

# What's happening

## Ongoing

■ The city of Davis holds “**Teen Open Gym**” every Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon at Davis High School, 315 W. 14th St. All teens in grades 9-12 are invited to drop in for a game of badminton or basketball. Participants are encouraged to bring their own equipment, but some will be provided. Hours are 4 to 8 p.m. Saturdays and 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Sundays. There is a \$2 drop-in fee to participate.

## Today

■ Teens are invited for a fun **gymnastics and movie night** from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Civic Center Gym. Hosted by the Teen Leadership Council, the evening will feature tumbling, balance beam action and a viewing of “Lilo & Stitch,” all for free. Snacks will be provided. For more information, call Robert Larson at 530-747-5857.

## Wednesday, Feb. 10

■ Join school district officials, parents and other community members at a **Local Control and Accountability Plan community forum** from 6 to 8 p.m. at King High School, 635 B St. The meetings will focus on the school district's progress and priorities in reaching annual goals for all students. Those attending the forum will have an opportunity to share ideas to support student achievement for the coming school year.

## Tuesday, Feb. 16

■ The city of Davis will acknowledge teens for their community service or for overcoming personal challenges during the annual **Golden Heart Awards ceremony** beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Chambers at City Hall, 23 Russell Blvd. Call the city at 530-757-5626 for more information.

## Friday, Feb. 19

■ Teens in grades 7-9 are invited to a **junior high dance** sponsored by the city of Davis from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at the Veterans' Memorial Center, 203 E. 14th St. A DJ will be on hand to play dance and hip-hop music; other activities include a game room with Wii Rock Band and board games as well as a snack bar. City dances are supervised by city staff and there are no in-and-out privileges. Tickets will go on sale Feb. 8 for \$10 and will be \$12 at the door. For more information, call 530-757-5626.

## Feb. 27-28

■ Learn the information and skills necessary to be the best baby-sitter on the block during a weekend **baby-sitter training** offered by the city of Davis. Participants must be between the ages of 11 and 15 and the cost is \$150. Hours are 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday at the Davis Senior Center, 646 A St.

## March 21-25

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

- **The Spring Beak 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 for \$184.



WAYNE TILCOCK/ENTERPRISE PHOTO

Clockwise from left, Jimmy Zhou of Davis High School, Emerson Junior High teacher Gary Slizeski and Jeffrey Yin quiz the Emerson science bowl team, around the table, Justin Yeung, Collin Fitzpatrick, Ben Skinner and Mitchell Madayag as the quartet trains for the state competition.

## Science bowl team's hard work pays off

BY ANNE TERNUS-BELLAMY  
*Enterprise staff writer*

Since 2010, there's been a large trophy in Gary Slizeski's science classroom at Emerson Junior High School, a third-place award won by that year's Emerson science bowl team in the U.S. Department of Energy's annual National Science Bowl regional competition.

One day last week, Slizeski took the trophy down from its perch atop a cabinet and placed it in the middle of a table in his classroom.

“I want you guys to bring back one of these,” Slizeski told the four eighth-graders sitting there.

All four, along with their three Davis High School mentors, would be heading to Las Positas College in Livermore two days later for a day of competition that would match their knowledge of science and math against teams

from 23 other Northern California middle schools. Slizeski believed this group of students had a pretty good shot at equaling their 2010 predecessors.

“It's a pretty strong team,” he said last week.

Turns out he was right.

The team returned to Davis over the weekend with a third-place trophy of its own, once again just missing out on qualifying for the national finals in Washington, D.C., in April, but thrilled nonetheless.

“We were very happy with the results,” said Davis High senior David Wang, who has been mentoring the team along with classmate Jimmy Zhou and junior Jeffrey Yin.

“We were so close to getting second and lost by a thin margin,” Wang said. “It was overall an awesome experience and I am

very proud of my team.”

The National Science Bowl is a nationwide academic competition that tests students' knowledge in all areas of math and science, from biology and chemistry to earth science and physics. Teams face off in a fast-paced question-and-answer format, using buzzers to get a chance to answer each question before their opponents.

To prepare, the four students on Emerson's team — Ben Skinner, Mitchell Madayag, Collin Fitzpatrick and Justin Yeung — had been meeting weekly after school in Slizeski's room where the high schoolers would quiz them on the sorts of questions they would face in competition.

Science Bowl has become kind of a legacy activity at Emerson, with former team members returning to the junior high to help coach the kids coming up after them, and the school sending one or more teams of four to the regional competition

every year, Slizeski said.

They join because they love their science and math and are more than happy to spend their Thursday afternoons learning more.

And learn they do — for every question the eighth-graders answered incorrectly during practice sessions, the high schoolers would patiently explain not just what the correct answer was, but why.

Slizeski serves as official coach for the team but doesn't have to apply much pressure.

“It's really nice, because they're so self-motivated,” he said.

And now they have another trophy to place up on Slizeski's cabinet to show for it.

Learn more about the National Science Bowl at <http://science.energy.gov/wdts/nsb>.

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

## Forum on sexting and cyberbullying set for Monday

BY ANNE TERNUS-BELLAMY  
*Enterprise staff writer*

The Davis school district will hold a community forum on sexting, harassment and cyberbullying on Monday from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Brunelle Performance Hall at Davis High School, 315 W. 14th St.

The event is free and open to all students, parents and community members, but the forum's presentations are designed to address the needs of parents and other adults. Children are welcome to attend should the parent or guardian deem it appropriate.

In a letter to Davis families in December, the school district's director of student services, Laura Juanitas, and director of instructional technology, Marcia Bernard, reported on a rise in sexting and other types of cyberbullying that they said was not isolated to any one campus or age group.

“(I)t is occurring at elementary school through high school,” the letter said. “We all need to be aware of this trend and act together to educate and protect our students.”

For Monday's event, the school district is partnering with local law enforcement to educate parents about the consequences of these behaviors.

“The Davis Police Department is concerned about how teens use social media and the consequences of ‘sexting,’” said school resource officer Keirith Briesenick. “The Davis Police Department works with the District Attorney's Office to examine every criminal case that involves ‘sexting’ in order to determine if there is a criminal element and if charges are appropriate.”

Also on hand will be representatives from the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Yolo County District Attorney's High Tech Crime Unit, school district administrators and crisis team members and Empower Yolo, all of whom will be available for questions during the panel portion of the evening.

Davis Enterprise columnist Bob Dunning will moderate the discussion.

## Preparing for those tests

It's a new year and a new set of high schoolers are entering the college admissions phase. The question I am fielding quite frequently these days from juniors, sophomores and their families is how to prep, if at all, for standardized tests for college.

So let's go through what the options are and what makes sense.

First, it is important to know that almost all colleges require some sort of standardized test as part of the application process, and all will accept either the ACT or the SAT. However, there are some colleges that do not require standardized testing, which is good news, in my opinion. Check out [www.fairtest.org/university/optional](http://www.fairtest.org/university/optional) to see a list of these schools.

For this column, however, let's assume standardized tests will be required and focus on whether and how to prep.

To start, I try to ascertain how much — if any — test prep is a good idea. (Keep in mind that many students do no need to test prep or choose not to prepare and still do well.) I like to begin by asking students how they feel about taking tests. For instance, do they dread them? Have test anxiety? Feel fine about them? Or flat out just rock the test?

If they answer yes to any of the first three questions, I then ask about past results on STAR testing and the PSAT. How do they feel about their results? Did the results accurately reflect their abilities? Were the tests harder than expected? Did they run out of time?

Often, there are some legitimate concerns about their results, which test preparation can alleviate. For these students, prep can be worthwhile. And, if students require accommodations for testing, this is an ideal time to start the process of preparing and getting the appropriate accommodations.



(See my website, [www.therightcollegeforyou.org](http://www.therightcollegeforyou.org), for more information on applying to college with learning challenges.)

So if test prep is determined to be useful for this student, then how should she prep and how often? Now it becomes important to match the student's learning style with the type of test prep. Fortunately, there are a variety of options in our area, including online classes, real-world classes, one-on-one sessions, self-paced online prep and boot camps.

Free online options include number2.com, Khan Academy, and some practice questions available on the College Board and ACT websites. And there's always good old-fashioned studying on your own from books.

Next, consider a student's motivation level. Will she really prep on her own or does she need a class or tutor to make sure time is set aside for this endeavor? Hint: Parents' insight is sometimes needed to answer this one.

Frequency is the next step — does the student have time to take a class once or twice a week, or does he have extracurriculars and homework that will get in the way? Maybe it's best to wait and prep the week-end before the exam in a boot camp setting or over the summer? There's no sense in wasting money on an option that does not fit well into a student's schedule.

most expensive being real-world test prep classes. But if that is what works best for a student then that may be the most efficient use of resources (if families can afford it). High test scores do help students be competitive for college scholarships.

Overall, it is a good idea to be strategic about time and money when figuring out when to do these test prep options. (See my website for a previous column about when to take the tests.) Remember that the junior year is a busy one and GPA is a major factor in admissions, so do not undermine performance in courses with too much test prep. And, try to make time to relax and have fun, too!

There are two basic time frames for test prep:

■ For students who are striving for selective colleges or believe their test scores are not as high as necessary, it makes sense to prep before taking the tests in March and April of the junior year. Once scores are received, test prep for the fall exam in the senior year can be tailored to areas of weakness.

■ Take the exams during the junior year and then test prep over the summer to be ready to peak for a second go in the fall of senior year.

I wish I had a crystal ball to be able to see into the future to provide students and families with the best test prep course of action for them, but I do not. Bottom line: Ask yourself what works best for you and then do it. Corny, I know, but also true!

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