



THE BEAR FACTS

VOL. 29 NO. 4

BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 2017



Soccer girls scoring goals, winning games

By Jackson Baird

The BCS varsity girls' soccer team is 4-3 in district, losing their last game on Jan. 30 against Kerrville Our Lady of the Hills 5-2 with goals from junior Bekah Connor and freshman Kelli Tindel.

"The biggest takeaway so far this season has been our ability to score goals," head coach Cash Miller said.

Miller said he thought the girls would struggle to score after last year's talented senior class graduated. But so far several girls have been scoring multiple goals in games, and the team has scored 29 goals in seven games. Miller added that the team has excelled in patience, which keeps them in close games.

This year the Lady Bears have a roster made up of nine girls out of 13 whose experience is no more than one or two years. But so far this hasn't been a problem for Miller, who has several talented girls he leans on to help coach the newer players. These include Connor and junior Avery Miller.

Coach Miller said his seasoned players are extremely "genuine" and able to give advice in a way that is received well.

"I have a great set of girls this year, and the team chemistry is outstanding," he said. "This team works hard for one another."

Junior goalkeeper Alex Sass said she is pleased with the season so far and can't wait to see where the season takes them.

"We are improving as a team not just on the field, but we are growing closer together as individuals," Sass said.

Tindel also stressed how the team's connection off the field has not only helped the team but also herself.

"I have grown and learned so much this year from my teammates. We have all gotten so close as a team, and that has helped us so much this season," Tindel said.

see **DESPITE**, page 6

BCS hosts visiting Chinese students

By Benjamin Helyer

While BCS middle school students were enduring typical January days of classes and schoolwork, five visitors from the other side of the world mingled with them for several days, observing a vastly different culture, witnessing tremendous educational differences, and enjoying a great deal more free time.

But on Jan. 28, the tables turned, and it was the Americans who sat and watched while international students performed their talents at a celebration of the Lunar New Year.

Two weeks ago, six Chinese students visited Brentwood for six school days. Premier Education Partners (PREP), an international placement organization, organized the two-week "Winter Camp." The middle school and ninth-grade students sat in on classes and interacted with BCS students from Tuesday, Jan. 16, to Tuesday, Jan. 24, and the camp concluded with a celebration of the Lunar, or Chinese, New Year on Saturday, Jan. 28, on the BCS campus.

The visiting students were assigned a specific BCS student to shadow. On each of the six school days, they shadowed until eighth period, when all of the visitors gathered in the

conference room to recap the day and to listen to messages regarding virtues from administrators. From Wednesday, Jan. 25, to Friday, Jan. 27, the students visited other schools in the area such as Hyde Park and Regents.

During the weekends, the students participated in several activities such as a recreational weekend camp and a visit to the Pacific War

see **CHINESE**, page 8



photo: Dorothy Walters

Whoops! Launching water balloons from their trebuchets on the baseball field for AP Physics, seniors enjoyed beautiful weather on January's final day.

Field gets lights from Rio Olympics

By Blake Benton

The newest addition to campus promises a very bright future for athletics.

Brentwood Christian recently acquired permanent lighting for the athletic field from a unique and unusual location. The four new light poles come from the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where they provided light for some Olympians' evening outdoor competitions. Now they provide light for Brentwood's own athletes.

On Jan. 26, the varsity boys' soccer team played Brentwood's first game under the lights, defeating district rival Hill Country. Afterward, school supporters gathered in the FLC to enjoy a fundraising lasagna dinner before heading over to the Spring Open House.

BCS dad Brant Troutman, who is a sales representative with Musco Lighting, was

the man who made it all happen. His position with Musco allowed him to propose the idea to his company that they could sell some lights that Rio officials would not be keeping past the Olympics to BCS at a discounted price. He asked if it would be a possibility to combine new equipment with some of the Olympic lights and sell them at a considerable discount to Brentwood.

Troutman then met with BCS president Jay Burcham to propose the idea.

"We discussed that permanent lights would save rental money in the long run as well as allow other sports to be able to practice and have games played in the evening," Troutman said.

Once the school decided to go with the permanent lights, Musco Lighting started manufacturing things like the poles and remote control system while waiting for the light fixtures to leave Rio and be taken by boat, then train, then truck to their plant in Iowa. Musco then

tested each fixture that would be sold to Brentwood and installed new lamps.

Because of Troutman's efforts, Brentwood ended up spending well below half of the original cost of the lights, which Troutman said will allow them to spend money where it is needed elsewhere.

"I'm fortunate to work for a family friendly company that looks to help with projects that are of interest to their employees," Troutman said.

Athletic director and head football coach Stan Caffey said the new lights are a big deal for athletics.

"It was obvious after that first home ballgame (in 2015) in September that we desperately needed lights," Caffey said. "It's just too hot for any sport to play out there in the middle of the day."

see **LIGHTS**, page 6

Lighting the Darkness: Camille Sunshine

Editor urges boldness, good listening

“Just a little tip for the future: I am always right. Even when I’m wrong, I’m right,” says Franny from the movie *Meet the Robinsons*. If you know me, you know this quote kind of summarizes my life. I’m really bad about admitting I’m wrong, and I often tell people my opinion way more than I should; a lot of you are the same way. So when should we voice our opinions and when should we just keep quiet?

There are definitely times when backing down is not an option, and your opinion needs to be said. Sometimes it’s obvious, like in a class discussion, Socratic seminar, or debate where your opinion is being asked of you. Other times, it is just a judgment call, and those times are a lot harder. People say things we disagree with all the time, but if you told people that you disagreed with them and explained why every time, no one would want to be around you any more.

Knowing when to talk is often something for which you need to gauge the situation and take on a case by case basis. If the person you are talking to is either really open to new ideas or presses you incessantly with their opinion, that might be a case in which you should say what you believe. Anytime you believe something deeply, there is a potential to stand up, but sometimes saying what you believe will hurt your cause.

Christians have the reputation of trying to shove their opinions down people’s throats, and a lot of times, that reputation is earned. If you are talking about someone who knows what you believe already, there is not really much of a reason to keep telling them again and again. Let your beliefs be known through the way you live.

Some arguments are also not worth continuing. You don’t always have to be right. Even if you know you are right, sometimes just let someone else win. If it matters, they’ll find out they are wrong later. Or, in the worst-case scenario, you find out you are wrong. Oh no – such tragedy!

At Brentwood, we are surrounded by people that, for the most part, seem to believe the same things as we do. But not everyone who comes to Brentwood is a Christian. We shouldn’t assume that people believe exactly what we do.

Anytime you believe something deeply, there is a potential to stand up, but sometimes saying what you believe will hurt your cause.

Nothing should ever be assumed because everyone comes from their own background, with their own scars, insecurities, and beliefs. That doesn’t mean they are right in all their beliefs or not accountable for all their behavior, but it does mean that you have to act with sympathy and grace.

As a bossy control freak who really likes to be right, I know I have trampled on a lot of toes in trying to be right all the time, and I regret that. I try to do better but I know that I am still the same. And as a Christian who grew up in the legalistic Bible-belt city of Columbia, S.C., I am very opinionated about my beliefs.

I think the way we need to act to these two different types of “rightness” are quite different. Bossy me needs to be quiet and let someone else take the reins. But opinionated me is a little different. I think we use the term opinionated too broadly. Now we take it to mean anyone who won’t budge on what he believes and isn’t afraid to say so. Opinionated is defined as “obstinate or conceited with regard to the merit of one’s own opinions; conceitedly dogmatic.” This only refers to the manner in which one states one’s beliefs.

As a Christian, I think we need to hear other people’s opinions without contradicting. We need to listen with grace – actually hear their argument, ponder it, and remain in the truth. Aristotle said, “It is the mark of an educated mind to entertain a thought without accepting it.” Christians have fallen into the trap of refusing to “entertain” anything on the threat of being “polluted” by it. We are in the world, and we are being pushed to believe the same things as the world. We have to be able to have conversations with people who disagree with us without making them feel like idiots or heretics.

Just because what you believe might be offensive to someone, that does not mean it is wrong. It means you should take what you believe very seriously and you should take the manner in which you say things very seriously. One of the biggest deterrents of Christianity is the behavior of many Christians.

So I just wrote a whole article about how not to be opinionated in a very opinionated tone. Thanks for making it this far with me. As we go through life, and as we seniors go off to college, I challenge you and I challenge myself to speak boldly, listen attentively, and be silent humbly.

THE BEAR FACTS

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

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

Editor-in-Chief
Camille Sunshine

Photo Editor
Thomas Yates

Reporters

Jackson Baird	Savannah Jowers
Kaitlyn Baird	Michael Milicia
Blake Benton	Hannah Odom
Zack Haswell	Uyen Phan
Benjamin Helyer	Lauren Weilemann
Nicholas Hunka	Mary Womack

The Honorary Omelettes

Rachel Beggs	Merideth Mallett
Samantha Mack	Gabie Nguyen

Adviser

Jonathan Weed

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

The Honorary Omelettes

Weather In Austin



10:00am



10:05am



10:10am

THE DEAR EDNA COLUMN

by the lovely Ms. Edna

READER: I’m so tired of all the people who discriminate toward tissues. Not all tissues are Kleenex! How can I combat this?

EDNA: Find a better brand and start calling tissues that instead. You’ll have to explain yourself so much it may catch on. Like maybe “Pass me a Puffs.”

READER: Which ravioli is the best ravioli?

EDNA: Use the force. Answer you will find.

READER: How many licks does it take to get to the center of a Tootsie Pop?

EDNA: The world may never know...but you can always ask Mrs. Mallett for a lolipop from her candy bowl and test it out.

READER: Do blind people have love at

first sight?

EDNA: Seeing is not just through the eyes; you look through the heart and through the mind also. Eye wouldn’t know. *wink wink*

READER: What inspires you to write this column?

EDNA: The newspaper editor *gently* reminding me of the deadlines.

READER: Should I try the new cafeteria food?

EDNA: Does it move? Is it supposed to?

READER: How old are you?

EDNA: What is time? It flows differently in different places, so it depends on where I am and where I’ve been.

THE BEAR FACTS FEBRUARY 2017

Third-grader Kolagani outlasts all in Spelling Bee

By Savannah Jowers

Before last month's school spelling bee, third-grader Michael Kolagani had a feeling he would win. He studied with his mom and watched videos so he could learn strategies in case he didn't know a word.

As the rounds went by, the feeling only grew, and eventually he was the only one left, with one more word to spell: "literate."

With that final word, third-grader Michael Kolagani became the 2017 BCS Spelling Bee winner. Cheers were heard throughout the auditorium, especially from his classmates, who erupted in loud celebration. His mother came and hugged him, and he was awarded the first-place trophy from the director of the bee.

The annual bee was held in the auditorium on Jan. 12 and had 22 competing students from first to eighth grade. The lower grades each had two students in the bee, while the middle school grades each had four.

Fourth-grader Jocelyn Galvan and sixth-grader Nathan Esche tied for second, since they were both eliminated in the final round.

Every student survived round one, and only one was eliminated in round two. After that there was at least one eliminated in every

round until the 11th and final round.

Brentwood has held the spelling bee every year during the spring semester since the 2009-10 school year. This year's judges were Mara Ashley, Carrie Hunter, Tere Hager, and Dr. Brooke Hollingsworth, who pronounced the words.

Bee director Sharonda Cooper addressed the audience to begin the bee, explaining some rules and then introducing the contestants. Cooper said every year they make small changes to increase fairness. This year when she read the rules, she also explained in detail the appeal rule, since an appeal was made in last year's bee that she said should have been invalid.

At the end of the bee the judges gave some special awards for a few of the students who participated in the bee. The sportsmanship award was given to Galvan; the spirit award to Esche; pronunciation to eighth-grader Rebecca Schmitz, and the poise award to second-grader Liora Naidu.

Kolagani will represent Brentwood in Regionals on Saturday, Feb. 25, at Hays CISD Performing Arts Center. The top two spellers of regionals will advance to the Houston Public Media Spelling Bee on April 1.



photo: Carolyn B Smith

Proud pals When Michael Kolagani (center, with trophy and medal) won the school spelling bee on Jan. 12, his third-grade classmates erupted in cheers. The celebration continued outside the auditorium, as the students reveled in the underdog victory.

Graessles pause chemo to see 'Hamilton' in Chicago

By Hannah Odom

Though there are a million things that the Graessle clan hasn't done, just you wait until they tell you their story about *Hamilton: An American Musical*.

Math teacher Kaleen Graessle and her husband Scott, along with their three children and daughter-in-law, piled into their Honda Odyssey on Dec. 18 to drive to Chicago to see the wildly popular musical.

"It's what we did for Christmas. It sure was nice to do instead of to get," Mrs. Graessle said.

Not only was this a special trip due to the Graessles' nuttiness about *Hamilton* — especially BCS freshman Genevieve Graessle — but the trip was made possible by the fact that doctors gave Scott a break from his regular chemo treatments for cancer.

The drive took two days each way and was not nonstop as they had to spend the night in Searcy, Ark., and in Joplin, Mo.

When they finally arrived, the coterie enjoyed the city by visiting a conservatory, going to "the Bean," standing on the glass floor at Willis Tower, looking at frozen Lake Michigan, visiting the Chicago Art Institute, eating Chicago dogs and pizza, and attend-

ing Christkindle Market — Chicago's largest open-air German Christmas festival.

"It's incredible there," Genevieve said. "The city always continues to amaze me."



photo: Jackson Graessle

It's Hamilton! Genevieve Graessle poses with the star of *Hamilton* on her family's unforgettable trip to Chicago.

Eventually they were cozily settled into their plush, red, velvet seats, and the Graessles saw the show on Tuesday, Dec. 20, which is the wedding anniversary of Kaleen and Scott.

"*Hamilton* was even better than I ever imagined!" Genevieve said.

Hamilton, the musical that fanned its spark into a flame that is sweeping across the nation, has won 11 Tonys and a Pulitzer Prize.

For those who are living under a rock, *Hamilton* is a musical about political happenings and heartache during a time when history had its eyes on America — its dawning.

"It brings so many different people together with all of the unique types of music in it," Genevieve said. "It makes me really interested in our founding fathers and their backsto-

ries, something I definitely thought I would never be interested in."

Genevieve, who is young and dreams of glory, began communicating via social media a few days before their trip with a dancer, Justice Moore, who played the Bullet in Chicago's *Hamilton*.

The Bullet is a dancer in the ensemble that at first glance has nothing to distinguish her. But as the show progresses, the Bullet is present at every death in the musical and symbolizes death by providing the means that leads to every fatal situation.

After the show, the Graessles wanted to meet the cast, but they had to wait for it by standing in an extremely long line.

"Burr, it was cold," the Graessles thought.

Unfortunately by the time they reached the front of the line, Genevieve's friend had left, but, because they were the last ones, the cast lingered with the Graessles.

Genevieve got to take a picture with the actors, including those who played George Washington, Aaron Burr, and Hamilton himself.

In the snap-worthy words of Mrs. Graessle, "Good art speaks to the heart and soul of a person; it can encourage or convict. *Hamilton* does both of those things."

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: Jordan Johnson

Seniors featured in the Bear Facts were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS Class of 2017.

Energetic athlete leads by example, eats hot Cheetos

By Mary Womack

Most seniors can recall meeting the new guy in eighth grade who loved Flamin' Hot Cheetos and basketball, but none of them could have imagined the impact he would leave on them and on BCS with his energetic, fun-loving spirit and his faithful leadership.

Jordan Johnson previously attended Cedar Park Middle School and was at first unenthusiastic when his mother, Carol Johnson, told him she was offered the job of secondary principal at BCS. But after some encouragement and smart-phone bribes, Jordan begrudgingly agreed.

"At first Brentwood just felt very different," Jordan says. "I still remember being surprised that no one put locks on their lockers."

But despite the difficult switch, he quickly fit in and, through the help of his outgoing attitude, made friends with everyone. Both he and his mom can remember the summer before he first attended Brentwood. Classmate Brandon Patterson invited Jordan to a pool party. Jordan remembers feeling welcomed and included right away. And soon after, he joined numerous sports teams including basketball, flag football, and track.

Since that year, Jordan has excelled in every sport he has played, becoming renowned by students and coaches alike for his unique repertoire of energy, skill, leadership, and competitiveness. In fact, last year he was named Brentwood's male athlete of the year.

One of his closest friends, sophomore Connor Troutman, remembers the way Jordan revealed his competitive nature the day they met in the middle school flag football camp. Connor and Jordan were on the same team, and both extremely competitive. During their first game, Jordan threw Connor a deep pass that was incomplete.

"We ended up fighting for almost a full minute," Troutman says.

After that, they didn't have another incomplete pass between them and went on to win the camp tournament.

Jordan's

tremendous amount of energy is a puzzle for friends, teachers, coaches, and even his parents. He can be easily recognized from far away due to his jaunty strides and wide smile. When asked about where all his vigor might have come from, Carol Johnson says she suspects the hot Cheetos. Since Jordan has joined the BCS family many have noted the bags of Flamin' Hot Cheetos he appears to consume daily. Jordan still retains the memory of being three years old when his dad, Albert, gave him some, and he's been hooked ever since. This may be why he has had so much spirit and vitality since he was young.

"When I was little, my great uncle gave me the nickname 'firecracker' because I had so much energy," Jordan says. "I've just been energetic my whole life. In sports, if I don't get fired up then no one else will. I like to use it for good."

His energy and dedication have taken him far in BCS sports. In the past 12 months he took first-team all-district on Brentwood's first eleven-man football team, first-team all-state in basketball, and sixth place at state in the high jump.

"He's a great leader and a hard worker," football coach Stan Caffey said. "He stays real and holds his teammates accountable.

He'll get after 'em. He's also very well rounded: He's good at football, basketball, and track."

One might expect Jordan's proudest achievement at BCS to be one of his many athletic feats. But in reality, Jordan says he takes the most satisfaction in a math award from eighth-grade. He wasn't even supposed to be competing in PSIA Number Sense, but still remembers his third place ribbon. His mother also recalls this clearly and has the award hanging in her office.

Playing three sports at BCS and managing normal academic pressures is no small task. But Jordan has managed to deal with the stress of schoolwork and the demanding nature of all three sports since he first came to Brentwood. Not only this, but he was actively involved in choir his first three years of high school, and he sang bass in Encore during his junior year. But his wide range of abilities alone are not how Jordan has earned the respect of his teammates,

friends, teachers, and coaches alike. His faith is evident to those who encounter him.

"As you work with these young men you really learn who they are,"

Caffey says. "His faith is evident in the way he carries himself and the way others see him. He is encouraging to others through his strength."

A strong faith tradition has been instilled in Jordan since he was young. His parents taught him and his two older brothers, Albert and Taylor, the importance of a Christ-centered life. They also focused on the importance of having faith in God's plan. The Johnsons attend East Side Church of Christ on Sundays, and Jordan attends Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ on Wednesday nights. Jordan's mother has noticed how resolved he is on going to church every Wednesday night.

Jordan's love of attending church has been a big part of his life, so much so that everyone around him notices. His friends know that he is always the first to offer to pray and is never afraid to lead a devotion. According to his mom, both his brothers realize how central Jordan's faith is to his life, and they admire the way he values it so much.

"Jordan is motivated by his relationship with God. He lets his faith affect his everyday life and doesn't let other things take that place," Brentwood Oaks youth minister James Henley says.

This incentive should serve Jordan well in the coming years as he pursues a career in accounting at Harding University. He would love to continue to play basketball but is open to where God will take him.

"I don't have a plan that far ahead, but I think if you let God take control of your life he'll lead you in the right direction," Jordan says.

Commitment to God's plan has been a big part of the Johnson family's strength and faith. They have allowed God to show them the direction and relied on him for help in times of trouble. Looking back on Jordan's arrival at Brentwood, his mother is able to clearly see why God led them there.

"Brentwood has been so supportive of us both," she says, "and I think God brought us here more for Jordan's sake than mine. God had and has a great plan for him."

Jordan's multiple assets will be greatly missed at Brentwood, but his talent for leadership will take him far in the coming years.

"Jordan has been a blessing to Brentwood through his many talents, and his leadership is key on and off the field," classmate and close friend Brandon Patterson says.



THE BEAR FACTS FEBRUARY 2017

Super teacher pours heart into history, ministry

By Lauren Weilemann

“He has the voice and face of an angel,” says a senior girl about one of her favorite teachers. When asked if she could be quoted, she blushes and consents, but insists on keeping her identity concealed.

Bearing a striking resemblance to Captain America and known for his spellbinding voice and fascinating lectures, U.S. History and Government teacher Jimmie Harper is a favorite among BCS high school students.

Whether he is energizing the multitude of students in chapel or giving an animated play-by-play of World War I as if it were a bar fight, “JimJam” Harper has a way of engaging students’ attention in any number of situations. But his most appreciated asset by far is his heavenly voice that combines smooth jazz and high energy Gospel. Last year, in Harper’s second year at Brentwood, then-junior Joseph Mohrmann discovered a video Harper and his friends recorded late at night in their dorm in their freshman year of college singing “I Will Always Love You” by Whitney Houston.

With a voice and a talent for lip-sync battles like his, many find it hard to imagine how he could have ended up at Brentwood. Why didn’t he pursue a career in the music industry? Why isn’t he performing a musical version of his World War I barfight on Broadway? What would bring him to a place as seemingly unassuming as Brentwood? But Harper says he has realized how “finely tuned” his life experiences have been in leading him to Brentwood.

In 2008, when Harper took his first trip to Italy, he met a missionary by the name of Brandon Edwards. A big inspiration, Edwards’ stories about his missions in Sicily and China are often shared in Harper’s classes. Harper says he was “captivated” by the adventure and courage required to be a missionary in potentially hostile environments.

“I was awestruck by stories and knew then that whatever I did would relate to ministry,” Harper says.

During this same trip, the Harper family was waiting for their tour guide in Rome, when they saw a young, “wild-eyed” American running toward them. Harper reminisces that the man said he had not slept in 21 hours and had just downed two Red Bulls. This, of all people, was their tour guide. Thinking that this was “the coolest thing ever,” it became apparent to Harper that whatever he did with his life, it would involve history.

“History is a hit-or-miss subject,” senior Morgan George says, “but he brings it to life.”

Besides the World War I barfight, Harper is

known for his sledge hammer that represents the Schlieffen Plan and taking students outside behind the soccer field during the World War I unit for what has been affectionately dubbed “Trench Day.”

“I’ve never seen a teacher use a sledge hammer before ... or a meat grinder,” junior Merideth Mallett says.

Last year, Harper allowed Mohrmann to carry the Schlieffen Plan sledge hammer to chapel, but on one condition: Mohrmann had to explain the Schlieffen Plan to anyone who asked.

“He actually really cares about the subject and cares that we know it,” junior Tara Whitaker says.

His passion for the subject cannot be made to stay within the classroom. It seeps into all areas of Harper’s life, including friendships.

“He will tell you the history

of things when you don’t want to know,” good friend and fellow teacher Mere Rowlett says.

Rowlett remembers eating at Olive Garden with Harper and being given a 10-minute spiel on the history of olive oil.

“He’s unashamedly nerdy,” George says.

A self-proclaimed “next-level nerd,” Harper has read his all-time favorite books, the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, three times, and states that his favorite character is Gandalf.

Though Harper sometimes comes across as a “dad in a young person’s body,” he still loves his video games. Senior Tim Lee says that at the senior retreat in August during

the Pokemon Go craze, Harper rushed outside with the boys at 11 p.m. to chase a Nidoking.

On a different occasion, Lee says Harper spent three hours talking about Pokemon and lost his voice.

His passionate voice extends beyond the classroom and chapel. Harper, a man of many talents, has also coached elementary flag football and basketball since he came to Brentwood three years ago.

The dedicated teacher and coach also spent more than 40 hours over the summer a couple of years ago decorating his classroom with a friend to make it more interesting for his students. His room has been described as artistic, warm, homey, and like a coffee shop.

With the incredible amount of work put into his job, one would think that Harper would hardly have time to visit his relatives up in Searcy, Ark. Fortunately, he has heaps of stories about his close-knit family.

When asked about them, he insists on starting as far back as his great-grandparents, who were sharecroppers; his grandparents were the ones to break out of that cycle. His father, who worked in the food sales industry for over 20 years, has been a missionary, primarily in Guatemala, for 13 years. His mom has worked as an office manager at Harding Academy since the family moved to Arkansas in 2003. He has a younger sister, who is currently studying education and reading at Harding University.

Harper, being the son of a missionary, grew up traveling a lot during the summer. These experiences “equipped” him with the ability to feel comfortable in unfamiliar places.

One time, when Harper and his family were in the mountains in Ecuador, he encountered a llama tied up. Thinking this was inhumane, he untied it. The llama chased Harper and his friend. The chase ended with Harper’s friend being headbutted in the back. The two spent the rest of the day hiding from the llama.

“You don’t have to be faster than the animal, you just have to be faster than the other person,” Harper says about his llama attack experience.

Harper attended Harding and majored in social science. When he came to BCS, he remembers telling his mom after his first week, “Teachers actually care about you! And me!”

Though young and relatively new to Brentwood, Harper is respected by students and fellow teachers alike. Known for his captivating voice, passionate stories, and introspective disposition, Brentwood would not be the same without him.

As Harper always says at the end of each class, “Make it a great day!”



Lady Bears poised for playoff run

By Kaitlyn Baird

The Lady Bears are 5-1 in district and 20-11 overall after a 70-21 victory over San Juan Diego on Jan. 31. They trail only Marble Falls in the district standings, and eagerly anticipate the rematch with the Flames during the district tournament next week.

Head coach Devan Loftis said the team had a tough preseason schedule with “a lot of success and some adversity.” He said he hopes the Lady Bears can get in front of Marble Falls, and he thinks the team has a good chance to be a contender for the state final four.

Loftis said his team needs to improve defensive communication and consistent focus, and fine tune some other small areas, but “most of the big things are there.”

Seniors Addy Hardin and Alicia Dixon both agreed that the team’s goal is to win district. They also said there are a few things to work on first, like decision making and everyone giving 100-percent effort. However, the team has made some progress in other areas.

“People have really started to find their roles on the team,” Hardin said.

Dixon leads the team with 16 points per game, and she scored her 1000th career point against Concordia on Jan. 6.

Following are the team’s recent results:

1/3: @Smithville 57-53 L

The Lady Bears came close to winning in what Loftis described as a “furious fourth quarter comeback.” Dixon led with 20 points, followed by Hardin with 11, and senior Kayleigh Lawrence with 10.

1/6: @Concordia 48-17 W

Even with cold shooting and too many fouls, the team brought home their first district win. Dixon scored 17 points and Lawrence had 10.

1/10: Marble Falls Faith 54-46 L

The Lady Bears were down 12-0 to start

the game and 20-7 after the first quarter, but they made a comeback in the second quarter. With a long 3-point shot by sophomore Nyna Vazquez right before halftime, BCS trailed by only two. Marble Falls pulled ahead again in the third quarter, but with several 3-pointers in the fourth quarter, Brentwood closed the gap to within four points in the last minute of the game. Dixon led with 16 points, and Hardin made five 3-pointers for a total of 15 points.

1/17: John Paul II 52-29 W

BCS took control early in the game and

was leading 22-9 after the first quarter. Dixon scored 17 points in the first half, and the Lady Bears had a 20-point lead by halftime. Dixon scored 21 points, Lawrence had 10 points and eight rebounds, and senior Abby White had 10 points and four steals.

1/19: @Texas School for the Deaf 42-36 W

The Lady Bears struggled against a well-prepared opponent in the first half, and they were down 16-9 at halftime. Junior Emma Leidlein and White both made 3-pointers in the third quarter, but TSD still held the lead at the end of the period. BCS was able to pull ahead in the fourth quarter after 3-point shots from Vazquez and Hardin and some free throws. Dixon led scoring with 17 points – including 15 in the second half, while Hardin had 9 and Lawrence finished with 7.

1/24: S. Marcos Acad. 55-5 W

BCS “took it easy” with this district newcomer, according to Loftis. Lawrence and Hardin had 12 points each, and White had 8.

1/26: @St. Stephen’s 57-10 W

The Lady Bears had a close first half, but they began “destroying them” in the third quarter, according to junior Grace McDaniel.

1/31: S. Juan Diego 70-21 W

Brentwood dominated the game on Senior Night, and Hardin broke the all-time 3-point record for BCS. The Lady Bears were up 21-3 after the first quarter and cruised from there.



photo: Julia Hwang

Determined Senior Kayleigh Lawrence prepares to score against Faith during the Lady Bears’ only district loss.

Despite inexperience, girls look toward soccer playoffs

continued from page 1

Following are the most recent game results:

1/9: Schertz John Paul II 3-0 W

Brentwood came focused and ready to play. Miller scored the first goal, followed by a goal from freshman Mya Hughes right before the half. In the second half the Lady Bears held onto their lead and got one last goal by junior MaeAnne Herring.

1/12: Boerne Geneva 5-3 W

It was a close game, but BCS edged out the win with help from sophomore Madison Moseley, who had four goals.

1/16: @Pharr Oratory Athenaeum 3-0 W

The Lady Bears traveled five hours to Pharr and came out with the victory, led by two goals from Connor and one by Tindel.

1/20: San Marcos 14-2 W

Brentwood put on an offensive explosion going into the half with a large lead. In the second half the Lady Bears continued to put the pressure on and scored six more goals. They were led in scoring by Moseley, who had six goals.

1/23: @Austin Veritas 12-0 L

It was a rough night for BCS, who struggled against the defending state champions. Missing their starting goalkeeper, the Lady Bears struggled to keep the ball out of the net, going down 8-0 at half. The second half

didn’t get any better for Brentwood, who gave up four more goals and were held to a shutout.

1/30: Kerrville Our Lady of the Hills 5-2 L

Kerrville scored three quick goals, putting the Lady Bears down early. BCS got on the scoreboard with a goal from Connor. But they gave up two more goals making the score at halftime 5-1. Tindel scored the only goal of the second half.

New lights

continued from page 1

Last football season the school rented six gasoline powered construction lights that most people agreed were too short, too loud, and not bright enough. The new lights are 70 feet tall and are set firm in a concrete base 12 feet underground. The lights are a combination of 400-watt Musco LED fixtures and 1500-watt Musco HID fixtures on each pole.

Football is not the only sport that has been in need of the lights. Caffey said that the soccer teams have also been needing this permanent lighting for their evening practices and for future evening home games.

“In the past, the soccer team was having to play a game early in the day when it is too hot for both the players and the fans sitting in the uncovered bleachers,” Caffey said.

Not only is it too hot to play a soccer or football game at 4 p.m., but it is an inconvenience to both players and parents.

“It is too hard for parents to try to drive to the games, and it’s an inconvenience to the players who have to miss valuable school time,” Caffey stated.

The four poles arrived at BCS during Christmas break, and their installation was completed in early January. Unfortunately, when the trucks came to deliver the light poles the field was too wet from rain, and the trucks weighed too much for the field. They caused two sets of ruts stretching all the way from sideline to sideline on both ends of the field, as well as a busted and exposed sprinkler pipeline. This mistake caused the soccer teams to move their home games to the fields at Town and Country for two weeks.

“The ruts left on the field are a small inconvenience that can be fixed compared to the big picture,” Caffey said.

BCS athletics also purchased a used John Deere XUV Gator to add to their inventory. The Gator will be used as a utility vehicle for grounds maintenance.



photo: Mere Rowlett

Pursuit Junior MaeAnne Herring (back) and sophomore Christi Snow defend during a 3-0 victory on Jan. 9.

Varsity boys on hot streak as postseason draws near

By Nicholas Hunka

The BCS varsity boys' basketball team has played strong since the holiday break, winning nine of their last ten games. A seven-game winning streak was broken on Jan. 19 by Texas School for the Deaf. Through Tuesday's win against San Juan Diego, Brentwood is tied for second place in district with Geneva. The Bears have a district record of 6-1 and an overall record of 16-12 for the season.

The Bears play tonight at Geneva for their last district game. Playoffs begin after next week's district tournament.

After struggling early in the season, the team has improved as the season has progressed.

"I honestly had no doubts at the beginning of the season that we'd be fine," senior Jordan Johnson said.

According to first-year head coach Jan Jernberg, the Bears have become a more versatile team, able to function smoothly against a variety of opponents. Another major factor in the boys' recent success is the improvement of the defense.

Jernberg said the team needs to improve on consistency by not starting the game off too slowly or lagging after halftime. They also need to work on their overall intensity.

Jernberg said the team has benefited greatly from seniors Jordan Johnson and Graham Marks, as well as Michael Hickl, who is playing well after being out with a knee injury earlier in the season. Underclassmen are also contributing to the Bears' success. Jernberg called freshman Daniel Hickl a "pleasant surprise."

The offense is led in scoring by Johnson, who has averaged an impressive 18.9 points per game. Marks averages 10.3 points and 5.7 rebounds per game. Daniel Hickl is the top rebounder with 7.4 per game, followed by Michael Hickl with 6.6. Johnson leads with 4.4 assists per game.

Following are the most recent game results:

1/6: @Concordia 72-34 W

The Bears had what their coach called an "outstanding performance" against Concordia in their first district game. Johnson scored 21 points and played the complete game. Sophomore Connor Troutman came off the bench and hit three 3-pointers. Michael Hickl played well after coming back from a knee injury.

1/10: Marble Falls Faith 64-45 W

The team continued their winning streak, led by Johnson's 23 points. Marks had 15 rebounds, while Daniel Hickl scored 10 points.

1/13: Giddings State 66-36 W

Starting off slow, Brentwood came together during the game and played good defense as well as offense. Marks, Johnson, and junior Connor White led in scoring as the Bears grabbed their sixth straight win.

1/17: John Paul II 75-44 W

The Bears shot well from the floor – especially Johnson, who scored 31 points. Michael Hickl had 16 points and 10 rebounds.

1/19: @Texas School for the Deaf 50-47 L

Brentwood fought hard but came up a little short at the buzzer. The score was back and forth through the entire game. TSD was up by eight in the fourth quarter, but BCS came back to tie it up at 47-47. TSD hit a 3-pointer at the

buzzer to win the game.

"It's hard to play TSD at their place," Marks said. "If we'd have played them anywhere else we would have beat them."

1/24: San Marcos 66-48 W

After a slow start, the Bears pulled ahead by three at halftime. The defense took over and performed well in the second half. Jernberg

said Dixon had a good defensive game. Johnson led with 28 points.

1/31: San Juan Diego 68-21 W

Brentwood led from the beginning against San Juan Diego for another district win, thanks to solid defensive pressure all game.



photo: Julia Hwang

Tenacious D Senior Graham Marks halts the progress of an opponent from Marble Falls Faith Academy during a 64-45 Bears victory on Jan. 10. Marks had 15 rebounds in the game for Brentwood, who has been near the top of the district all season.

Soccer boys sweep Hill Country, are second in district

By Zack Haswell

The BCS boys' varsity soccer team is 5-2 and tied for second in district with five games left. On Jan. 26 Brentwood beat Hill Country in the first game ever using permanent lights. Playing in front of an unusually large crowd, the Bears defeated their rival 3-1.

First-year coach Jesse Jordan said the team has faced some adversity this season, but these struggles are giving the team strength.

"It's all about owning our mistakes, learning and bouncing back from our mistakes, making adjustments and moving on," Jordan said. "We are doing great with our overall intensity, respect for opponents, possession time and number of corner kicks. Also, our defense has done a great job with utilizing strategies to counter specific playing styles of our opponents."

Jordan said Brentwood needs to improve on

possessing the ball against the tougher opponents in the district.

Brentwood has outscored their opponents 23-6 through seven games. Senior Brandon Patterson leads the team with seven goals and four assists. Junior Preston Glenn has added five goals, and freshman Zach Myers has scored three.

Following are the most recent game results:

1/5: @Hill Country 1-0 W

It was a scoreless game going into halftime. Late in the second half the Bears found the back of the net in an unusual way. Senior Will Moncure was winding up to take a shot when he got slide tackled from behind, which caused the Hill Country player to kick the ball in their goal, resulting in an "own-goal" that gave BCS the win.

1/9: @Austin Veritas 3-1 L

Veritas came out and scored an early goal,

and the Bears trailed 2-0 at halftime. In the second half Patterson scored before Veritas pulled away with a third goal. BCS players and coaches agreed that the game was poorly officiated.

1/12: Waco Vanguard 6-0 W

Glenn and senior Austin Greene scored two goals each, and Patterson and Moncure each scored one, while the Bears played on their temporary home field at Town and Country.

1/16: @San Juan Diego 6-1 W

Glenn had a goal in the first half along with Patterson, who had two. In the second half Patterson finished off his hat-trick with an early goal.

1/19: Waco Reicher 1-0 L

Both teams struggled to score throughout the game. Although Brentwood held most of the possession it was Waco who was able to capitalize off a BCS mistake and score the deciding goal late in the second half.

1/23: Temple Holy Trinity 6-0 W

Patterson started the game with a goal, which was followed by two goals from Glenn and one from junior David Reich. In the second half freshman Frank Guerrero and sophomore Isaac Drew each scored a goal.

1/26: Hill Country 3-1 W

In Brentwood's first true home game, the Bears came out with great intensity and took an early lead with a goal from Patterson. Hill Country quickly tied it with a goal off a BCS mistake. But right before halftime, Myers regained the lead for the Bears.

In the second half Brentwood kept the pressure on and never allowed Hill Country any opportunities to score. With 30 seconds left, the Bears added the finishing touches with a break-away goal by Myers.

Chinese visit ends with party

continued from page 1

Museum in Fredericksburg. Additionally, three of the international students went on a trip to the Texas Capitol with the seventh-grade class on Monday, Jan. 23.

At the conclusion of the two weeks, the Lunar New Year was celebrated at an event on the Brentwood campus hosted by PREP. The night began with an information meeting for prospective host milies for international students held in the chapel. After the meeting concluded, dinner was held at 6 p.m. in the FLC, where those attending enjoyed traditional Chinese cuisine. The festivities concluded with a talent show and professional performances held in the CSA, and a ceremony was held after the shows for awards and recognition.

Two of the visiting students, ninth-grader Shaobo “Jacky” Xu and seventh-grader Jiashuo “Henry” Guo, stated that the most surprising aspect of their visit to America was the difference in education. They noted that the Chinese and American education systems are very different from each other, and that in China, students have less free time.

“I think if I came to America, I would have more (free) time,” Henry said, and as he tried to put the rigor of the Chinese education system into words, Jacky concisely explained his perception of the Chinese system.

“Study, study, study,” Jacky said.

Henry and Jacky expounded on the situation by noting that in China, students at all secondary levels get at most an hour of free time each day. Henry said that at his school, students are released each day at 5 p.m., while Jacky, who attends international school, gets out each day at 3:30 p.m.

While in America, both students were astounded by the amount of free time they had

in the course of an entire day. They agreed that this extra time was very enjoyable, and, like many American students, they spent it playing sports and video games.

The idea for the visit was first discussed last summer, when the founder of PREP, Ed Wu, contacted BCS about hosting the winter camp. At the end of September, the concept was formally proposed and Brentwood agreed to have the shadow camp hosted on their campus.

From a student’s perspective, the choice to visit a school in a foreign country was made due to a curiosity regarding foreign education. Jacky said that he decided to get involved in the program because international school in China piqued his interest for attending school in America. Henry said he signed up because of a desire to see how American schools work.

PREP is a Christian organization and stays in touch with international students throughout their entire stay in the United States.

“They are very active and hands-on,” admissions director Kimberly McLain said.

McLain said she hoped international students would be impressed by American schools and have a good experience in the United States, while she wanted BCS students to have a greater exposure to other cultures through this camp.

As for the international visitors, at least two of them enjoyed their stay in America.

“I think Brentwood students and teachers are all very nice,” Jacky said, recalling how some teachers helped him learn how to take good notes in class. “Most of America is very nice, very helpful.”

Henry agreed, and stated that he liked his experience at Brentwood.

“Classmates are very friendly,” he concluded.



photo: Russell Larson

Maps mavens Eighth-grader Grant Martinez (left) defeated seventh-grader James Oberwortmann (middle left) in a tiebreaker to win the Geography Bee on Jan. 18.

Martinez wins Geo Bee

By Michael Milicia

Eighth-grader Grant Martinez won Brentwood Christian’s annual Geography Bee on Jan. 18 in the CSA theater, defeating seventh-grader James Oberwortmann in a tiebreaker. Martinez and Oberwortmann were tied 1-1 after the three questions of the championship round, making them progress into a tiebreaker.

Writing their answers on paper, the contestants were asked to name the body of water that is connected to the Gulf of Aden by a strait. With the answer “Red Sea,” Martinez was determined the winner, and Carrie Hunter, the coordinator and scorekeeper, put the first-place medal around his neck as the audience cheered. Hunter opened the bee by welcoming everyone and connecting the study of geography to the beauty of the world and the power of God.

As she handed things over to bee moderator Jonathan Weed, children’s screams interrupted Weed because of a yellow jacket in the theater. As it flew around, shrieks and shouts came up from the seats until someone threw their jacket onto the bug. Eighth-grader Aaron Lilya was able to lift the jacket, grab it by the abdomen,

and throw it outside.

The audience ranged from fifth to eighth grade, and a few seniors watched as well.

The first round consisted of questions from the United States, and only two of the seven students missed a question. In the second round, each contestant was given the same question and had to write their answer on paper. All contestants knew that Niagara Falls bordered New York and Canada. Round three had the students look at a U.S. map and answer questions about it. Again, all seven answered correctly.

One contestant missed a question in round four, but no one was eliminated until round five, when every contestant gave a wrong answer. This left Martinez, Oberwortmann, and eighth-graders Mason Hejl and Isaac Stanglin. A few questions later, only two students remained.

Other contestants of the bee were seventh-graders Emma Ayers and Ben Copeland, and eighth-grader Zoe Hamiyeh. Seventh-grader Conner Almanza also qualified for the bee, but he had already left town in order to attend the presidential inauguration on Jan. 20.

Zoo Man returns with favorites like Rocky, Sausage

By Uyen Phan

The chapel was alive with the sound of “oohs” and “aahs” as elementary students were introduced to various exotic animals from the Capital of Texas Zoo on Jan. 9.

For nearly two decades the traditional zoo show has helped the children of Brentwood Christian learn more about wildlife, this year conducting three morning shows for students from K4 to fifth grade. This year, “Zoo Man” Michael Hicks brought five friends with him: Fiona the wallaby, Annabelle the blue-and-gold macaw, Rocky the giant tortoise, Sausage

the blue-tongued skink, and Goldie the python.

A first-timer at Brentwood, Fiona caught the attention of many students for her fluffy appearance. Soon enough, the baby wallaby was obviously among the children’s favorite. The disappointment of the audience’s whine as they said goodbye to Fiona was palpable.

“She’s so cute and fuzzy!” second-grader Gracyn Mayle chirped.

Other wild guests were introduced to the students’ excitement and curiosity. Rocky the tortoise was slow and shy, but his hard shell and impressive size piqued several questions from the audience.

“What if you threw a rock on his shell?” somebody asked.

“It probably won’t break, but you must not do that because it’s mean,” replied Hicks, and sounds of agreement filled the air.

The show came to a close with the appearance of a snake, an annual specialty from Hicks. Goldie the python was only about three feet long, and was a replacement for Lemonade the Burmese python, which Hicks said is too big for school visits.

The traditional “snake finale” brought mixed reactions. Some were unimpressed.

“We’re kinda bored with the snake. He keeps

doing the (snake constricting) trick, so we get bored of that,” second-grader Elijah Duvvuri commented.

However, third-grader Aysia Ooi, who was chosen to hold the python, thought differently. She said she was not scared at all, although she had never touched a snake and was surprised by how smooth its scales were.

Overall, the zoo show once again succeeded to bring joy and knowledge to the young students of BCS. Elementary principal Martha Ashley said that she hoped it helped raise awareness on endangered animals and the proper animal treatment for future generations.