What's happening

March 21-25

■ The city of Davis offers all kinds of camps for kids during spring break, including:

— The **Spring Break Safari Camp** for kids ages 6-12, which takes place every day during spring break from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Redwood Community Building, 1001 Anderson Road. The cost is $165.

— **Mad Science Eureka! The Inventors Camp** for kids ages 6-12, which runs from 9 a.m. to noon at the Veterans' Memorial Center, 203 E. 14th St. The cost is $179.

— The **Invention-Action!** camp for kids ages 6-12, which takes place from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Veterans' Memorial Center, 203 E. 14th St. The cost is $179.

— The **Lego Pre-Engineering camp** for kids ages 5-6, which runs from 9 a.m. to noon at the Veterans' Memorial Center, 203 E. 14th St. The cost is $178.

— **Engineering Fundamentals** for kids ages 7-11, which takes place every day from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Veterans' Memorial Center, 203 E. 14th St. The cost is $178.

— The **Mini Horse Camp,** which runs from 9 a.m. to noon at the Sterling Riding Academy on County Road 102 every day during spring break. The cost is $184.

— And, finally, for the older set, the **So-Cal Safari**, an annual trip to visit colleges in Southern California, is available for students in grades 9-12. The trip, which takes place March 21-24, includes stops at UC Santa Cruz, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, UC Santa Barbara, UCLA and USC. The cost is $500.

For more information about all city of Davis spring break camps and programs, call 530-757-5626.

Saturday, March 26

■ The **Davis Math Club** will hold its next meeting from 2 to 3:30 p.m. in the small conference room at the Stephens Branch Library, 315 E. 14th St. The club is designed for math lovers of all ages; its first meeting drew attendees ages 6 to 70. Minors must be accompanied by an adult. Attendees should bring their math supplies: problems, books, notes, paper, pencil, calculators, etc.

This month's meeting will include a brief tutoring session, a puzzle or brain teaser, a math activity, a speaker and refreshments. For more information or to RSVP, visit meetup.com/davismathclub.

Citrus Circuits takes Regional by storm

Special to The Enterprise

The reigning world-champion Citrus Circuits robotics team led the winning alliance at the Central Valley Regional Competition held in Madera last weekend.
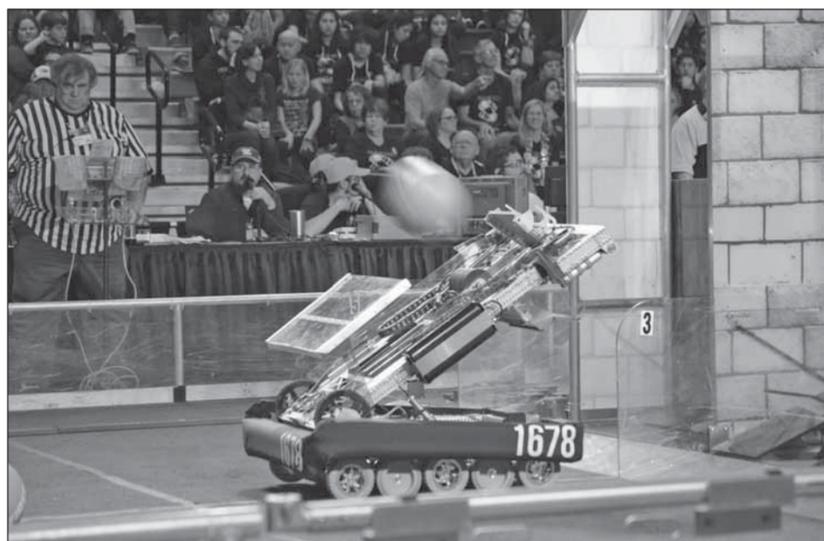
Citrus Circuits competed with 48 other high school teams from across California in this year's FIRST Robotics game, Stronghold, which consists of breaching enemy defenses by driving robots over obstacles in the playing field and capturing opponents' towers by shooting "boulders" into goals to gain points.

Each team is on an alliance with two other robots, and two alliances compete against each other at time.

Citrus Circuits claimed first place at the start of the competition and firmly held on to that ranking, seeding first after qualification matches concluded.

Having the first seed allowed the team to choose two alliance partners: Team 254 Cheesy Poofs from San Jose and Team 3970 Duncan Dynamics from Fresno.

Together, the three teams dominated the competition, scoring a total of 380 points in the final two matches and earning them the title of regional winners in the process. The alliance also set the highest competition score in the world this season with 210 points in one match.

Along with their on-field victory, Citrus Circuits also won the Quality Award. Sponsored by Motorola Solutions Foundation, the award recognizes outstanding robot design and construction.

Citrus Circuits is scheduled to compete again at the Sacramento Regional Competition, which will be held March 23-26 at UC Davis' ARC Pavilion. This local event is free and open to the public; everyone is encouraged to come and watch.

Citrus Circuits is composed of high school and junior high students from Davis High School, Da Vinci Charter Academy, and Harper, Emerson and Holmes junior high schools.

Major sponsors of the team include UC Davis, FMC Technologies, NVidia, DMG Mori, the Davis Joint Unified School District, Sunpower, the Davis High School PTA, and the DHS Blue & White Foundation. Learn more about the team at www.citruscircuits.org.

The Citrus Circuits robot shoots a "boulder" into a goal during last week's Central Valley Regional in Madera. The defending world champions won the competition.

COURTESY PHOTO

Friends in deeds

UC Davis soccer player Armando Quezada, above, leads a kickabout at Birch Lane Elementary on Wednesday, as the school celebrated its annual Friendship Week activities. This is Birch Lane's fifth Friendship Week since it was first organized by school counselor Susie Carrell and a leadership team of fifth-graders. Above right, an anti-bullying message highlights a handmade poster created by the school's students. At right, Aggie running back Manu Luuga shows off his moves on the Birch Lane lawn. Every day this week had a theme, and Wednesday's was "Teamwork."

SUE COCKRELL/ENTERPRISE photos

Are new college apps more work, or better work?

Often I find myself sitting across from a forlorn-looking family apologizing to them for how unnecessarily complicated the whole college admission process has become. So, I am relieved to report that there are some updates to the process.

What are these developments? First, there is the Coalition for Access and Affordability (www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org). This is a movement of about 90 top-notch private and public colleges and universities that are in the midst of rolling out an alternative to the common application.

Second, there is a relatively new app called Zeemee (www.zeemee.com) that many colleges have incorporated into the existing application system so students can use current technology to round out their files. Sounds great, right? Yes, there is much to be hopeful about, but I am not quite ready to jump on the bandwagon yet. Let's look more closely at these recent developments.

The coalition's stated goal is to "improve the college application process for all students as they search for and apply to their perfect college." In part, this movement is due to the technological glitches with the common application and the lag time to fix problems experienced during the 2013 application cycle.

The coalition has developed a free "centralized toolkit" for students to store, organize and create their applications for member schools. The coalition also wants to partner with community-based

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organizations to do more outreach to underserved and under-resourced students.

Coalition member-colleges must meet certain laudable criteria, which makes for an elite and selective group — think ivies and highly selective private and public colleges and universities. The criteria include: Public schools that have affordable tuition along with need-based financial aid for in-state residents; private colleges and universities that provide sufficient financial aid to meet the full, demonstrated financial need of every domestic student they admit; and schools that graduate at least 70 percent of their students within six years.

In April, the coalition will release its "lockbox" and collaboration platform, so students starting as early as ninth grade can begin saving their work to this private lockbox. Students also can invite chosen collaborators to review and provide feedback on their materials.

Then in the summer, the coalition application will be released. According to its website, this application "features a modern, intuitive interface that adapts to a student's life, providing a seamless experience whether engaging through a notebook computer, tablet, or even mobile device."

Will this replace the common application? At this point, none of the coalition members has any plans to drop out of the common application so this is an alternate route that will enable students to start earlier gathering relevant information, and will provide schools more flexibility to customize questions and receive answers in different content formats.

So, what to do? Here's what I plan to discuss with my students who have these coalition schools on their list:

■ Which application will play to your strengths? If you are someone who likes to be creative and use new technology, you may prefer to fill out the coalition application.

■ How would an additional application fit into your existing application workload? Chances are you're already going to be filling out several different types of applications so think about the time and money required to do yet another application.

■ How comfortable are you with being the guinea pig? This is the first year for the coalition application and there are no results of past performance to see advantages or disadvantages in terms of how schools evaluate applicants. There also could be technological challenges with the new roll out.

Compared to the coalition application, the other change in the application process is a bit more straightforward. More and more schools are giving students the chance to submit video essays or other types of content as part of the existing application process. Goucher, Babson, Claremont McKenna and College of William and Mary are examples that come to mind.

Different from a traditional essay, video submissions require less writing, can be more informal, and may allow for more opportunity to differentiate your application and stand out.

Along these lines, there are also many schools that allow for this new content to be uploaded to their applications by using a relatively new tool called Zeemee. This is a free application that essentially allows students to create and then link to their applications to a personalized web page using images and video and documents.

It's a pretty quick and simple to use. Drag and drop into an existing template. According to its website, there are about 20 colleges that are "deeply committed to reviewing each students' " Zeemee story and more likely will be joining in the fun soon. So far these colleges tend to be not as selective as the coalition members and do not have to meet any criteria to be included in the process. Colleges such as Beloit, Elon, Southern Methodist University and the University of Dallas are a few examples.

According to the website, colleges are using Zeemee to "replace the supplemental essays, substitute for an interview, select scholarship recipients, visualize stories and screen international applicants." Although I have not worked with a student yet who has used this app, I have worked with several students who submitted video essays as part of their common application process. They seemed to genuinely enjoy this component of the application, but it was significant work.

Overall, integrating a more multi-faceted approach to the application process is positive — especially if it encourages underrepresented, under-resourced students to apply. I fear, however, that it just ratchets up the timetable for when students begin to fret about college applications.

For many students this may just feel like more pressure to provide more information. On the flip side, though, it may engage them in a more qualitative and more familiar way, which I definitely support. Away with busy work! I would be especially thrilled if the outcome of these developments is a more transparent, streamlined and merit-based acceptance process. Time will tell.

— Jennifer Borenstein is an independent college adviser in Davis and owner of The Right College For You. Her column is published monthly. Reach her at jenniferborenstein@therightcollegeforyou.org, or visit www.therightcollegeforyou.org