

What's happening

Saturday

■ Peregrine School invites the community to "Creature Feature," a Halloween celebration and art spectacular featuring live music, food, drinks and hands-on activities for children of all ages. Highlights include a costume parade led by members of the Cal Aggie Marching Band-uh, an insect petting zoo and maggot painting. The event runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 2650 Lillard Drive. For more information, call 530-753-5500.

■ Downtown Davis merchants will host their annual **Treat Trail** from 2 to 4:30 p.m. Children ages 10 and under in costume are invited to visit businesses displaying the orange Treat Trail sign to receive a Halloween goodie. The fun takes place rain or shine.

■ Ghosts, goblins, princesses, action heroes and others are invited to visit the **Hattie Weber Museum** on Saturday for healthy fruit treats. Tricks are optional. The museum is at 445 C St. in Central Park. It is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Admission is free but donations are accepted with gratitude.

Saturday, Nov. 7

■ The Citrus Circuits high school robotics team hosts its second annual **Women in STEM seminar** from 1 to 5 p.m. in the DMG Mori auditorium, 3805 Faraday Ave. Women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) professions will speak about their experiences, including Denneal Jamison-McClung, director of the UC Davis Biotechnology Program and project coordinator of the UCD ADVANCE project that promotes diversity among STEM faculty. The seminar is open to all and no ticket or registration are required. Learn more about the Women in STEM lecture series at <http://www.citruscircuits.org/wistem>.

Wednesday, Nov. 11

■ It's time for the **Madrigals Holiday Choral Workshop**, for children in kindergarten through sixth grade. Youths are invited to join the Davis High Madrigal Singers for an afternoon of music, games, snacks and more music from 1:30 to 4 p.m. at the Brunelle Performance Hall at Davis High School. Participants also will have the opportunity to sing with the Madrigals at a holiday concert at the University Retirement Community on Monday, Dec. 7. To register, visit www.davismadrigals.com (select the K-6 Choral Workshop button). The cost is \$30 per student, with a limited number of partial scholarships available by request. For more information, contact Krista McClain at kristaemcclain@gmail.com or 530-746-8028.

Wednesday, Dec. 2

■ Julie Lythcott-Haims, former freshman dean at Stanford University and author of "How to Raise an Adult," will be the featured speaker at **Davis Parent University** beginning at 7 p.m. in the Brunelle Performance Hall at Davis High School, 315 W. 14th St. To reserve a free ticket and view past lectures, visit <http://dctv.davismedia.org/dpu>. Contact davisparented@gmail.com with questions.

Thursday, Jan. 7

■ Nominations for the city of **Davis Golden Heart Awards** are due at 5 p.m. at City Hall, 23 Russell Blvd. The awards honor local junior high and high school students who have significantly contributed to their community as well as those who have overcome personal challenges. For more information or to nominate a deserving youth, call 530-747-5863 or visit <http://www.cityofdavis.org>.

Home-court advantage

Citrus Circuits hosts robotics competition, and wins



Kelly Ostrom, left, and Avery Phimmasehn control Citrus Circuits' robot at Sunday's Capital City Classic tournament at Davis High. Teams from all around California brought their bots to compete in the Recycle Rush contest, using their machines to stack recycling containers. At top, Megan Yamoah gets the Davis droid into position.

By Anne Ternus-Bellamy

ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

The Citrus Circuits robotics team didn't just host the Capital City Classic tournament at Davis High School over the weekend, the team also continued its winning ways.

Following up on an unbeaten season that culminated in the world championship last spring, the team came out on top Sunday alongside two alliance partners after two days of competition in the Davis High gym.

The Capital City Classic, co-sponsored by teams from Pleasant Grove and Elk Grove, featured nearly 20 teams from around the state competing in the same Recycle Rush game played in April's world championships. During the game, robots built by the students earn points by stacking recycling containers.

This year more than 66 students from Davis high schools and junior highs are participating on the FIRST Robotics team, with many hoping for a chance to defend the crown next spring. The team is coached by Davis High teacher Steve Harvey and mentored by alumni, parents and college students.

Learn more about the team and upcoming competitions at www.citruscircuits.com.

Advice on making a major decision

In response to the nearly constant refrain I hear from both my senior and junior high school students — what major should I choose? — I often answer their questions with more questions ... What do you like? What are you good at?

That's usually the best way to start thinking about a good major. Do you love writing papers? Do you love doing experiments in the lab? Do you find art history riveting? Of course, there is more to selecting a major than this, but a good place to begin is with what makes you happy and what you have an aptitude for.

Do I need to select a major when applying to college?

Not always; since most schools require students to declare a major by the end of the sophomore year, students often can choose to be undecided or undecided. However, some schools do require a major selection when applying (Cal Poly San Luis Obispo), and some majors require students to start working on major course patterns in the freshman year (engineering). In these cases, there is usually an alternative major choice allowed as a backup.

In addition, many applications ask what you intend to study and why, so it's helpful if you have some ideas and can answer the question with specifics about what you would want to study at their school. For some, it can be challenging to write an essay about being undecided.

Will my major choice affect my chances of being admitted?

It's helpful to research how



competitive your desired major is. According to a July Forbes article, the top three most popular majors are business marketing, social sciences and engineering. Public universities such as the UCs and CSUs have many impacted majors, meaning that the demand outpaces the supply, so those are very challenging majors to be accepted into.

Consider, for example, the competitive field of engineering at Berkeley, or computer science at Georgia Tech. When applying to these schools, be aware and be strategic. Consider the tradeoff. Are you a student who only wants to do computer science? If so, make sure you also apply to less-competitive schools for computer science (Oregon State, Gonzaga). Perhaps the university is more important to you than the major, so consider switching majors.

Be aware that some universities (University of Washington) admit students only on a pre-major basis. For example, if you are an engineering pre-major, you have to achieve a certain GPA in introductory courses to qualify for acceptance into the major. This isn't always easy to accomplish given the level of instruction and competition. Again, if you are certain this is the major for you, you may want to find a

different college where you are able to be certain you will be an engineering major.

Some people may know exactly where they want to be; maybe a student longs to be an aerospace engineer or a graphic designer. Others are unsure but have some ideas of what to try, while still others have no idea and will want to try out a few things. In this case, a liberal arts college may be a good route for them. In general, the bigger the school the more class and major choices.

What would be a good major for me?

For those wanting extra help in deciphering your strengths and interests, I suggest trying some personality assessments. There are many great free resources online if you Google "personality assessments." My colleagues use either a Holland Code assessment, the Birkman Method or the Strong Interest Inventory, which produce results that map to majors and careers.

Once you have an idea of what you want to study, the next step is to look at which colleges have those majors, how competitive the programs are, and the classes/tests you need to take in high school in order to pursue that major.

What else should I consider in selecting a major?

It's helpful to consider costs and benefits. From the cost perspective, how difficult would it be to be accepted into that major, and then what is the course progression and the probability of earning a degree in four years? Will you need a graduate degree to be competitive in the job market? Add up these costs.

As for benefits — of course,

on top of emotional benefits — how likely are you to get a job? What are the career paths available? How much money can you expect to make with a degree in that major? I recommend looking at the College Scorecard website and payscale.com and www.iseek.org careers to learn more about career opportunities and expected income.

If you have trouble narrowing the search down to just one major, there is often a chance to do a minor in another topic, or to do a double major. A minor is like a major but does not require as many classes.

For example a student might major in international relations with a minor in Spanish, or be a double major in both subjects. The double major would require a student to complete twice as many required classes, but she may stand out in the job interviewing process.

Parting words

Keep in mind that about 80 percent of students in the United States end up changing their majors at least once, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. On average, college students change majors at least three times over the course of their college career. And, finally, new majors and programs are being developed every year, so what your major is may not have even been invented yet!

— 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. Reach her at jenniferborenstein@therightcollegeforyou.org, or visit www.therightcollegeforyou.org