



THE BEAR FACTS

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BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

NOVEMBER 2016



Football team makes playoffs

Boys prepared for game tonight in Houston versus top-ranked foe

By Blake Benton

The Brentwood Christian Bears' first-ever 11-man varsity high school football team is going to the TAPPS 3A playoffs.

To make the playoffs, the Bears had to win two consecutive road games to end the regular season. First they beat San Marcos Academy 24-21 on Oct. 29 in San Marcos, and then they defeated St. Gerard 54-12 in San Antonio on Nov. 4.

However, the Bears now face off against the top-ranked team in the state, Northland Christian, who finished the regular season with a 10-0 record, including seven wins by more than 50 points. BCS faces Northland tonight at 7 p.m in Houston.

Facing a seemingly unbearable opponent is not a new task for the Bears. They have faced tough competition all season long, matching up against state champs and very successful programs, and have improved greatly from the beginning of the season.

"Boys, I'm excited about this game," Caffey said to the team in the locker room before practice earlier this week. "We're going to go out there and have fun playing football because we have got nothing to lose."

Senior quarterback Jordan Johnson said the team is aware they are a "really really bad underdog," but they plan to just play their best.



photo: Kevin McKinnerney

Finding a seam Senior Jordan Johnson breaks free for a big gain during the Bears' game against Boerne Geneva on Oct. 14. Within 10 at the half, BCS lost 28-0.

"We've got to leave it all on the field," he said.

Defensive coordinator Correy Washington said his advice to the players is simple: "Believe in yourself; believe in your teammates."

Washington said that although Brentwood's opponent is a good team, there's no reason to

be scared of them.

"It's going to be tough, there's no doubt about it," he said. "But I think we've got a good game plan, and we can get after them a little bit. We should be able to move the ball and get

see FOOTBALL, page 6

Earliest ever Jog set for Wednesday

By Benjamin Helyer

Next week, students will not be pushing through the normal school day grind on Wednesday, Nov. 16. Instead, they will continue the annual tradition of having a day filled with activities, including a run to raise money for the school, called Jog-a-fun.

The runs will involve continuous laps on the baseball field for elementary students and a set track around the baseball field and upper elementary playground for secondary. Secondary students may again participate in a "color run" during their jog, where they will have bags of color thrown at them, coloring their body and clothes with bright powder. Students of all ages will participate in other activities throughout the day in addition to running.

"To many of our students, this day is a highlight of the year," president Jay Burcham said in an email to the BCS community last month. "They get to run, jump on bouncy houses, get a snow cone, and laugh and exercise with their friends."

Students and faculty were asked to participate in fundraising for the school by sending out 20 letters and raising at least \$150. The numbers are adjusted for families with multiple siblings at the school.

Incentives were offered to encourage fundraising. For different age groups, a name will be drawn from the set of students which met the fundraising goals for the day. Lower elementary will be competing for a party at the Dell Diamond, upper elementary will be put in the drawing for iFly, the middle school winner will receive an outing for Top Golf, and high school students have the incentive of a trip to Six Flags and Schlitterbahn. As always, secondary students may also earn a "Jog Free" day in the spring by meeting the goals.

School CFO Jeff Morris has offered his own challenge to secondary students regarding fundraising: If any person raises more than he does, he will buy lunch for that student's entire mentor group. A similar challenge was offered to elementary students with a pizza lunch offered for their class.

If Jog-a-fun is rescheduled due to inclement weather, as it was last year, then it will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 30.

This is the 33rd year of Jog-a-fun, but only the second year it has been held before Christmas. Last year's Jog was on Dec. 2.

Daily tutoring offered for high school

By Mary Womack

For the first time in Brentwood Christian's history, a daily after-school tutoring program is being offered for high school students. The program began on Nov. 1 and takes place in the secondary library from 4-6 p.m. every Monday through Thursday.

Retired elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed was asked to oversee the program, hire the tutors, and make sure that it runs smoothly.

"The goal of the program is to provide high-quality tutoring in a break-even program," Dr. Weed said. "This program is planned not as a money maker for the school but as a service provider."

Presently, four tutors are employed, but

more may be added depending on the need. Tutors were hired from the University of Texas, Concordia, and Southwestern University to coach students in all English courses, all science courses, Spanish, math, and social studies.

Middle school and elementary courses may be added in the future, depending on needs and the success of the current program.

BCS parent Chris Ruiz said he expects the new program to offer more one-on-one help than students typically receive.

"Since many students don't learn at the same pace, it allows students to work at their own pace and receive the help they need," he said.

Students who sign up for the program may select either an individual or group session. Small group sessions consist of 2-5 members

Lighting the Darkness: Camille Sunshine

Editor finds true holidays feature food, family

Merry Christmas! Happy Thanksgiving! It's the holiday season – the weather is cooling off and there are pumpkins to be carved, turkeys to be eaten, and presents to be bought, wrapped, and opened. There are so many holidays in the months of October, November, and December. Among the most known and celebrated are Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve. But did you know that there are 68 holidays in November alone?

Today is Veteran's Day. There are several days this month designed to celebrate types of food, such as deviled eggs, sandwiches, bittersweet chocolate with almonds, cranberries, cashews, parfaits, deep-fried clams, and French toast.

November also has days to Plan Your Epitaph, Clean Your Refrigerator, Have a Party with Your Bear, Have a Bad Day, and Stay at Home Because You are Well. You can also celebrate King Tut, being Marooned without a Compass, Saxophones, Buttons, Absurdity, False Confessions, and Square Dancing. And don't forget Chaos Never Dies Day, World Hello Day, and oh yes, Housewife's Day, which is wonderfully the same as Men Make Dinner Day.

Freshman Genevieve Graessle recently started to write down holidays for each day on the whiteboard in the classroom of her mother, math teacher Kaleen Graessle.

"I thought it would be a cool idea to try and celebrate every day and appreciate every single

day that we get," Genevieve said.

So why do we celebrate Christmas and Thanksgiving and not all these? I would love it if people went around giving each other sandwiches on Sandwich Day. Somehow, these things lack meaning and popularity to be celebrated. What exactly is a real holiday?

Holiday is defined by the fabulous dictionary.com as "a day fixed by law or custom on which ordinary business is suspended in commemoration of some event or in honor of some person." Why do we have to go to school on Have a Bad Day but not Thanksgiving Day? Here is a brief history of Thanksgiving Day to show you why we celebrate it and make it a true holiday.

The first thanksgiving feast was 395 years ago at Plymouth Plantation. The Mayflower sailed from England in 1620 and arrived at Cape Cod in the winter. Most stayed on board for protection from the weather, but when spring came, only 51 of the original 102 passengers were left alive due to scurvy, disease, and cold.

They were visited by Squanto, who helped the settlers learn how to farm and foster good

relationships with the nearby Wampanoag tribe. Their leader, William Bradford, invited the Wampanoag tribe to a feast after their crops succeeded, and this original Thanksgiving Feast lasted three days. It featured deer instead of turkey and had no desserts.

I think the reason our holidays are what they are is all the history behind them. There is absolutely no relevant history behind Absurdity Day that is not absurd (sorry for that – just making sure you're still reading). Thanksgiving is one of the first things that happened in America – maybe the first American success story. We celebrate Thanksgiving, and in between mouthfuls of stuffing, we occasionally think of the men and women who did the same thing so many years ago.

Christmas is the same way. I know it is a month away and Christmas music hasn't started yet (or it shouldn't have), but it is the most popular holiday in America. We remember the day God became man on this earth, and the sacrifice that was and later became. We picture Mary and Joseph, set up nativity scenes around our houses, give gifts to each other like the Magi did, and praise God as the angels did. We can remember

the people who started the traditions of Christmas, from Martin Luther and his Christmas tree with actual candles on it to the smell of Grandma's cookies baking in the oven.

That brings me to my second point about the importance of these holidays over the others: Holidays are about family. Every major holiday we celebrate involves people coming together and eating. There is a reason that the words "fellowship" and "food" are often near each other in the Bible. Something about food brings people together. Even Jesus' body is represented as food, bringing us together as His church.

So this holiday season, take the time to be with your family. They won't be there forever. Either you are going to get busier and busier as you move up grade levels and be at home less and less, or you are leaving home like the seniors. Or maybe it's the other way around. I don't mean to be morbid, but life is short, and we students are not going to live forever. Value every moment you have with the people you love, and even people you don't like quite so much. I know you'll probably have some homework over Thanksgiving break, but take some time to set it down and be with your family.

To close, felicidades, frohe weihnachten, jie ri kuai le, lể tạ ơn vui vẻ, 좋은 연휴 보내세요 and I wish you an absolutely wonderful holiday season – one that is restful, rejuvenating, and full of laughter.

THE DEAR EDNA COLUMN

by the lovely Ms. Edna

READER: Why is pizza so unapproachable nowadays?

EDNA: Pizza just wants to be loved. Not their fault they have a resting mean face. Except pineapple pizza, those guys are as unapproachable and are as horrible as they look, if not more so.

READER: Why are elephants so wrinkly?

EDNA: They lost a lot of weight so their skin is a bit stretched out. But the elephants thank you for noticing.

READER: What can I do in life if I can't even sleep properly because I'm so busy?

EDNA: Maybe start a rock garden. You can't kill it like a real garden and if you fail at that too you have a pretty sweet sandbox.

READER: I'm always hungry but my teacher will never let me eat. What should I do?

EDNA: Offer them the food first, waving it tantalizingly in front of their noses. If that doesn't work, try standing outside their classroom while aggressively eating your food and staring inside the room.

READER: I know the Brentwood baseball team lost some good players, but do you think they will be good this year?

EDNA: They've practiced I'm sure. And besides, with the right walkup song, anything is

possible.

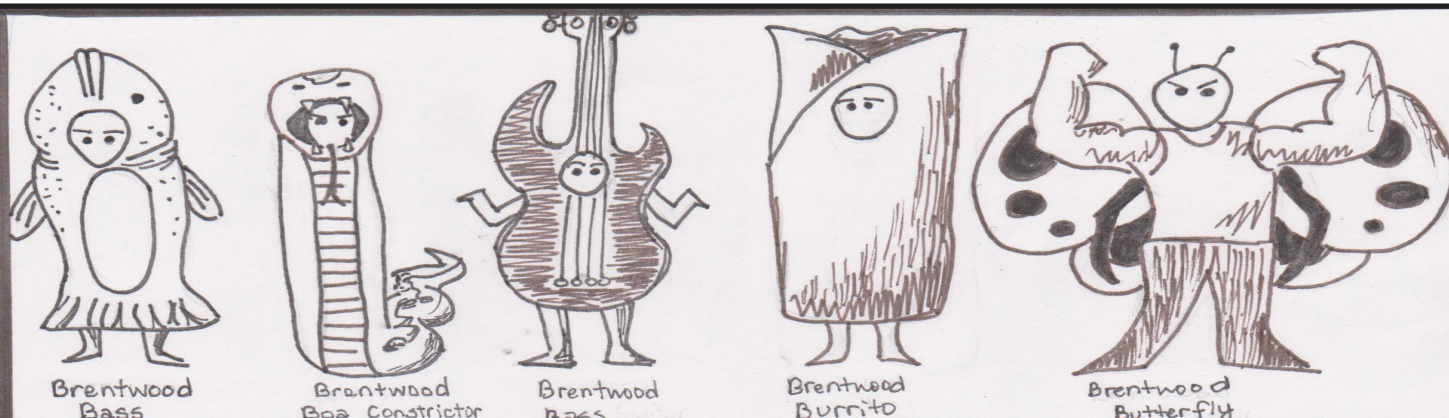
READER: But what if it snows?

EDNA: First off, we live in Austin. Besides, my grandmother told me of this "snow" once. It turned out to be about as real as Santa.

READER: How should I vote on Proposition 24601?

EDNA: If you're Inspector Javert, you arrest it. If not, maybe you should vote on Prop. 8675309 instead.

Rejected
Brentwood
Mascots
by
The Honorary Omelettes



THE BEAR FACTS NOVEMBER 2016

Honor societies induct dozens

By Jackson Baird

BCS mom Melissa Biegert brought tears to the eyes of some National Honor Society students as she delivered a heartfelt story about her childhood friend's struggle with finding his place in the world.

Biegert was the featured speaker at Brentwood Christian's annual NHS induction ceremony, which was held at Westover Hills Church of Christ on Oct. 11. This year there is a total of 103 NHS members, just shy of last year's record of 105 members.

"I really enjoyed listening to her speech," junior Katie Griffith said. "It was inspiring to hear what led her to become who she is today."

On Oct. 27, the National Junior Honor Society held their ceremony in the school theater during first and second periods, adding 51 inductees, which included 46 seventh graders and five eighth graders. With the 24 returning members, NJHS now has a total of 75 total members.

At the NHS event students and parents entered the church's chapel and waited in line to enjoy their pasta buffet. Before the NHS induction began, the officers performed the candle lighting ceremony. Officers included president Kristyn Chambers, a senior; vice president Bekah Connor, a junior; treasurer Merideth Mallett, a junior; secretary Hope Hutson, a senior; and historian Jenna Beggs, a junior.

Returning members were introduced along with the previously introduced officers. The new members were then called by their grade levels individually and signed their name in a registry which includes all the past members and officers since 2009.

There were 36 inductees, which included 23 sophomores, six juniors, and seven seniors. To

end the ceremony, the officers led the members in the National Honor Society pledge.

Before the school year, NHS made a change regarding the head of the society, as Dr. Brooke Hollingsworth took over for Kaleen Graessle, who is now in charge of Brentwood's TCSIT and TAPPS contest efforts.

In the middle school's NJHS ceremony, on stage welcoming new members were the eighth-grade NJHS officers: president Grant Martinez, vice president Caroline Griffith, secretary Rebecca Schmitz, treasurer Molly Allen, and historian Brooklyn Allen. Students were then inspired by a motivational speech by Chambers, the NHS president.

NJHS sponsor Paula Bennett said the NJHS members will conduct a service project at Travis County's Brown Santa off of Cameron Road at the end of November, where the students will wrap gifts for underprivileged kids.

NJHS students will receive their T-shirts soon, and they have already received permission from secondary principal Carol Johnson to wear them every third Tuesday in the month.

"It is a special reward for the students who have put in the hard work to get into NJHS," Bennett said.

Two weeks ago some NHS members went to Rosedale school to help out with their fall carnival. On Nov. 2 they worked a bazaar at Village Christian Apartments, where they helped sell handmade crafts and baked goods, and raffle items.

"The BCS chapter of NHS has a long history of serving our school and community," Dr. Hollingsworth said. "I hope that we will continue that tradition this year as our members exemplify excellence in scholarship, character, leadership, and service."



photo: Dana Ragsdill

Agging Peanuts Elementary teachers Jackie Boyd (subbing for her daughter), Cynthia Davis, Paul Morrow, and Summer Best dressed up as Peanuts characters for the last day of Book Week on Oct. 28. This year 85 students submitted books to be judged.

Fall Fest features new booths, nice weather, funds for school

By Uyen Phan

"My limbs, they're dead!" exclaimed senior Sam Mack as she stumbled out of the giant hamster ball, one of the favorite activities during Brentwood Christian's Fall Festival on Oct. 22.

With preparations made as early as mid-September, the fundraiser was smoothly carried out despite being scheduled on the same day as the fall musical, *Cinderella*, and at the end of Homecoming Week. The warm, dry October day was chiming with children's screaming and laughter.

The 2016 Fall Festival featured over 30 booths. New additions included 3wide Racing's Mobile Race Track and BCS Drill Team's snack booth. The football toss and soccer penalty kicks booths were provided by freshmen, while the sophomores were in charge of the dunk tank. All-time popular booths such as hamster balls, petting zoo, and laser tag also made a comeback this year.

Cafeteria food vendor U.S. Foods, after the success of last year's event, continued to be the main lunch provider. The food received compliments from festival attendees for its quality and price, especially the barbecue beef sandwiches, hot dogs, and nachos. However, Fall Fest co-



photo: Lisa Lee

It's so fluffy! Junior Merideth Mallett joyfully cradles a bunny at the Fall Festival petting zoo on Oct. 22.

ordinator Maryam Fernandez said she might have new plans for lunch catering in mind.

"If I coordinate again next year, who knows? I may mix things up a bit," she said.

The totals this year, which include both ticket sales and donations and sponsorships, amount to \$13,527. The top three booths in ticket sales are: fourth-grade's petting zoo with \$715.50, third-grade's cake walk with \$681, and fifth-grade's hamster balls with \$572.50.

Fernandez said she hopes next year's Fall Festival will be planned sooner, and that PTF will be able to reach out to the community further for more sponsorships.



photo: Rachel Beggs

Creepy, cooky Seniors (left to right) Mary Ruiz, Samantha Mack, Thomas Yates, Gabie Nguyen, Hannah Odom, and Khue Tran dressed up as the Addams Family for the National Honor Society's annual Halloween get-together at Rosedale on Oct. 28.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: Charlie Vazquez

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

Big-hearted actor loves to sing, work out, eat muffins

By Lauren Weilemann

Mornings in Encore would not be complete without a half-serious rant about muffins from senior Charlie Vazquez. According to classmate Morgan George, if his favorite muffins from H-E-B have more cinnamon or chocolate chips than usual, Charlie will launch into a spirited tirade.

"I've never met a person more passionate about life, music, and muffins," Morgan says.

Well known for his "angelic" voice, Charlie Vazquez has been a staple in the elite high school singing group since his freshman year. He is beloved by his fellow Encore members for his uplifting spirit and being helpful and encouraging to newbies and underclassmen.

"He makes it more enjoyable for everyone," Morgan says. "Without him there, it would just

feel like there was an empty space, like there was something missing. It wouldn't be complete without Charlie."

Since kindergarten, Charlie has graced this campus with his compassionate heart, calming spirit, consistent effort, and friendly personality. Some might say the campus will seem empty without him.

"He was a friend to everyone," his fifth-grade teacher Carrie Hunter recalls. "He always sees the good in others."

Though under average in height, Charlie makes up for it with a big heart. His sister Nyna, a sophomore, says she loves his love for other people and his ability to make his friends laugh.

"He is very determined, loyal, and responsible," Nyna says. "Charlie is that person who always reads directions. He read the directions on how to put a happy meal together."

Charlie is described by his friends as a laid back, humble, caring, funny, and overall great person. Nyna says he's bubbly, creative, friendly, and social.

Charlie's creativity has been evident since his childhood. Nyna remembers putting on magic shows for their parents when they were little.

"I would be the assistant, and he would be the magician," she says.

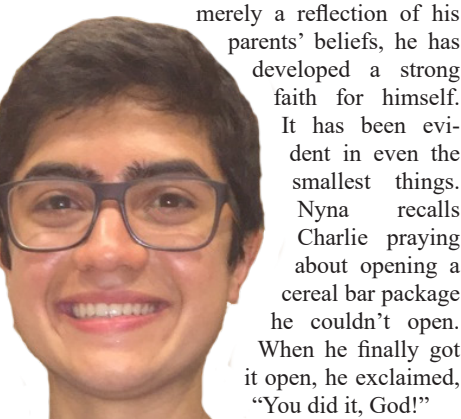
Morgan says Charlie loves his freshman buddies, Cade Young and Nick Weston. For Cade's birthday recently, he texted Morgan and freshman Adrie Gruis to ask them to sing "Happy Birthday" with him during one of Cade's classes. The three got permission and were able to surprise and embarrass Cade.

"He's the kind of person that thinks of that stuff," Morgan says. "He likes being an example to younger students. He doesn't know how great he is."

Charlie lives with his parents, Nyna, and their two-year-old dog Nyx, a Havanese. Though he said he is closest to his mom, he often spends time at the movies with his dad watching action

films. Charlie also enjoys playing volleyball with his sister, and going on walks with Nyna and Nyx.

The spiritual senior attends St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, and it may come as no surprise that his favorite form of worship is singing. Though Charlie says his faith started out as



merely a reflection of his parents' beliefs, he has developed a strong faith for himself. It has been evident in even the smallest things. Nyna recalls Charlie praying about opening a cereal bar package he couldn't open. When he finally got it open, he exclaimed, "You did it, God!"

Next year, Charlie plans on going to Savannah College of Art and Design in Georgia to study industrial design. He says he really enjoys the concept of creating what he imagines.

"My imagination is the limit," he says. When asked why he chose to go so far away from home, Charlie says about the campus, "It was just right for me. I felt it."

One of Charlie's favorite activities is theater. He's had numerous roles in plays and musicals at BCS, including Kurt in The Sound of Music, Theodore "Laurie" Laurence in Little Women, and Prince Christopher in Cinderella. At last spring's Greater Austin High School Musical Theater Awards, or GAHSMTAs for short, Charlie won a scholarship to a three-week sleepaway theater camp on the UT campus in June.

Sixty-five people attended the "intensive" camp and were split into groups of about 10 people for the classes. The entire camp was very fast-paced, and Charlie had a hard time keeping up at first. Fortunately, it did not take long for him to get the hang of things.

At 8 a.m., the campers started their lessons in ballet, jazz, hip hop, and tap dancing. Charlie's favorite style of dance was jazz, because he liked the music and movement style. The hardest style of dance for Charlie was tap, as it requires a certain amount of coordination to produce the correct "tap" sound.

Campers also took voice lessons and acting classes. There, they prepared two contrasting styles of monologues and worked on identifying their motivation in a scene.

Charlie says he is hoping to do some community theater in the future, but he would not major in musical theater. For him, acting is more of a hobby.

On the other hand, he says he will be in choir for sure.

"I really love singing," he says. "My two passions are singing and acting ... and working out."

Charlie and choir director Whitney Wick have similar workout schedules and enjoy chatting about them before Encore. Charlie wakes up at 5 a.m. to work out before Encore.

Wick says Charlie is a really good singer who takes direction very well and doesn't give up.

"He wants to be the best at what he does," she says.

Though Brentwood Christian will seem empty next year without Charlie's soaring tenor voice and bubbly laughs, students can rest assured that he will do great things outside of the BCS community. It is safe to say that, through his artistic talents and strong faith, God will bless him and those around him.

photo: Morgan George

THE BEAR FACTS

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www.brentwoodchristian.org.

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Passionate Renaissance woman leads with peace, logic

By Hannah Odom

Kaleen Graessle is like a parfait composed of sugary sweet layers. She is a mom, a wife, a teacher; she is also a peacemaker, a go-getter, a singer, an artist, a grammar enthusiast, and most of all, she is the Christ-like friend that all people need in their lives.

Graessle began teaching at Brentwood Christian in 1989 and has taught on and off for the last 28 years. From Physics and seventh-grade Life Science to nearly every math class, Graessle has taught it all. Nowadays, she teaches Geometry, AP Calculus, and Competitive Math; she has headed the math department for 24 years.

With her logical reasoning skills and overwhelming likeability, she has always found herself to be involved in a massive number of school activities and leadership positions throughout her years at BCS. These include running TCSIT, TAPPS, and NHS; being cheerleading sponsor; planning senior trips and community service opportunities; and snapping her applause during Haiku Club meetings.

"You may think of a math teacher as being kind of ... dispassionate, but not her," teacher Mel Witcher says. "She is very passionate for her own kids and her students, and when her students aren't doing well it hurts her."

Anyone who knows Graessle can attest to her sing-song tone and chipper yet quiet demeanor. Her angelic voice has been described as "cotton candy light and sweet," by senior Gabie Nguyen.

Her Geometry class has long been a favorite among many Brentwood students. Pupils enjoy making bridges out of spaghetti, creating scale drawings, and seeking geometrical shapes in day-to-day life. And they appreciate getting stickers on their tests if they make a 90 or above.

The popular teacher is also held in high regard among her peers.

"She is extremely smart and articulate, and she's a true leader," teacher Jonathan Weed says. "She's also one of my favorite people - a lot of fun to be around, and also full of wisdom."

Graessle used her sweet demeanor to her advantage to surprise the student body in recent lip sync battles, performing songs like AC/DC's "Back in Black."

"She killed it!" senior Elayna Bruce says. "It was an awesome surprise."

Close friend Dr. Brooke Hollingsworth says one of her favorite memories of Graessle is when she put on headphones, so she could not hear herself, and sang Beyonce's "Halo" on the tour bus in Italy one night on last year's senior trip.

"I laughed until I cried," Dr. Hollingsworth says. "It was awesome."

In 2001 Graessle took a three-year break from teaching in order to raise her three children: Jackson (BCS Class of 2013), a senior studio art major at Baylor; Isabel (BCS 2015), a sophomore biology major at Harding; and Genevieve, a freshman at Brentwood.

All of Graessle's children competed in Art Memory at PSIA and TCSIT. When it comes to art, Graessle says she likes to "look at it, think about it, and create it to some extent."

To create it, Graessle paints bridge themed paint-by-numbers which are proudly displayed in her room, and she draws Zentangles with other teachers.

Graessle partakes in a number of other hobbies including reading "light" murder mysteries, watching musical theater, doing yoga, and singing.

Graessle sings second soprano at local churches

with a group called "Sweet Expressions." They have about 10 singers, including Witcher.

"She fills the part well, and she obviously loves it," Witcher says.

Graessle and her husband Scott, a game developer, graduated from Abilene Christian University with physics degrees in 1985 and were married a year later.

In May of 2015 Scott was diagnosed with colon cancer and still undergoes regular chemo treatments. Graessle says that their struggles have become "the new normal."

Graessle also received her master's degree of education in curriculum and instruction in 2011 from ACU along with a certification in conflict resolution.

"I've always been a peacemaker," she says, with her nurturing smile and lilting voice.

Several teachers have attested to Graessle being the teacher "with her hand up" during meetings. Witcher says she is the one who gently steers everyone to think about why they're doing what they're doing.

"She asks a lot of good questions," Witcher says.

Growing up with an air force dad, Graessle moved a lot as a child, spending kindergarten through high school in 13 different schools, including eighth to tenth grade in Madrid.

This moving about planted a love for traveling in Graessle. She has gone to Honduras, Korea, New York City, and all over Europe on about 10 senior class trips.

This is the first year that Graessle will be taking over the role of TCSIT and TAPPS coordinator from science teacher Michelle Mallett. Not only is Graessle the coordinator of Brentwood's TCSIT trip, but this year it is Brentwood's turn to be the liaison between all of the participating schools and ACU, keeping her extra busy.

Unfortunately for Graessle, this is the first year since 2009 that she will not be able to run the National Honor Society.

"I really loved doing NHS," Graessle says. "I was so proud of the members. I watched out for them like a mama would."

Graessle has been at BCS long enough to have taught quite a few of the current teachers at BCS: Weed (Class of 1991), Paul Morrow (1996), Paul Sladek (1996), Summer Best (1997), Carrie Hunter (2001), and Abbie Boyd (2010).

"She was hard but fair, fun but stringent, and always willing to work with a not-so-great Geometry and Physics student like me," Sladek says. "It's great working with her."

Graessle has always gone out of her way to help all kinds of people at BCS.

"She's a huge mentor for me," Dr. Hollingsworth says. "My first year, I went to her classroom every 20 minutes for help."

Not only is Graessle helpful, but she has a heart of gold and plays the "mama" role in the Brentwood family.

"Mrs. Graessle genuinely cares about her students," senior Mary Ruiz says. "She is always asking about how my family is. I love Mrs. Graessle."

With all of her sweet layers as a nurturer, a mentor, a mediator, a logical genius, and a friend to all, in the words of Mallett, "Who doesn't love Mrs. Graessle?"



photo: Thomas Yates

Volleyball season ends one win short of state tourney

By Nicholas Hunka

The Lady Bears lost a hard fought game to St. Thomas Episcopal in four sets on Nov. 3 in Flatonia, ending their season one win short of making their fourth-straight state tournament. The team finished the season with a district record of 12-2 and an overall record of 23-17-1. They finished second in district, with their only two losses coming to undefeated John Paul II.

According to head coach Russell Larson, the team had some good runs, but in the end they just couldn't match St. Thomas. For the seniors, it was their first time not to reach state.

"I think if we would have played well, we would have made it to state," senior Claire Polasek said.

A week earlier on Oct. 27 at BCS, Brentwood defeated The Woodlands Christian in area playoffs. The Lady Bears took control and played strong the first two sets, then were down 11-1 but came back in the third set to win the match 3-0 (25-18, 25-18, 25-21). The win made them area champs for the fourth straight year.

"The team showed resilience and fight," Larson said.

According to Larson, the Lady Bears have come far since the beginning of the season and have developed as a team as the season progressed. Larson said that the team is a unified one and good at working together. He said an

important team strength is how they adapted and adjusted depending on the team they faced. Although they lost some outstanding seniors last year, the team has done very well, and new leaders have emerged.

Larson said seniors Alicia Dixon, Addy Hardin, Nicole Dobos, and Polasek "really stepped up big time" this year.

After the expectations and pressure of coming off last year's state title, Larson said the team had to find out who they were this season to move forward. He said the Lady Bears found their identity through the season and played as a team.

Larson said he was proud of the overall results of the season.

Hardin said she enjoyed the season and was pleased with the team's performance.

"This year was a major adjustment for the team, but we had many players step up and learn how to play cohesively," she said.

Through the end of district play, Dixon led the team with 57 aces and 335 kills, and Dobos followed with 265 kills. Hardin led the girls with 834 assists, sophomore Jaelyn Wisard led with 54 blocks, and sophomore Nyna Vazquez was the team leader with 715 digs.

Already looking forward to next year, Coach Larson said losing five seniors will be tough for next year's offense, but he hopes new leaders will emerge from the younger players.



photo: Mark Hickl

Airborne Senior Alicia Dixon smacks the ball over the net in Brentwood's regional playoff loss to St. Thomas in Flatonia on Nov. 3. BCS finished the season 12-2 in district.

Football team ends regular season with 5-5 record, 2-4 in district

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some stops."

The Bears finished the regular season with a record of 5-5 overall and 2-4 in district play. This first-year football team has shown improvement with a tough schedule they have faced. The Bears were originally supposed to be in a district with schools like Central Texas Christian and TSD. Instead, they played defending state champions Shiner St. Paul, as well as three other top 20 teams in TAPPS 3A.

To say that Brentwood Christian was given a tough schedule, in a tough district, for their very first season, would be an understatement, according to Caffey. The Bears are mainly freshmen and sophomores with a handful of upperclassmen who have gained valuable experience playing veteran teams.

"There is only one first-ever playoff team, and I can't put into words how special I feel being a part of it," junior Hunter Burcham said. "I feel like I'm a part of history that can't ever be remade."

BCS will lose only two seniors after this season – Johnson and Daniel Torres – and has a large and talented upcoming eighth-grade class.

Johnson, who has quarterbacked the team since last year when BCS began playing six-man football, leads the Bears with 690 passing yards and eight touchdown passes along with



photo: Kevin McKimmerney

Breaking through Freshman Sam Orick darts through the St. John Paul II defense during the Oct. 21 homecoming game, which the Bears lost 42-7.

719 rushing yards and eight rushing touchdowns.

Sophomore Chase Blackman leads the team with 16 receptions for 225 yards and two touchdowns. Burcham has 299 rushing yards for 5 touchdowns, and freshman Sam Orick ran for 319 yards and three touchdowns.

Sophomore Blake Benton leads the defense with 56 tackles, and Blackman leads with three interceptions.

Following are recaps of the team's last four games:

10/14: Boerne Geneva L 28-0

The Bears held Boerne to just three points in the first quarter with three forced turnovers. Boerne scored once in the second quarter bringing the score to 10-0 going into the half. Johnson completed 12 of 27 passes for 107 total yards. Benton led the team in tackles with 11.

10/21: Schertz John Paul II L 42-7

On their homecoming night, the Bears could not complete enough first downs to put an effective drive together. Johnson scored the Bears' only touchdown and led the team in tackles with nine.

10/29: @San Marcos Academy W 24-21

The boys beat San Marcos at their homecoming in a crucial game in terms of making playoffs. The first play of the game resulted in a San Marcos defensive touchdown, and the Bears' offense stalled for a few drives. After making a comeback in the first half, BCS went into halftime tied 14-14. Brentwood scored a touchdown and field goal late in the game giving them the victory. Freshman Isaac Copeland had a monster game with 15 tackles. Johnson scored two rushing touchdowns, and Burcham rushed for another score.

11/4: @St. Gerard W 54-12

Needing a win to make the playoffs, the Bears got it. The Bears scored seven in the first quarter, 14 in the second, 26 in the third, and seven in the fourth. Brentwood had 435 total yards on offense and eight touchdowns. Freshman Phillip Mach led the defense with an astounding 19 tackles.

Basketball underway

Varsity teams look to return to top of district

By Jackson Baird

Basketball season is underway for the varsity boys and girls, who had their first games this week.

The boys defeated Meridian World School 49-36 in Round Rock Tuesday night. Missing some key contributors, the Bears used the game as an opportunity to play many different players. While they struggled with execution, senior Michael Hickl said there's nothing to worry about.

"It's all fixable," he said.

The girls opened their season Nov. 10 at St. Dominic Savio. They will also play road games Nov. 12 and 15 at Bartlett and Lanier, respectively.

Last year the boys finished first in district, and the girls came in second. The girls went on to win a playoff game before losing 45-30 to Legacy Christian Academy. The boys made a great run in district, but their season ended in a 57-40 loss to Waco Vanguard in their area playoff game.

The boys will begin the season with new head coach Jan Jernberg, after previous head coach Brian Thrift left in July to coach the men's team at Judson University in Illinois.

Prior to coming to BCS, Jernberg was the head basketball coach at St. Dominic Savio. His teams won over 110 games in his five seasons there, going to the playoffs four times, regional playoffs three times, and the state tournament once. He has won just short of 800 games in his career, which has spanned 40 seasons. This puts him in the top 10 active coaches in the state of Texas.

"I know we are going to learn to walk before we run, but we want to be the best we can be and live up to our potential," Jernberg said.

Jernberg grew up in San Antonio, graduated from Pan American University, and attended graduate school at North Texas State.

"I played college baseball, though my greatest love was basketball," Jernberg said.

Jernberg was already familiar with BCS before taking the job. He knew Thrift and Loftis from his time at Savio, and would sometimes ride his bike through campus admiring the facilities.

Jernberg comes into the season bringing his house rules of playing hard, playing smart, and playing together.

"So far, I like the potential on my team. I am bringing a new style, a new approach to the game, and even maybe some new expectations," Jernberg said.

Senior Graham Marks expects to have good success with his new coach.



photo: Addy Hardin

Focused Sophomore Connor Troutman pushes the ball upcourt against Meridian in the the Bears' opener on Nov. 8.

"He's a great coach and is one of the top 10 winningest coaches in Texas," Marks said. "He's nit-picky with everything, especially fundamentals. He emphasizes precision in every part of the game."

Coach Devan Loftis returns for his 17th year with the varsity girls. He comes into this season hoping to continue the success of last year, when the team fell just short of winning his eighth district title as head coach.

"The expectations are high as usual, and we are returning a good core of experienced players," Loftis said. "We have a challenging pre-season to prepare us for district, and I think we have a lot to look forward to."

Both teams might be lacking some depth this season after the graduation of some key players. The girls lost three seniors: Cailin McDaniel, Madi French, and TAPPS 3A female Athlete of the Year Keely Hardin. The boys lost two seniors: Diego Batlle and Robert Lesko.

However, both teams do have strong players returning. The girls will be led by four seniors: Alicia Dixon, Addy Hardin, Kayleigh Lawrence, and Abby White.

The boys will be led by seniors Jordan Johnson, Marks, and Hickl. Johnson and Marks were the team's leading scorers last year, and Hickl was the team's leading rebounder.

Dixon, who led the Lady Bears in rebounding last season and was one of the leading scorers as well, said she is eager to begin pursuing the goal of another district championship. She also looks forward to another opportunity to play Marble Falls Faith Academy, the only team to beat them in district last year.

"We intend to beat them this year," she said.

Dixon said the team's strengths will be their chemistry, communication, and their ability to push the ball up the court.

Cross country concludes; Herring, Milicia place well

By Michael Milicia

Junior MaeAnne Herring came in 17th among 106 other girls running in the TAPPS 4A cross country state championships on Oct. 29 in Waco, and freshman Michael Milicia finished 47th out of 145 boys. Herring finished two miles in 13:57, and Milicia finished the 5K in 19:43.

"There's nothing better than finishing off a season knowing you put it all out there and there's nothing else you could have done," Herring said.

The BCS boys' team finished 13th out of 19 schools; New Braunfels John Paul II took first place. The BCS girls had too few runners to compete as a team in meets this year.

"Overall, I'm happy everyone ran well," coach Katie Smith said. "Nobody got their best time, but there is room for improvement."

Junior Derek Lilya came in 76th (20:51), followed by sophomore Nathan Ging, who placed 80th (20:58); freshman Cade Young, who was 88th (21:17); and Mitchell Johnson, who finished 105th (22:17).

Senior Macy Kidwell placed 41st (15:01), and freshman Marina Murillo finished 98th (18:43).

Early on the morning of the run, it was very foggy and cool, but as races went on, it became warmer and the fog cleared. The course had lots of sharp turns and was flat with the exception of running onto a road. To make the running easier, there were mats placed on the asphalt.

Two weeks before state, the school van arrived at Faith Academy in Marble Falls on Oct. 15, and the runners were ready to do well in their district meet. The only schools competing as teams against the BCS boys were John Paul II, San Juan Diego, and Texas School for the Deaf. It was dark, yet athletes said the weather was perfect for running – chilly and not too windy.

Brentwood finished in third place, just ahead of TSD.

Milicia came in eighth out of 28 runners with a time of 17:49 on the short course, which was more than a quarter mile shorter than a 5K. He was followed by Johnson, who placed 16th (19:23); Ging, who was 18th (19:29); Young,



photo: Katie Smith

Accomplished Senior Macy Kidwell (left), junior MaeAnne Herring, and freshman Marina Murillo were the varsity girls' cross country team this year. While they were too few to qualify as a team, they had lots of fun.

who was 19th (19:48); and Lilya, who finished 23rd (21:39).

Herring finished third out of 31 runners with a time of 13:53 in the girls' two-mile run. Kidwell came in 16th (15:09); Murillo finished 24th (18:35).

Runners said the course was surprisingly flat compared to all the other meets. According to meet officials, the 5K was short because of construction and vandalism. There were only two major inclines that slowed the runners down, and the ground was full of holes and dips.

Coaches Smith and Jeffery Bates say they hope for more runners next year, especially for the girls, and they have encouraged their athletes to prepare well during the summer.

Kidwell said practicing with the boys was her favorite part of the season. Herring said training with them was strange at first, but eventually they challenged her and pushed her much more than she had been before.

"We finished off the season strong – two teams, blended into one," Herring said. "I'm so incredibly proud of everyone and what they accomplished this year. This season has definitely been one that I'll never forget."

Like her coaches, Herring hopes next year will bring more runners.

"Obviously I'm hoping to have a bigger team next year so we can actually compete, but quality is always better than quantity," she said.

Homecoming features football; Hardin, Vazquez crowned

By Kaitlyn Baird

From students wandering the halls wearing trash bags and teachers switching classrooms to the homecoming coronation taking place on a football field instead of a basketball court, everything seemed to be backwards at BCS during Homecoming Week.

BCS celebrated its first fall Homecoming Week, leading up to the football game against St. John Paul II on Oct. 21, where seniors Charlie Vazquez and Addison Hardin were crowned king and queen of the Homecoming Court.

Student Council decided on the theme of Backwards Week while they were on a retreat to plan Homecoming Week in August.

“We figured that since we are mixing it up with the first football homecoming, we might as well mix it up with our theme,” said Hardin, who is also the StuCo president.

The king and queen nominees and the rest of the court were announced during intermission at the second showing of *Cinderella* on Oct. 15.

Lord Sam Orick and Lady Natalie Barry were announced to the audience at intermission, followed by Duke Riley Walker and Duchess McKenzie Gatlin. Next came Prince Elijah Cunningham and Princess Katie Griffith. Finally the king and queen nominees were announced: Vazquez, Michael Hickl, and Daniel Torres; Hardin, Alicia Dixon, and Morgan George.

The week leading up to the coronation was filled with crazy costumes and a variety of hall decorations in the C building, including upside down skyscrapers and forest-dwelling fish.

StuCo, along with cheerleaders, spent the weekend before the celebration decorating the halls to fit the theme of the week, working for a total of about 20 hours.

Backwards Week began with Marvel Mon-



photo: Julia Hwang

German bear? Football players look on as a new mysterious Brentwood Bear mascot dances at the homecoming pep rally in the athletic center on Oct. 21.

their clothes backwards, and some attempted to talk and walk backwards. A few teachers even switched classrooms with each other.

Teachers Jimmie Harper and Mel Witcher were among the few who decided to switch classrooms that day. Junior Mallory Lesko said she was confused at first when she saw Witcher in Harper's room, and Harper wasn't there.

“As class continued, it was interesting to see how Mr. Witcher teaches compared to Mr. Harper, and I thought it was a lot of fun,” Lesko said.

The last day of the week was Funless Friday, which is traditionally known as BCS Spirit Day. All Brentwood students were encouraged to come to school dressed in green in support for the football team playing that night.

The school cheered and enjoyed fun activities at the pep rally, which was held in the athletic center in the afternoon. Both the cheerleaders and drill team performed dance routines, and students were led in a cheer to compete for the BCS spirit stick, which is given to the grade who cheers the loudest and shows the most spirit.

Decorating the gym took four hours, which according to Hardin, was “the smoothest that gym decorating has ever gone.” StuCo had the cheerleaders, drill team, and many senior leaders to help them complete the task.

The football game kicked off at 7:30 p.m., and the Homecoming Court was announced by secondary principal Carol Johnson at halftime. Members of the court stood on the field while Johnson read a short bio about each student. The king and queen were announced after a drumroll from the pep band.

“I immediately was so overwhelmed with joy that tears came to my eyes,” Hardin said. “In that moment, I just tried to soak it all in. I realized how beyond blessed I’ve been by the Brentwood community.”

Seventh-grade retreat adds changes, still brings bonding

By Benjamin Helyer

While most BCS students were in class on Oct. 25, seventh graders were racing on ziplines, playing kickball, splashing around in a pond, and running from bees swarming near a soda fountain.

At 7:45 a.m., 71 seventh-grade students left BCS for Reunion Ranch near Georgetown for a day full of excitement and bonding with classmates. The students were divided into seven groups, each led by one of the BCS seniors who went on the retreat: Kristyn Chambers, Nicholas Dunagan, Gabie Nguyen, Camille Sunshine, Claudya Torres, Charlie Vazquez, and Abby White.

In the morning, the students played several group games and team building activities. During the rest of the day, each seventh grade group participated in various activities including kickball, canoe and paddle boats, horseshoes and washers, volleyball, an obstacle course, tug of war, mini golf, a maze, and a zipline.

At lunch, the students ate brisket and sausage and had to avoid a great deal of bees while getting drinks.

“Some people were super scared,” Peyton Reagan said about the bees.

“I just ran in and ran out,” Gavin Snell added regarding his process of getting drinks.

After they finished their meals, the group had a devotion and then went to more sessions to finish off the day.

During the canoe and paddle boats activity, students noticed a snake at the edge of the pond. Despite the snake, some seventh graders “accidentally” fell in but remained in the water and swam around. A few, including James Oberwortmann, thought that the snake was a joke.

“A few of the girls got scared,” Oberwortmann said, but noted that he was not afraid because he thought the snake warning was only in jest.

Alongside the students at the retreat were coordinator Travis Pollard and four additional sponsors: principal Carol Johnson and teachers Evan Johnson, Deborah Strickland, and Jonathan Weed.

A difference from previous years was the number of students who went. Pollard noted that while there are usually only 40 or 50 students, the increase in numbers did not affect the attitude of the class. Despite the numbers, he said the class was still very easy to work with.

Another difference this year was that the retreat consisted of a single day at Reunion Ranch instead of being the usual overnight stay at Camp Buckner. Pollard noted that in order to decide what will happen next year, the differences between having an overnight retreat and having a single day retreat need to be weighed.

“We have to decide the pros and cons and weigh those,” Pollard said.



photo: Travis Pollard

My Lady Caleb Riley holds Ethan Rivera in a game of “Horses, Knights, and Cavaliers” on the seventh grade retreat at Reunion Ranch on Oct. 25.



photo: Kevin McKinnerney

Homecoming Queen Addison Hardin takes in the moment with her mother.

day on Oct. 17. Students were given the choice to dress as a superhero or the “backwards” of that, which could be a villain or a princess. The next day was called Trashy Tuesday, and students came to school dressed in old T-shirts and sweatpants. A few students chose to wear trash bags, while others decided to take the opposite route and dress more elegantly. The PSAT was on Wednesday, so it was excluded from the dress-up days. However, the fun returned on Backwards Thursday. Many students wore