

bracken

Letters

BRACKEN

Christian School will assist

CHRISTIAN FAMILIES

by providing a

QUALITY EDUCATION

within the context of a

BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW,

equipping students to

IMPACT

their culture for

CHRIST.

How good and pleasant it is when we dwell in unity!

The most effective school atmosphere cannot be developed unless there is a healthy, effective working partnership between the school and the home. We must always remember that God established the home, not the school, as the primary learning center (Deuteronomy 6:7; 1 Timothy 3:5; 1 Timothy 5:1-2). The home, the church and the school ideally form an educational tripod. All three need to work in harmony to prepare students for the Christian life. When one leg of the tripod is not holding its weight, students suffer and then, corporately, the body of Christ suffers.

I must evaluate and remind myself of these priorities. My wife, Linda, and I have had to check ourselves in the past when we began grumbling over what we thought the church or school was allowing our children to become. It is always easier to blame something or someone else for undesirable outcomes. When it comes to parenting, though, it is always a wakeup call to realize that I am ultimately responsible to God for the things taught or not taught to the children He has blessed me with.

It has been very refreshing to see the caliber of mature parents that are involving Bracken Christian School as the 3rd leg in their tripod. I couldn't be more optimistic about the future of the students I see at BCS. Rarely are there disgruntled parents talking about where we are dropping the ball when it comes to their kids. Certainly we are not perfect, and Satan is careful to pick his targets when it comes to the "blame game." Thank you for your support and prayers for this school, the teachers and the staff. We consider it joy to labor with you in the task at hand.

In every home, every church and every school, there is a multitude of interpersonal relationships. If Satan can cut off any line of communication, he will achieve a victory. In a great many schools today, that's exactly what's happening. Administrators, teachers and/or parents are guilty of gossip and

slander. In such an atmosphere, it's impossible to enjoy the blessed presence of God or to teach students to do so.

Because of the changes that are taking place in the society around us, Christian schools can only expect the warfare to intensify. We will need to be vigilant in our personal and corporate spiritual commitments. Thank you for the letters of encouragement and support. You are the words and hands that God desires to use in order to motivate and inspire the teachers and staff at our school.

Our time of Harvest on November 1st will be a joyous time that we can all share. As God continues to grow and shape us, we are more fully aware of His plans and desires. I am hoping that this event will turn into a time of yearly celebration with all the Christians and churches in our community. God alone is worthy of our praise and adoration. Let this time of thanksgiving be directed to Him. †



CRAIG WALKER
administrator

If you would like to receive Mr. Walker's weekly e-letter *The Light* please make sure the office has your email address

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Join us for
INTERCESSORY PRAYER
Thursdays at 8:30am in Room 204

* * * * *

CREDIT CARD TRANSACTIONS

If you use Visa/Mastercard to pay your tuition & fees, please consider making a one-time donation to specifically cover the 3% loss Bracken incurs with each credit card transaction. This loss amounts to approximately \$150 per year, per student, depending on the annual tuition--more if other fees are charged. Please write "3% charge" on your check & forward it to Libby Matthews. As always, your faithfulness and understanding are appreciated.

* * * * *

VETERANS DAY ASSEMBLY *"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." John 15:13*

The Student Council would like to invite all parents, grandparents and friends to a special Veteran's Day assembly on Tuesday, November 11th, at 2:30 p.m. where we will honor veterans of our Bracken family and community. Join us for this special time of fellowship and remembrance.

Faculty and staff veterans comprise Jim Cagle (Navy), David Ross (Marines), Larry "Poppy" Vincent (Air Force), Jim Edwards (Navy), Dan Hicks (Air Force), Jay Chapel (Air Force), and Wayne Harmon (Air Force).

THANK YOU SAFETY PATROL!

Some very special fifth graders had the opportunity during the first nine weeks to serve younger students and their parents. These boys and girls each served several weeks on safety patrol. Some arrived for early shifts from 7:45 am to 8:15 am, and others worked from 3:00 pm to 3:30 pm each day.

It is a big commitment, and they did a great job. Thank you, safety patrol, for fulfilling your commitment and serving with a cheerful heart.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Josh Grothues | Ashley Ortiz |
| Natalie Banks | Sarah Kubala |
| Cody Blackmon | Lecia Meyer |
| Loren Koch | Taylor Stanush |
| Payton Rion | Laurelyn Kelly |
| Trevor Tabler | Grant Granato |
| Catherine Bell | Tori Rathburn |

* * * * *

ANGEL TREE 2003

Beginning November 12th, Bracken families will be able to participate in Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree ministry. The Angel Tree ministry is a wonderful way to share Christ's love with others by providing two gifts for each prisoner's children. This year Bracken families will provide gifts for 100 children! In order to help with this charity, there will be a Christmas tree decorated with angel ornaments (gift requests) next to the office. The Angel Tree at Bracken is sponsored and organized by the High School Student Council.

* * * * *

ALUMNI BLESSING

This year we are preparing a special blessing for our college and military alumni. The alumni committee (and other volunteers) will

prepare about 30 care packages to send around finals time. We need your help in collecting:

1. Current addresses of enrolled college students or active military.
2. Special treats to be packaged. Ideas: gum, p/b crackers, candy, microwave popcorn, etc. Just about anything that is easy to mail will be fun for them to receive.
3. Money for postage.

If this sounds like a blessing you would like to help with, leave your contributions in the office. If you have any questions or ideas, send those to: laura.simmons@brackenchristian.com

We will be mailing the packages the week after Thanksgiving.

* * * * *

Mexico Trip

Bracken's first mission trip to Mexico City September 22nd-28th was a wonderful success. The following students joined Mr. and Mrs. Perry and Mr. Palmer on the trip: seniors Bobbi Martin and Alexis Pack, juniors Dustin Hebert, Eli Spector and Keon Vasquez, eighth-grader David Willstrop, and seventh-graders Hannah Perry and David Yarter. The group spent one day giving lunch to, playing soccer with and sharing Jesus with 30 or so street children, and they spent two days in San Marcos working on the property of the future home for the street kids and interacting with the children and youth of the community. Many lives (both American and Mexican) were impacted by the trip, and we're looking forward to returning and seeing more lives touched and changed on future trips like this one.

Thanks to all who prayed for the success of the trip and the safety of the participants!

Fall sports coming to a close

By the time this newsletter is printed, our fall sports of volleyball, soccer and cross-country will have ended for this year. As I am writing this, both our high school soccer and volleyball teams have secured play-off spots, and our cross-country teams are preparing to continue their success at the state meet. Our middle-school teams are doing very well and are expected to challenge for the league championship in our division.

With all that said, I am proud of the way that our teams have represented our school and, more importantly, our Savior, Jesus Christ, in all that they have tried to accomplish. We know that we are not perfect, and I know that we have stumbled along the way at times. However, I can assure all of you that our coaches and ath-

letes have tried to use every situation to learn more about Him and what He wants for all of us in our lives. Athletics is a great teaching tool, in some ways greater than any other teaching opportunity in all of the school. We as coaches value this unique opportunity to work with your children. We continue to pray that God will use us as a means to teach these student athletes the lessons He has for them. Thank you for the trust that you have placed in us. If you ever have a concern, please come to us, and we will be more than happy to speak with you. †



JAMES JOHNSON
athletic director

NJHS Community Project 2003-2004

This year's National Junior Honor Society community project is designed to provide help to the Bulverde "In Touch" pantry to feed the community's needy while playing a fun game of soccer. On Thursday, October 30, the classes will face off for the first time on the soccer field. Sixth grade will play seventh grade, eighth grade will play ninth grade and 10th grade will play 11th grade. The seniors will get to sit this month out and develop their strategy for next month's game by watching the lower classmen. Points will be scored as in any other soccer game; however, more points can be gained by bringing nonperishable food. For every 10 boxes or cans of nonperishable foods donated, that grade will get one extra

point. For example, the sixth grade can start with 10 points before the game even begins by bringing 100 cans or boxes of nonperishable food items. This will be a once-a-month competition, with the winning grade each month receiving a bonus casual dress day. So, let the fun begin. Be there or be square! All parents are invited. Flyers will be sent home to remind you of the date. †

DATE: Thursday, October 30th
PLACE: BCS Soccer Field
TIME: 2:30 – 3:30
Bring your own chair.
Snacks will be sold on the sideline.

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT/BOOSTER CLUB SHIRTS, CAPS AND SWEATERS ON SALE NOW!

We have just received our supply of "Bracken-wear" for this coming basketball season. These items are a great way to support your favorite athletes and teams here at Bracken. All of our caps, sweaters and shirts are top-quality and clearly display your support for our school. Prices are \$15 for long-sleeved t-shirts or baseball caps and \$25 for sweaters.

If you are interested in purchasing any of these items, please come by the coach's office. †

Bridge the Gap Update

<i>Funds Needed:</i>	<i>\$136,000</i>
<i>Cash Received:</i>	<i>-\$41,240</i>
<i>Teacher Salary Reduction:</i>	<i>\$11,950</i>
	<i>\$82,810</i>
<i>Added 4 Students:</i>	<i>-18,000</i>
<i>Still needed to Bridge the Gap:</i>	<i>\$64,810</i>

1st And 3 To Go



JIM CAGLE
secondary principal

The first nine weeks is over already. It has been a busy one. It seems like we have tried to fit an entire year into the last few weeks. The mission trip, retreats and spirit week activities have come and gone. Volleyball, soccer and cross-country seasons have come to a close, and basketball is coming down the court.

I'll let Mr. Perry give you the details about the mission trip in his article, but it was a blessing to all who went. We're thankful that Bracken has been able to join in the mission work Mr. Perry has been doing for several years to reach the children living on the streets of Mexico City. We look forward to involving our students in more mission trips and in seeking to meet the spiritual and physical needs of these hurting children.

Following the mission trip, our high school students went for a retreat at HEB. This was a change from the traditional spring retreat and one purposefully made to help us put an emphasis on developing a spiritual focus at the beginning of the year. It was also our first time at the beautiful Echo Valley facility. From the outdoor chapel we looked out on the beautiful river and high bluffs as we sang praises and worshiped. Our speaker, Jeff Magnum, challenged our students to walk in a way that honors the Lord and is obedient to his will. Jeff was able to clearly communicate to the students through his own personal experiences the importance of putting Christ first. Many students responded to his call to make that decision and make a difference at Bracken.

Immediately following high school's return on Wednesday, the seventh and eighth grades arrived for their retreat on Thursday and Friday. This was the first year both grades went to HEB together. Again our aim

was to begin the year by strengthening classes and building a strong spiritual foundation for the rest of the year. Dennis Rohlmeier spoke to the students about their spiritual journeys. Using track equipment to illustrate his message, he began with a set of starting blocks to emphasize that the Christian life starts with salvation through Jesus Christ. The sins along the way which must be dealt with and which can entangle us were made clear by the hurdle he placed before the students. Finally, he used the baton, which the track athletes must pass in a relay, to challenge the students to examine the witness and influence they are passing on to others. Following the message, many students shared their hearts, seeking forgiveness to heal relationships and seeking the support of others in walking in a Christ-like manner.

God's blessings were abundant during both retreats. From the beautiful setting and cool weather, the outstanding food and fun activities, to the life-changing decisions the students made, God's spirit was present. Thanks to the many parents and teachers who helped with transportation, food, supervision and especially prayer; God honored your physical and spiritual labors. Continue to pray for our students and encourage them to be faithful to honor their decisions to walk more closely with the Lord.

Parent conferences are only days away. This is an important time for our parents and teachers to facilitate communication between the school and home and help us partner in the education and spiritual growth of the students. Our teachers want to get to know their students' parents, so please make this a priority in your busy schedule. The report card for this first quarter will be given out at this time. If you forget your time or have difficulty taking the time set for the appointment, please call the school office. †

PRE-APPROVED EXCUSED ABSENCE REQUEST

Pre-approved excused absences can be arranged when parents know in advance their student will be absent. The administration recognizes that there are times when the parents may have family needs that necessitate their student being absent from school to be with family. The school will allow a student to have five (5) days excused absence per year for family needs if these conditions are met:

1. The student completes a Pre-Approved Excused Absence Request (PEAR form)
2. Parents provide evidence that this time dedicated to meeting family needs significantly benefits

Your high school years will be some of the most amazing and most important years of your life. Here are some tips to take a serious look at:

- Get organized – keep a record of daily assignments.
- Do not try to do all or too many extracurricular activities.
- Do a few activities well that encourage your natural abilities and talents, and save time for academics and social activities. A well-balanced life is important.
- Start thinking about and evaluating your strengths and weaknesses.
- Start to investigate information about colleges – ask others, read, research.
- Keep your grades up. All grades, ninth through 12th, apply to your grade-point average (GPA). Colleges only see six semesters of grades on which to base acceptance.
- Be responsible – assignments and success are your responsibility.
- Be prepared for every class regardless of how easy or mindless it may appear.



KAREN WATKINS
counselor

FRESHMEN

- Start a college search and scholarship search. Apply for any scholarship that fits you. (www.fastweb.com)
- Keep a resume of all the activities, awards and honors outside of school. BCS will maintain a record of your in-school activities, etc.
- Look into joining some clubs on campus.
- Take ACT and SAT tests for practice.
- Consider volunteering over the summer.

SOPHOMORES

- Take any honors courses that are offered.
- Review and continue college search and scholarship search.
- Update resume with outside activities.
- Seek out clubs and leadership opportunities.
- Take ACT and SAT tests for practice.

JUNIORS

- Update college and scholarship search.
- Update resume.
- List colleges that you would want to visit on a college tour or privately with your parents.

- Take the ACT and SAT for practice.
- Evaluate your PSAT results.
- Participate in college tours or schedule visits during breaks.
- Consider summer volunteer or internship positions.
- Apply for scholarships at www.fastweb.com.
- Visit any other college(s) on prospective.
- Begin to consider teachers you might use for college recommendations.
- Athletes should register with the NCAA initial eligibility.

SENIORS

- Select as many as four people who are willing to write letters of recommendation.
- Narrow down your list of colleges and start applying.
- Review and update your resume.
- Request scholarship applications.
- After January 1, fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

Notes about the ACT and the SAT:

The majority of schools in the United States accept both SAT and ACT test results. The SAT and ACT are significantly different tests that measure different skills. Students may perform much better on one test than on the other.

The ACT includes: four subtests – math, English, science reasoning and reading.

The SAT includes: verbal and math only.

The ACT math includes trigonometry. The SAT tests

vocabulary much more than the ACT. The SAT has a guessing penalty; the ACT does not. The ACT tests English grammar; the SAT does not. The ACT is a curriculum-based test; the SAT is a critical-thinking test.

Both tests report sub-scores. The ACT can only replace a previously poor cumulative score. The SAT takes the highest verbal and highest math even if from different test dates. All colleges look at only the highest scores. Both the ACT and SAT can be taken as many times as dates are offered.

Continued on page 8

New Website: ECampusTours.com offers a 360-degree view of hundreds of different schools and a free national scholarship search.

Corporal Punishment



MARK PALMER
elementary principal

Last month I wrote about parental authority. I want to expand on this topic by discussing corporal punishment. Spanking is no longer viewed as a proper way to discipline children in our “politically correct” world. Many in society would consider any form of corporal punishment abusive. I have heard some say that spanking children only teaches them violence. This is foolish thinking and is the epitome of the “wisdom of the world” (1

Corinthians 2:5,6). The absolute truth of the Word of God does advocate the use of corporal punishment by the parent for the child.

We are so saturated and bombarded with the philosophy of this world that we may neglect or minimize the clear teachings of Scripture. Rather than building a case for spanking, I just want to share what the Bible says about this topic and let the Word of God speak for itself.

He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently. Proverbs 13:24 NASV

Chasten your son while there is hope, and do not set your heart on his destruction. Proverbs 19:18 NKJV

Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him. Proverbs 22:15 NKJV

Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell. Proverbs 23:13, 14 NKJV

The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother. Proverbs 29:15 NASV

Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. Make level paths for your feet, so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. Hebrews 12:7-13 NIV

Although my primary purpose in relating these verses is to influence you as parents to think and act biblically, it would also be beneficial for you to share these verses with your children. When I deal with a student in my office who has lied or stolen, for example, I read Scripture to them that addresses these choices. The Bible is our foundation for what is right and wrong. It gives us the proper perspective on our actions. Your responsibility and authority as parents to discipline is reinforced. Children will more clearly see their choices as right or wrong. They will also see you as being obedient and submissive to God in your actions. †

PEAR Form continued from page 4

family relations and/or yields important educational benefits.

3. Parents understand that these days absent will count toward the student’s total days absent allowable by the state which requires a student attend 90% of a class in order to receive credit.

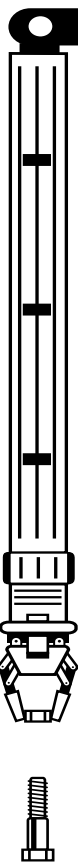
The “Pre-Approved Excused Absences Request” (PEAR form) is available in the office and is to be completed before the student’s absence.

The completion of the form will:

- (A) allow the student/parent to know in advance if the reason for the absence will be considered sufficient to excuse the absence,
- (B) allow the student to complete the work that will be missed during the absence and
- (C) enable the teacher to plan for the student’s absence. Students are to complete the form at least two days prior to the planned absence.

The form is not used when a student is participating in a school function. †

BCS Robotics Team Ready to Roll



The BCS Robotics Team has been meeting several times a week since the competition began September 13 at St. Mary's University. This year's competition is "Transfusion Confusion" and has a medical technology theme. The goal is to have the robots remove blood cells (balloons) from arteries and capillaries and put them in a specific holding area. The color of the balloon and where it is stored determines the points earned (i.e. white blood cells placed in the top of the cell saver are worth the most). There are four teams competing during each three-minute match. Each team's score for seven of the eight matches will be averaged. The three teams with the highest average score will advance to the regional competition in College Station in November.

The robot building team includes Rachel Korkosz, junior;, Stephanie Swientek, sophomore; and eighth-graders Kyle Hall, Tyler Hilgendorf, Andrew Korkosz and Patrick Tabler. Mr. Ross has been helping the team build on Tuesdays and Thursdays after school, and Mr. Craig Walker has also helped. Mr. Richard Hall and Mr. Bill

Brockmeier have worked with the students every Saturday for many hours and have been indispensable in making the team's robot model a reality. Working with these mentors, the students have learned how to solve the problems that inevitably come up when building something from scratch. Kari Wood, senior, has created the team's documentation notebook with reports, sketches, photos and charts explaining the planning, development, construction and testing of the robot.

The team honed their robot driving skills during practice matches at St. Mary's the week before competition. They are eager to take on all competitors on October 25. After many hours of diligent effort, the students believe it will all pay off and that Mr. Robotnik (their robot) will take them to victory. Thanks to their dedicated mentors, win or lose, the students will come away with valuable, hands-on experience in teamwork, problem solving and engineering. †

Technology Tidbits

CAROLINE BOOTH



In 1977, Ken Olson, President, Chairman and Founder of Digital Equipment Corp., said, "There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home." No doubt, some of you still feel this way. On the other hand, many of us have become quite dependent on the technology computers have to offer and can't imagine life without them. While that technology can greatly assist us by facilitating many tasks, including communication (I love email!), it can also, at times, contribute to the loss of valuable time and a frustration level all its own when it doesn't function the way we think it should. I have faced my share of technological challenges and frustrations. However, in the midst of those challenges and frustrations comes the opportunity for much joy.

That opportunity comes each time an elementary class enters the lab with the excitement of learning something new.

Even more exciting for me is the opportunity I have to learn from them. One such occasion was during a kindergarten class that took place after a particularly challenging morning. One of the students was particularly concerned about her father who had been ill. She asked me if I would pray for him and I said I would. The next thing I knew, many hands were raised in anticipation of me calling on them so they could share their prayer requests as well. One by one the students shared their concerns. I asked the class if they would like to stop and pray right then. They responded with a very enthusiastic "yes!" As we prepared to

bow our heads, one of the students asked if we could get on our knees to pray. Who would have thought that such a sweet time of prayer could take place in the middle of a computer lab! It is such a joy and privilege to be able to work with your precious children. Thank you for that opportunity!

Thank you Barbara Kubala, Gary Liming, the Stolarski Family, Brenda Lehmberg and the Wilson Family for your overwhelming generosity in contributing equipment and/or supplies and curriculum supplements to the Elementary Computer Lab.

TECH TIP: If you use Internet Explorer to surf the web, you can add a page to your Favorites list by pressing CTRL+D. †



CHRISTIAN SCHOOL 670 Old Boerne Rd. • Bulverde, TX 78163

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Mr. James Johnson	Athletic Director
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College Corner continued from page 5

Test prep courses are available online, in books and on test-prep software. Sylvan Learning Center has what I believe is the best test-prep course with a tutor. Bookstores carry several test-prep books such as Kaplan, Princeton Review and Peterson's. These test-prep companies also have websites (see the September newsletter) and provide free online practice tests.

All merit-based scholarships are initially based on either an ACT or SAT score. Thirty-five percent of college admission requirements are based on the ACT or SAT scores. Obviously, these tests are critical. Understanding the format of the test, the type of questions, the instructions and developing test-taking strategies are important to achieving a high score. Part of the reason we require all students, ninth through 11th, to take the PSAT and PLAN is precisely to familiarize each student with the above aspects of the tests. †

Make a donation to Bracken in honor of those you love...

<input type="checkbox"/> \$50 <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 <input type="checkbox"/> other <i>is sent to honor...</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Memorial <input type="checkbox"/> Anniversary <input type="checkbox"/> Birthday <input type="checkbox"/> Other			
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