

Brady Keane Writes His Way to State  
by Ashley Skinner

This year at regionals, over 20 Bandera students competed. Five people qualified for the state level, four being from the speech and debate category. Will Fitzpatrick placed first in Prose, Corey Jennings took second in Poetry, Michaela Turner placed third in Poetry, and Royce Barnes took fourth in Lincoln Douglas Debate going as an alternate for state.

But only one student placed in the academic category. Senior Brady Keane took first in news writing.

“Mrs. Grona from Fredericksburg is actually the one who told me,” Keane said. “She was in the judging room before the awards were announced. I was thrilled. It was such a rewarding feeling.”

Keane has been in four writing events since his eighth grade year: News, Editorial, Feature and Headline. His freshman and sophomore years, he placed at district as an alternate in two events.

“Placing as an alternate so young,” Keane said, “was really a motivation to work harder.”

Keane’s junior year proved successful, placing first in feature writing at district, advancing him to the regional level held in Corpus Christi. During the competition, Keane’s computer failed, turning off and preventing him from finishing his article.

“It happened just as I was finishing,” Keane said. “When it came back on, it hadn’t saved any of the article and I didn’t have enough time to retype anything. It was pretty disappointing for my first time at regionals.”

This year at district, Keane was determined to qualify for regionals in at least two of the four writing events, and he did just this, plus a little more.

“I ended up getting first in News, second in Editorial, third in Feature, and fourth in Headline as an alternate,” Keane said. “I had prepared a lot more for district this year. I had to leave before places were announced, but I was thrilled to have done so well.”

After the technical difficulties from last year at regionals, a new computer was bought by the school for various purposes in the journalism department, including UIL.

“I was nervous at first,” Keane said, “but having a new computer eased me and after my first competition (News), I was fine.”

Keane qualified for state in News, but felt that his feature story was well written and was proud of it.

“It was rough knowing that that was the last time I will compete in feature at UIL,” Keane said. “But it was nice to move on in News, because that’s the event that comes easiest at this point.”

Keane’s inspiration to write came from a few different people. Pushing him to start UIL back in eighth grade, English teacher Stephanie Jones taught him something that has now become a part of his everyday life. English teacher and Journalism Advisor Laura Keller has helped him in the past few years, showing him how to understand the style of each event and how to make things flow better.

“Brady has settled into a specific style which is polished and professional,” Keller said. “He is successful because he eats, sleeps, and breathes news. Readers appreciate not only the accuracy of the facts, but also the word choice and natural writing style he uses.”

Something else that has really helped Keane with his writing over the years is writing for a local paper, *The Courier*. He has been writing for *The Courier* since December of 2011, and that is one of the ways he plans to prepare for state, along with reviewing practice prompts from

past years.

“I am grateful to everyone at The Courier for giving me my first professional writing career and helping me along the way. Writing for them each week keeps me on my toes,” Keane said. “More practice will help though. I need to have the style down to a T.”

Keane has been accepted to the University of North Texas and received the UNT-Excellence Scholarship. He plans to major in Journalism.

“I wanted to get back to the Denton area,” Keane said. “I have a lot of friends there that I grew up with, and the Mayborn School of Journalism really sold me when I went to visit.”

Keane will travel to Austin May 25 for the state meet along with the other state qualifiers, and the rest of the academic competitors who are not advancing wish him the best of luck.

“I certainly wish some more of the academic competitors were advancing, but I think that it’s certainly an accomplishment to be proud of,” Keane said. “After four years of competing, it feels so good to finally make it to the state meet.”