they need to do to compete at the state level," Vandygriff said. "The entire team will be back next year, and I have confidence they will continue to improve."



# Bears come within two runs of championship game

continued from page 1

the Bears came out firing, playing at the top of their game at all parts of the field. Ryberg pitched "a gem," coach Thrift said, allowing only four hits in the game. The offense converted as well, pounding out 14 hits and capitalizing on key Bay Area errors.

Before the game, players endured trash talking from Bay Area students and team members. But the Bears chose to respond with their bats.

"Beating them was extremely satisfying," senior Cody Hunt said.

The Bears were represented by dozens of

students at both of these games. Some rode in Brentwood "fan vans" while others, with parental permission, drove themselves. Before the Bears left campus the day of their state semifinal game, students of all ages gathered in the athletic center for a send-off pep rally.

Brentwood opened the playoffs with a thrilling 5-4 comeback victory over the Woodlands Christian at home on May 1. Brentwood got off to a fast start in the area championships, taking a 2-0 lead in the first inning. But the other team soon fought back to take a 4-2 lead.

The game stood at a standstill as both teams struggled to convert offensively until the bottom of the sixth, when Marsh stepped up to the plate with the bases loaded and got a clutch hit to score two runs, placing the Bears in the lead.

Hollingsworth came in to pitch for Ryberg in the final inning, and with one out and a runner on first, he ended the game with a double play. Catching a soft liner and tossing to first, he clinched the Bears' first-ever playoff win.

Marsh led the offense with two hits and two runs, Hunt and Marsh each had two RBIs, and Ryberg had a triple.

Junior Jake Velasco led the team with 25 hits, 34 runs, while Marsh led with 31 RBIs. Hollingsworth had an ERA of 1.17, while Ryberg

won 10 games and had an ERA of 1.42.

Coach Thrift expressed optimism about next year's team.

"I'm looking forward to starting again next year and building on what we accomplished this year," he said.

Velasco shared his coach's attitude.

"I see us with a good chance to get back to where we were or maybe even farther next year if we put in the effort," Velasco said.

Following are the final district results:

#### 4/17: @ Waco Van. 14-3 W

Brentwood jumped out to 5-0 lead in the first inning and pulled away again with six in the sixth. Ryberg pitched all seven innings, five of which were in the rain. Thrift praised the defense, which turned three double plays in the game. Hunt had three hits, and Ryberg scored three runs.

#### 4/21: RRCA 6-0 W

The Bears dominated as they clinched back-to-back district championships. Ryberg and Hollingsworth combined to allow only five hits. For the second game in a row, Garcia, Velasco, and Hickl teamed up to take a triple away from their opponent.

Marsh had two runs, three hits, and two RBIs. Senior Brodie Brown also had three hits; Velasco stole three bases.

#### 4/23: CTCS 21-1 W

Garcia smashed a second-inning grand slam that went over the fence in right-centerfield. It was his first career home run. Brentwood jumped out to a quick 20 runs in their first three rounds at bat, with CTCS scoring their run in the third. Marsh, Hollingsworth, and freshman Patrick Hanrahan combined on a three-hit performance from the mound.

Ryberg was 4-for-5 with three doubles and six RBIs. Hunt scored four runs.



photo: submitted

**Huddle up** The Bears perform their pre-game ritual at their state semifinal game in Houston on May 14.



photo: Shelbie-Ann Spencer

**Rock and fire** Senior Zachary Marsh, here pitching during a district game, led the Bears with 31 RBIs, including two that gave Brentwood its first playoff victory ever.

## BCS hires veteran coach to build football program

By Thomas Yates

When new football coach Stan Caffey considers the lack of experience among Brentwood Christian's first tackle football players, he shows no great concern. Caffey has a reputation as a program builder, and he's ready to do it again at BCS.

Caffey was hired as the school's first-ever tackle football coach, and athletic director Brian Thrift says he is an outstanding coach who will kick the football program off to a great start.

"Stan brings a ton of coaching experience to our first-year program," Thrift said, "but more importantly he has a servant's heart when it comes to his care for kids and building relationships that teach kids how their faith interacts with athletics, especially football."

Caffey was hired at the end of April and held his first meeting with the middle school and high school teams during a brief visit to Aus-

tin on May 4. He was able to sell his house in Winters quickly, and he said he will be back in Austin June 1.

Last fall, Caffey finished his second season as head coach for Winters, a 1A school in West Texas. In his first year there, the Blizzards finished 2-8, but the next year they were 10-2.

While Caffey said that his new job at BCS will be "somewhat of a challenge" and require some patience, he also expressed confidence in his ability to develop the program.

"I suspect we'll win more games than people think we will," Caffey said. "I've been able to build a program pretty quickly."

Caffey's resume comes with lots of experience, having successfully guided 13 teams to the state playoffs, which included Lubbock Christian School in 1983. He has amassed 75 wins in the last 10 years as head coach.

In his meeting with players this month, Caffey told the new recruits that they should

start getting in shape. He challenged each of them to work up to doing 200 jump ropes a minute.

Players noted that Caffey stressed three goals, the first being to develop a good work ethic. This goal has the motto "Work wins."

The second goal is to develop confidence, or to "Believe and achieve." Number three is loyalty, and Caffey likes to stress this with the motto "Ride for the brand."

Hiring Caffey might have been the most pressing part of the football plan, but much more has been done.

Thrift said the \$120,000 that Brentwood raised in the February fundraising dinner has been spent partly on helmets and uniforms. These have all arrived, and more equipment is to come. Thrift said the money will also assist in re-sodding the soccer field, to make it playable for a few home games.

According to Thrift, the high school team

will be able to play six-man games this fall, with the expectation that eventually they can play full 11-man games. The bigger picture forecasts a full-sized field, but he said it will be a few years before that happens.

Since TAPPS district alignments are done biennially, Brentwood will not be in a district until 2016-17. Instead, they will play local six-man teams that Thrift was able to schedule, and will not be eligible for any playoffs.

With all the school football hype going around, the players are enthused as well. After meeting the coach along with the rest of the team on May 4, junior Jake Dillard said he was very impressed.

"He's a really cool and knowledgeable dude who bleeds football," he continued. "I really look forward to him being coach."

Thrift said four more coaches are expected to be hired, and Caffey will be directly involved in their recruitment.

# Foreign flair, scenic beauty make for memorable Jr./Sr.

By Maria Harris

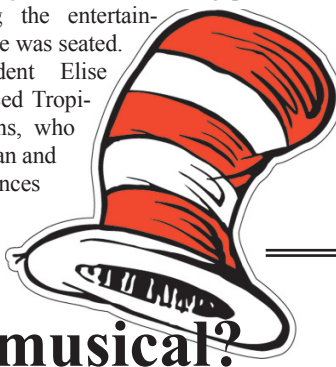
What do a Chinese Yo-yo, a bagpipe player, African dancers, the Eiffel Tower, and a mime have in common? They were all things you could have seen at this year's Jr./Sr Formal.

From Africa to France, and Italy to Asia, "Around the World" was the theme this year for Brentwood Christian's annual formal, which took place on Friday, April 24, at the Avery Ranch Golf Club in Austin.

As partygoers walked up to the building they could hear drums and bagpipes being played; they could also see a mime putting corsages on some students and even talking a few times. Some stood on the deck that overlooked the river, but it was too cloudy to watch the sunset. The humid weather did not make it any better, so people found their way to the building fast.

After meeting with friends, taking pictures, and watching the entertainment, everyone was seated.

Junior president Elise Lilya introduced Tropical Productions, who then did African and Caribbean dances with drums.



## Fall musical? It's Seussical!

By Nicholas Bergeron

Oh, the places Brentwood will go! During chapel on April 23, choir director John McMeen announced that the biennial musical production will be *Seussical*, the Broadway adaptation of the tales of Dr. Seuss.

The musical features stories and characters from the whole canon of Dr. Seuss, born Theodore Seuss Geisel. The plot roughly follows the storyline of *Horton Hears a Who!*, and brings together many famous characters.

Since theater director Cindy Singleton and art teacher Lori Morin, who used to direct set design, will be leaving next year, the theater department will face extra challenges producing the musical. However, the readily available costumes and gender-neutrality of the parts should make casting and costume design easier for next year's director.

Choir director John McMeen was very impressed by the play when he saw it on a visit to his old high school.

"It kept me on the edge of my seat," he said.

The musical will be performed over two weekends in October.

After their performances, BCS dad Dr. Roger Battle played the bagpipes, closing out the live entertainment for the night.

Once all the performers were done, tables one by one were sent to the receiving line to get their dinner. In the receiving line were junior class sponsors Ashley Dargai and Dr. Brooke Hollingsworth; also there were senior class sponsors Michelle Mallett, Cindy Singleton, Kevin Claypool, and Kaleen Graessle, as well as secondary principal Carol Johnson, incoming president Jay Burcham and his wife Sylvia, outgoing president Marquita Moss and her husband Gary, and several other teachers.

For dinner there was pesto chicken with bow-tie pasta along with grilled vegetables, Caesar salad, and garlic bread. During the dinner Dr. Hollingsworth presented a short film of the seniors answering a series of questions, such as who takes the longest to text back, who is more likely to forget a birthday, and who can pull off any outfit. Many seniors shared laughs at the answers, as well as when pictures of just Christian Montgomery popped up in the slide show.

Dorothy Walters put together the wills and prophecies booklet for the juniors and seniors. Senior Travis Teeter was prophesied to be a successful comedian with gravity defying hair

and courtside season tickets for the San Antonio Spurs. Senior Deirdre Smith was prophesied to win the Academy Award for Best Visual Effects for a blockbuster Hollywood movie.

Junior Lauren Lewis was willed the ability to eat three Double Dave's pizza rolls during lunch. Lilya was willed the power to be an independent black woman who "don't need no man," along with the ability to thrive at anything and everything she does.

At the end of the dinner the tables competed with each other in a game of Travel Trivia Crack. Members of the winning table were presented with \$5 Sonic gift cards. After this, each couple or pair of friends was given a floating lantern to put in the reflection pool. Dr. Hollingsworth said this was to represent the seniors lighting the way as they leave Brentwood. The seniors were then each given a gift box

containing a luggage tag.

"I feel like I went all around the world in one night," junior Ope Okupe said.



photo: Facebook

**Photogenic** Sophomore Jordan Johnson (left) joins juniors (from left to right) Cailin McDaniel, John Hollingsworth, and Martha Hughes by the reflection pool.

## Way Off Broadway shows talent, hilarity

By Lila Therrell

Way Off Broadway has been a production in which students are able to show off their skills in the arts, and this year was no exception. Grandparents, teachers, parents, and students filled the theater and the halls of the CSA building on May 1 and 2 to witness artistic and creative student work.

Way Off Broadway debuted in 2008 as just a few shows for the grandparents to watch on Grandparents' Day. But that only displayed a small portion of Brentwood's skills in the

arts, so theater director Cindy Singleton and art teacher Lori Morin put their minds together to make it even better. The improved version would show all of the fine arts skills at BCS, including art, theatre, jazz band, and Encore.

The night started out with monologues and duets from students who performed in TCSIT and TAPPS, including dramas and comedies. Freshmen Merideth Mallett and Katie Griffith presented *The History Of Television, Condensed*, written by John C. Havens. The audience roared, and on Saturday night, one student near the front of the audience found it so funny that he fell onto the floor in a fit of laughter.

"This is a great way to show our God-given gifts and talents," Mallett said.

Another act that was also praised highly by Singleton was that of freshmen Austin Biegert and Alex Pittner, who showcased *Psychiatry in a Can*, by David Burton. During this comedy sketch, Biegert's character Joe Tratham struck Pittner's character Art Phifer in the face.

"If slapping Pittner across the face brings people joy, then, you know, why not?" Biegert said laughing with his good friend Pittner.

Between skits, Encore performed

several popular songs from recent years and from long ago. These included *Africa* by Toto, *Let It Go* from the hit movie *Frozen*, and *Happy* by Pharrell Williams. During intermission, students, parents, and grandparents viewed some of the art work done by the students displayed in the foyer of the arts wing.

"This is a wonderful way to have the kids' work displayed," Morin said. "It's like the grand finale of the year."

Among the many works was senior Nicole Glenn's *Mrs. Morin's Wrath*, which depicted a planet being consumed by the sun. She had a previous project that she had accidentally dropped and broken that was a major grade. So she thought of this illustration and put it in place of the one that was broken to reconcile with the art teacher over the one she had broken.

After the intermission, students performed *Last Night at Ballyhoo*, their Grand Champion one act play from TCSIT.

The night ended with the honoring of the seniors with a song by Encore. Heartfelt goodbyes were given to Morin and those who would be leaving the school. Tears were shed and goodbyes made final as the seniors said their so-longs and the crowd clapped for them, wishing them all well.



photo: Dorothy Walters

**Crazy** Freshmen Austin Biegert and Alex Pittner perform their duet *Psychiatry in a Can*.