

What's happening

Ongoing

Registration is open for the Davis Shakespeare Ensemble's production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Rehearsals begin Jan. 19 and the show runs through Feb. 29. Participation is open to youths ages 8-15. Rehearsals will be held at Peregrine School, 2650 Lillard Drive, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Tuesdays and 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays. Enrollment costs \$300. Visit [www.shakespeare.davis.org/Midsummer2016](http://www.shakespeare.davis.org/Midsummer2016) for more information.

The Holmes Junior High School PTA is holding its 14th annual Un-Fundraiser. This is the PTA's only fundraiser of the year. The goal is to raise \$12,000 to fund upcoming field trips for all students in each grade level at Holmes — a re-enactment of the Renaissance period for seventh-graders, a re-enactment of the Civil War for eighth-graders and a Tennessee Valley trail hike in Marin County for ninth-graders. Tax-deductible donations may be mailed to Holmes Junior High, 1220 Drexel Drive, Davis, CA 95616, Attn: Jan Chandler/Un-Fundraiser. Holmes' tax ID is #237-08-4131.

Nov. 23-25

Children can spend part of Thanksgiving vacation doing a little LEGO engineering during Bashem Bots, a city camp that takes place Monday through Wednesday from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Redwood Community Building on Anderson Road. Campers ages 8 to 12 will spend the afternoon making LEGO robots that will battle obstacles and fellow campers. For more information or to register, visit [www.cityofdavis.org](http://www.cityofdavis.org) or call 530-757-5626.

Nov. 23-27

Kids can have fun with science at Explorit Science Center over the Thanksgiving break, with "Pirate Treasures" on Nov. 23, "Fun with Feathers" on Nov. 24, "Found Harvest" on Nov. 25 and "Autumn Leaves" on Nov. 27. Each workshop for children ages 5-12 runs from 9 a.m. to noon; parents are welcome to attend as well. The cost for each workshop is \$30 for Explorit members, \$35 for nonmembers, and includes free admission to the Explorit museum at 3141 Fifth St., which is open until 5 p.m. Register one child for four days and get a \$20 discount. To register, call Explorit at 530-756-0191.

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](mailto:davisparented@gmail.com) with questions.

Through Dec. 7

Papa Murphy's Pizza store in Davis, 640 W. Covell Blvd., Suite G, and Big O Tires, 1513 Fifth St., are drop-off locations for new, unwrapped toys for donation to young patients at Shriners Hospitals for Children. Hospital staffers wrap the toys just in time for Santa Claus to deliver Christmas morning.

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>.

Brand identities



From left, Birch Lane fourth-graders James Trotman, Christopher Acosta, Madelynn Arias and Sophie Meng discuss their ideas for an updated Great Seal for the state of California.

SUE COCKRELL/ENTERPRISE PHOTO

Birch Lane fourth-graders reimagine California's state seal

By Anne Ternus-Bellamy  
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

The Great Seal of the State of California hasn't changed much since it was adopted at the state's Constitutional Convention in 1849.

Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom, is the central figure, with a California grizzly bear, grapevines and a sheaf of grain at her feet — representing the state's wildlife and agricultural heritage — a miner straight out of the Gold Rush nearby and a background dominated by the Sacramento River and Sierra Nevada mountain range.

But every year, as part of his students' study of California history, Birch Lane Elementary School teacher Joshua Crowell asks his class to reimagine the state seal — in fact, to create an entirely new one showcasing what they think is most important about California today.

The fourth-graders work in small groups and focus their research on specific areas: national parks, landmarks, industries, mythological people, cities, universities and animals.

"They do a lot of research," Crowell said.

Then each group chooses the features for their proposed state seal, writes a few paragraphs about each of those features and then draws a new seal on poster board.

Not surprisingly, their reimagined seals are a bit more modern than the one created in 1849.

Gone are Minerva, miners, bears and wheat, replace by Yosemite, the Golden Gate Bridge, the golden trout, Hollywood

and the computer industry, among others.

The students presented their reimagined seals to parents and a panel of school district leaders and elected officials on Monday, explaining, in the process, their reasons for dropping, say, Minerva in favor of someone like Poseidon — "Because he's the god of water and we need water," said student Toby Osterloh — or leaving off the grizzly bear in favor of the golden trout or newt — the latter "because it's one of the top five native animals in the state," said Diana Dorosti.

Erik Kimball's group included the computer industry "because it's important," he said.

"If you don't have computers or Internet you don't have freedom to search for what you need," he explained.

And while Disneyland was a top landmark, as was the Golden Gate Bridge, the state's beaches also were heavily represented on the six different seals as well.

As for Minerva's replacement, there were many suggestions. Like Poseidon, Amphitrite was chosen for her water theme by Kylie Cain's group.

"It represents our drought, and just sounded like a very good name," Cain said.

Aries and Zeus were both suggested as replacements, as was Asclepius, the god of medicine.

But when it came to the best representation of the state's educational heritage, there was only one choice that

showed up on every state seal: UC Davis.

The students talked about UCD's history as the University Farm, its size and varied programs, the Cal Aggie Marching Band-uh and the school's ranking among California's top colleges. Every group decided the local university was the best choice for representing education on the state seal.

"I really think UC Davis should be on the state seal," Aisling Bennett said.

Whether that will happen anytime soon remains to be seen, but one thing was clear as the students reached the end of what was a lengthy research project:

*"I really think UC Davis should be on the state seal."*

"We learned a lot about California," Dorosti said.

The adults they presented their seals to were impressed as well.

"It's exciting to see all the things you've learned from books and from being online," said Birch Lane's teacher-librarian, Lynne Sundstrom, who was joined on the panel watching the students' presentations by Assemblyman Bill Dodd, D-Napa, and Davis Board of Education President Alan Fernandes, as well as Associate Superintendent Clark Bryant and Director of Curriculum Stephanie Gregson.

— Reach Anne Ternus-Bellamy at [aternus@davisenterprise.net](mailto:aternus@davisenterprise.net) or 530-747-8051. Follow her on Twitter at @ATernusBellamy

**Aisling Bennett**  
Birch Lane fourth-grader

Don't let senioritis hurt your success

For many high school seniors who are elbows-deep right now into the college application process, the symptoms of senioritis are starting to surface. Can you blame them? It's been a long haul navigating through the treacherous terrain of standardized tests, letters of recommendation and the dreaded college essay.

But for those seniors who are starting the slide into senioritis, please be wary. Do not succumb ... Here's why: college acceptances are conditional upon senior-year performance. Yes, senior-year grades really do matter. Sorry.

How do they matter you might wonder, since for many applications like the UCs and CSUs there is no place to even enter senior-year grades, and GPA is based on grades from 10th and 11th only. However, students are required to send a final transcript to their school of choice, and this is where senioritis is discovered.

First, if you do not pass certain senior-year courses, you may no longer be a-g eligible. Second, and more commonly, if your GPA takes a serious downturn, or you have downgraded a class to something less challenging, colleges have a basis to rescind an admission offer. Yikes!



For private schools and public out-of-state schools that require a transcript to be sent as part of the application process, the schools also will see later-term, senior-year grades. If your first- or second-quarter grades do not convince schools of your academic competency, they may ask for third-quarter grades. Same goes for if you apply early action or early decision: Colleges may ask for your first-quarter grades if they feel junior-year grades were not particularly strong.

When applying regular decision, most colleges will ask you to submit your first-semester, senior-year grades. Anything below a C is cause for concern, especially if you had all A's up to that point. Basically, they have ways of finding out if you have caught the senioritis bug and that may trigger a warning from them or a revocation of their offer.

This is laid out clearly in "the statement of conditions," which may be called something different at different schools

but always relays some sort of conditional aspect of the acceptance. It may state that acceptance is conditional upon the successful completion of the final year of high school or that you must remain "fully engaged" in your studies.

Here's how Harvey Mudd Admissions puts it: "If, for example, your grade goes from an A to an A-, there's no cause for concern, but if you used to be a straight-A student and your most recent grades show a significant drop, then we'll reach out to you and ask for an explanation. These types of situations are handled on a case-by-case basis and outcomes can range from anything from a warning letter to actually having your admission rescinded."

Well, how likely is it that a college will rescind, really? According to the 2009 State of College Admission report on the National Association for College Admission Counseling website — [www.nacacnet.org/studentinfo/articles/Pages/FinishingStrong.aspx](http://www.nacacnet.org/studentinfo/articles/Pages/FinishingStrong.aspx) — during the fall 2008 application cycle, 21 percent of colleges reported that they revoked an admission offer; of these, 65 percent stated that the cause was due to final grades.

Another noteworthy tidbit from this report: Public

colleges were more likely than private colleges to have rescinded an offer of admission due to final grades (84 percent versus 49 percent).

OK, so what to do if you catch a bad case of the senior slide? Be pro-active. Meet with your high school teacher and counselor and come up with a plan to resurrect your grades, if possible. Ask for extra credit. Work with a tutor.

I also recommend that students contact the colleges they applied to and explain the situation. It is much better to know from the schools now about what they would do so you can take action to address their concerns rather than wait until it's too late. Perhaps they will suggest taking an online class or getting a certain grade in summer school.

Final parting words of advice — try not to catch the senioritis bug. The stakes are too high. But if you do catch it, take action to make it to the finish line. You have worked hard for this. Do not let it slip away.

— 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](mailto:jenniferborenstein@therightcollegeforyou.org), or visit [www.therightcollegeforyou.org](http://www.therightcollegeforyou.org).