

What's happening

Saturday

■ **Birch Lane Elementary School will celebrate its 50th anniversary** with a party at Davis Community Church's Fellowship Hall, 421 D St. in downtown Davis. The event will start at 6:30 p.m. and will include appetizers, a dessert buffet and silent and live auctions. Tickets will be \$10 and may be purchased at <http://blepta.ejoinme.org/atickets> or at the door. All proceeds will go toward helping Birch Lane students. For more information, visit www.birchlanepa.org or email Mike Clark at birchlanepa@gmail.com.

■ **International House, Davis, 10 College Park, will host a program on Chinese New Year crafts for children** from 1 to 3 p.m. Participants will celebrate the Year of the Horse by making traditional Chinese crafts, such as 3D paper mobiles, mosaic candles, panda cookies, goldfish kites, pop-up greeting cards and gift-money holders. I-House is at 10 College Park, and the program is for kids ages 5-12. All craft supplies and instructions are included. An adult must accompany children, who should wear clothes they do not mind getting glue, paint or markers on. This program is led by a Davis High School senior as her volunteer project to raise funds to promote cultural learning and tolerance at I-House. Call 530-753-5007 to reserve a spot; the cost is \$5 per child and there is limited space.

■ **The annual Patwin Elementary School Walkathon and Silent Auction** takes place from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 2222 Shasta Drive. The walkathon — open to all Davis residents — is the school's primary PTA fundraiser and organizers hope to raise over \$20,000 this year to support a variety of school programs. In addition to walking, there will be a variety of entertainment, including face painting, a cake walk and dunk tank, as well as a silent auction in the multipurpose room. There will be an auction preview Friday from 5 to 7 p.m. and the auction will take place Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon in the Patwin MPR.

Monday

Local residents are invited to **enjoy a burrito for a great cause** between 5 and 8 p.m. at Chipotle, 227 E St. in downtown Davis. Fifty percent of the sales that evening will go toward a technology upgrade at Emerson Junior High School that has been four years in the making. The goal is to raise \$1,500 that evening. Supporters must mention Emerson or the Da Vinci Charter Academy when they make their purchases.

Ongoing

■ **Be a part of the excitement, glitz and glam that is Grad Night 2014!** Volunteers have planned an amazing event for the graduating seniors from all Davis high schools; to bring this dream to fruition, help is needed. Even if you are not a parent of a high school senior, Grad Night organizers appreciate help from everyone. Openings are available for decorators, check-in helpers, event monitors, poker and black jack dealers, raffle team workers, café workers and security assistants. Choose a shift(s) for Thursday, Friday or Saturday (June 12-14). For more information and to sign up, see <http://www.davisgradnight.org/volunteers>

■ **Davis High School's Blue Devil basketball camp** will run June 16-19 in the gym, 315 W. 14th St. Camp for fourth- and fifth-graders is 8 a.m. to noon; camp for sixth-through eighth-graders is noon to 4 p.m. The camp is designed to have young basketball players learn the fundamentals of the game through drills as well as team and individual competitions. Future Blue Devil basketball players will learn what is necessary for competitive basketball at the next level, while getting to know the program and staff. The registration fee is \$100. Go to www.dhsbluedevis.com to download a camp flier.

Willett running club invites community to 'run with the owls'

By Anne Ternus-Bellamy

ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

When the bell rings at Willett Elementary School on Tuesdays and Thursdays and children in grades 1-3 are released for the day, they don't all head to the bike racks or pickup zone.

At least 60 to 70 of those kids head to the field behind the school and start running. And they run and run, around and around the field, quarter-mile after quarter-mile for a full half-hour.

Second-grader Gazaw Baker is often at the head of the pack, slowing down only long enough to receive a mark on his arm each time around in order to keep track of his laps.

He regularly runs two or three miles during the 30-minute "Challenge Club" session.

His biggest complaint, says teacher Lindsay Upcraft, "is when we say, 'OK, last lap,' and he says, 'What? Can't I do three more?'"

"For some of them, anything less than 12 (laps) and they're upset," she added.

Parent Stephany Cavatoni loves that these kids love to be out there running.

They don't even have to do much to sell the activity to kids — students see their classmates and friends out there running and immediately want to join in.

"It gets them some exercise after school, instead of going home and playing on the iPad," she noted.

And it's a nice activity for students who normally have to wait around for older siblings who aren't dismissed until a half-hour later.

The Challenge Club after-school running program has been taking place for several years and always concludes with the "Running of the Owls," named after the Willett mascot. The family fun run is open to all Davis families, not just Willett families, and takes place Sunday, May 4, beginning at 8 a.m. at 1207 Sycamore Lane.

The runs — which include a quarter-mile, a 1-mile and a 5K — begin in Sycamore Park, with the longer runs going over the pedestrian overpass and through Arroyo Park. All finishers receive a Fun Run Dog Tag award.

And the fun doesn't end with the run — activities will continue back at the school after the running is over, including a pogo tournament, a basketball knockout game and a fitness contest. Food and drink vendors also will be present, Cavatoni said.

Race-day registration fees are \$25 for the 5K and \$15 for the quarter-mile and 1-mile races.

For more information and to see the race routes, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/willett-elementary-family-fun-run-tickets-10984971345.

Last year, about 150 people participated in the fun runs and organizers are hoping for even more.

They'll have some stiff competition in these Willett runners, though.

Last Tuesday featured runner after runner hitting the two-mile mark before the session was even over.

Teachers Upcraft and Kris Inouye have been running the Challenge Club this year and are out there on Tuesdays and Thursdays, tallying laps and encouraging the students. More than 100 students have signed up for the running club this year and many will top 50 miles by the time the school year ends.

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SUE COCKRELL/ENTERPRISE PHOTOS

Parent Jen Adams runs with Willett students, from left, Anabelle Navarro, Khila Herring, Yocelyn Villegas, Charlotte Mulloney, Vanessa Quesada-Cota and Jessyca Soto-Hernandez.



Damian Valk runs like the wind. Takahiro Uchinomi, below, gets his arm marked to show that he has completed a lap.

What is the right number of APs to take?

About February every year I field the same basic question from a variety of families and students. No, not which team will win March Madness, but actually something even more mysterious ... how many Advanced Placement courses should I take? Since this question requires some careful self-assessment, the answer is different for different students.

What is an AP class?

The College Board, the not-for-profit organization in charge of the Scholastic Achievement Test, also runs the Advanced Placement program. The point of this program is to provide high school students the opportunity to benefit from exposure to college-level material.

A committee of college and high school faculty develop the course curriculum based on typical syllabi from introductory college-level courses in that subject. According to the College Board website — <http://advancesinap.collegeboard.org> — AP courses and exams are periodically revised to "enhance alignment with current best practices in college-level learning." This year, AP physics 1 and 2, and AP U.S. history have the honor. Next year, it will be AP art history and AP European history's turn.

After completing an AP class, a student can choose to take the AP subject exam. Students are not required to do so, but colleges use information about the scores — a 5-point scale, ranging from 1, which is "no recommendation," to 5, which is "extremely well qualified" — to help determine how they will count the coursework.

Why take AP classes?

There are several compelling



Advanced Placement at DHS

19 AP courses plus 11 Honors classes
Counselors recommend **limiting the number of weighted classes** per year to two in 10th grade and three in 11th and 12th grades
In 2013, **593 DHS students** took 1,098 AP exams
89% earned a score of 3 or higher

reasons to consider taking AP classes. But that does not mean a student should take every class possible. Nor does it mean that every student should take an AP class. Here are the main reasons why it is worthwhile.

1. **Demonstrate ability to handle rigorous classes.** College admissions officers want to see a track record that proves a student is ready for and will be able to succeed in college. Doing well in AP courses shows that a student is up to the task.

2. **Additional points in GPA.** Students can earn an extra point in their GPA calculation for earning a C or better in an AP course. Some schools cap how many extra points may be earned. For instance, the UCs and CSUs cap it at eight courses.

3. **Increase competitiveness compared to other applicants.** Colleges consider applicants within the context of their school. The more AP classes offered at your high school, the more college admissions officers want to see students avail

themselves of those opportunities. Taking only a few when 20 are offered does not impress admissions officers. (See the box regarding Davis High School's AP information.)

4. **Earn college credit and/or skip introductory level courses in college.** Students who pass AP exams (usually with a 3 or above) may reduce tuition expenses by earning credits toward graduation or by skipping certain prerequisites. Another benefit is taking a reduced course load and thus freeing up time to devote to studying or internships. Make sure to check each college's policy since there is a wide variation.

Recent developments

I believe this column would be remiss if I did not mention the recent concern expressed by several colleges and universities about whether a high AP exam score actually represents subject mastery. Dartmouth, for example, conducted an informal survey and found that 90 percent of its freshmen who earned a 5 on the AP psychology exam, who were then given a condensed version of the college's final exam on the subject, failed the final.

Some schools now grant credit only for a score of 4 or 5. Others, like Dartmouth, will not award college credit for high AP scores effective beginning with the high school class of 2018. With this in mind, be sure to do your research and learn about the policies of the schools on your college list.

The big reveal

OK, you may be thinking, "Now I know more about AP classes, but she has not answered my question yet. How many APs should I take?" Well, only

you (the student), your family and your teacher can really answer this question. The goal is to challenge yourself, take the most rigorous classes available, but maintain a solid GPA.

Be strategic and take AP classes in your areas of strength and interest. If you can handle all APs, then go for it. But most students should aim for not too many nor too few. Make sure to factor in sports schedules, family commitments and extracurricular activities, all of which can undermine your ability to put your best effort into the class.

A few parting words

I want to end with well wishes for those of you who are studying for AP exams. Best of luck! And, here are a few last issues to remember.

■ Take the hardest classes in your favorite subjects.

■ Avoid taking an "easy" AP just for the bump in GPA if this is not an area of interest. Colleges are well aware of this practice.

■ Please take the AP exam whenever possible. Colleges want to see that you followed through and made the effort to demonstrate subject mastery.

■ Remember to build in time for fun and free time. This is a marathon, not a race. Do not overload yourself and compromise your social/emotional well-being. Because, no matter what, there is a right college out there for you!

— Jennifer Borenstein is an independent college adviser in Davis and owner of *The Right College For You*. Her column is published on the fourth Tuesday of the month. She lives in Davis with her family. Reach her at jenniferborenstein@therightcollegeforyou.org, or visit www.therightcollegeforyou.org.