

What's happening

Through Sept. 30

■ **The third annual "Best of Davis" photo contest** takes place during the month of September. Participants enter in one of three age categories: 6-11; 12-17; and 18 and up. Visit <http://www.cityofdavis.org> for contest rules and how to enter.

Today

■ **High school students** interested in applying to one of the **service academies** — Air Force, West Point, Naval and Merchant Marines — are invited to attend an informational meeting from 6 to 8 p.m. at River Valley High School, 801 El Margarita Road in Yuba City. Recruiters and academy graduates will be on hand to answer questions.

Friday, Sept. 11

■ Applications for the **39th annual "Davis Children's Nutcracker"** are due by 5 p.m. in the Parks and Community Services Department in City Hall, 23 Russell Blvd. All Davis children ages 6 to 12 are welcome to apply for a spot in the 250-member cast. Positions are filled by lottery.

Rehearsals begin Nov. 30 and performances take place Dec. 16-20. Applications are online at <http://www.cityofdavis.org> or call 530-757-5626.

Saturday, Sept. 19

■ Celebrate **National Gymnastics Day** during an open house at the Civic Center Gym, 23 Russell Blvd., from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. The event is free and open to all.

Saturday, Sept. 26

■ **The Julia Robinson Mathematics Festival** invites students in grades 6-9 and their parents to explore intriguing, accessible mathematical activities during a program sponsored by Davinci Charter Academy from 9 a.m. to noon.

The event's collaborative, non-competitive atmosphere offers an alternate setting for students to explore the joys and power of mathematics with other kids and older mentors. Activities will take place in the indoor commons at Emerson Junior High, 2121 Calaveras Ave.

The cost is \$10 in advance or \$25 at the door and scholarships are available. To learn more and to register, visit <http://juliarobinsonmathfestival.org/register.html>.

Friday, Oct. 16

■ Students in grades 7-9 are invited to a **teen dance** at the Veterans' Memorial Center, 203 E. 14th St., from 7 to 9:30 p.m. The cost is \$10 and activities include a DJ playing dance and hip-hop music, video games, board games and more.

For more information, call 530-757-5626.

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>.

Get those applications in order

I hope you all enjoyed your summer and are ready to get back to school. For many seniors, this means college applications!

If you haven't already done so, go online and set up your UC and Common Application accounts to start filling out applications. There are also several public out-of-state universities that are not on the Common Application that are open now.

Schools such as the University of Arizona and Oregon State are on a rolling admission deadline, meaning that students usually hear back about acceptances three weeks after they submit. Not too shabby! Why not have a few sure things as soon as possible?

Part of starting the application process early is strategizing about whom to ask for letters of recommendation. So let's go through the what, when and how of letters of recommendation.

■ Which schools require letters of recommendation?

In general all the private colleges do. Most public universities do not, but some do. (Sorry to sound like Dr. Seuss.) When it comes to public universities, it is best to check the school's website.

Some examples: None are required at the CSUs nor the big Oregon and Washington state schools. But new this year, UC Berkeley is the only UC that will allow students to submit two optional letters of recommendation. This is not required but students may be invited to submit one teacher letter and one from someone other than a



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teacher by Jan. 1. See <http://admissions.berkeley.edu/freshmanpolicy> for more details.

This is a growing trend among public universities. The University of Texas at Austin, for example, has a policy that states that letters of recommendation are "appreciated but not required." Public out-of-state colleges and universities that are on the Common Application — such as Purdue, the University of Michigan, Georgia Tech and the University of Colorado Boulder, to name a few — also require/allow letters of recommendation from teachers and "others."

■ How many letters do I need?

In many cases there is a required amount of letters of recommendation with an "allowed" or up to amount. What does this mean? It means try to fulfill the higher standard of what is allowed. Any time a college states that they allow or appreciate letters of recommendation it is in a student's best interest to submit them.

For example, St. Mary's in Moraga requires one but allows up to three teacher letters of recommendation, and allows, but does not require, up to two letters of recommendation from "others." Ahh, don't you just

love how straightforward this is. Again, check the Common Application or each college's website to be sure.

■ Whom should I ask?

It is best to ask teachers from core subjects such as math and science, and especially teachers from subjects students wish to major in while at college. The more recent the teacher, the better. Try to avoid asking a teacher from the sophomore year and focus on teachers from the junior and perhaps even the senior year. It probably goes without saying, but ask people who know you well and will be able to comment on your skills.

For letters from "others," the Common Application suggests asking an "arts teacher, clergy, coach, college access counselor, employer, family member, peer, other." This may include someone from a family for whom the student baby-sits, or a family friend who has known the student for a significant amount of time. Keep in mind it is important to ask someone who will be able to write a good letter.

■ When do I ask?

Usually it is best to ask at the beginning of the senior year, but for some popular teachers it is necessary to ask during, or at the end of, the junior year since they fill up quickly and/or limit the number of letters they will write.

For the "others," make sure to ask them several months in advance of the deadline so they have time to craft a quality letter. Remember that letters of recommendation are due by application deadlines so if you choose to apply early to a school, the letters of recommendation

must be submitted by that early deadline as well.

■ How do I ask?

I counsel students to ask people in person but also send a follow-up email to confirm. The next step is to assign them as recommenders directly from the Common Application. If the college is not a part of the Common Application, students may need to provide the writer with a stamped, addressed envelope.

Each high school has its own process for requesting letters of recommendation. At Davis High School, for instance, students start the process by making an appointment with their counselor and then filling out the Private College Recommendation Packet. This form is essentially an extended résumé, so I have students work on their résumés over the summer to be ready to hit the ground running in the fall.

Parting advice: No matter the which, when, who and how, students will always want to waive their right to see the letters of recommendation before they are submitted by teachers and others. Otherwise colleges assume the writers may change what they have to say about the student. So, no surprise here, be mindful to ask someone who you think will represent you well.

With that, I wish you a happy new school year!

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



WAYNE TILCOCK/ENTERPRISE FILE PHOTO

Jeff Kessler helps a participant put a zinc coating on a penny during March's Hogwarts event at the Stephens Branch Library, an example of the sort of hands-on programs the library hosts.

Library hosts magical fun all month long

ENTERPRISE STAFF

The following children's programs will be held during September at the Stephens Branch Library, 315 E. 14th St. in Davis:

■ A Lego Block Party at 2 p.m. Saturday;

■ A family movie at 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12;

■ A stuffed-animal sleepover at 11:15 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 19. Stuffed animals are invited to storytime and to spend the night at the library. Each child will receive a certificate and photo of their stuffed animal sleeping over.

■ Up, Up and Away! at 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 19. Blast into the world of air pressure, aerodynamics and physics in this show presented by Mad Science of Sacramento.

The following ongoing weekly programs will begin the week of Sept. 6:

■ Bilingual Chinese/English Storytime, Sundays at 3 p.m. for ages 0-5;

■ "The Spot" after-school club, Mondays through Thursdays for grades 4-7. Contact the library for hours;

■ Mother Goose on the Loose, Tuesdays at 10:15 and 11 a.m. for ages 1-3;

■ Pajama Storytime, Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. for ages 3-5;

■ Hug-a-Bye Baby, Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. for ages 0-12 months;

■ Tot Play Time, Wednesdays at 11 a.m. for ages 0-3;

■ Aventuras de Lecturas, Fridays at 10:30 a.m. for ages 0-3;

■ Tales for Tails, Fridays at 3 p.m. for school-aged children to practice their reading skills; and

■ Family Fun Time, Saturdays at 11:15 a.m.

The following programs will be held during September at Yolo County's Montgomery Elementary School Library, 1441 Danbury St. in South Davis:

■ It's Electrifying, at 11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 12; and

■ Aventuras de Lecturas, at 5:30 p.m. Tuesdays for ages 0-5.

All programs are free to attend and no registration is necessary. Programs are sponsored by the Yolo County Library and the Friends of the Davis Branch Library.

For more information, call library staff at 530-757-5593, visit the Yolo County Library online at www.yolocountylibrary.org (see calendar for branch-specific events) or connect with the library on Facebook at www.facebook.com/yolocountylibrary.org.



FRED GLADDIS/ENTERPRISE FILE PHOTO

Matteo Nouve gets his Scrabble on at "The Spot" after-school club.

City reminds families to be safe out there

SPECIAL TO THE ENTERPRISE

Students in the Davis Joint Unified School District hit the bike lanes, bike paths and sidewalks last week as they returned to school. And whether they're arriving on foot, bike, skateboard or in the car, the city's Street Smarts program reminds parents to follow basic safety guidelines to make sure children arrive at school — and back home — safely.

Prioritize safety

■ Reduce your speed to 25 miles per hour or lower in a school zone;

■ Obey all traffic signals, signs and markings whether walking, bicycling or driving;

■ Do not double-park or block crosswalks when dropping kids off at school;

■ Have children enter and exit vehicles on the passenger side of the car, next to the sidewalk;

■ Consider parking a block away and walking your children to school to help cut down on congestion around schools as well as the potential for collisions;

■ Remind your children to look in all directions (left, right, front and back) before crossing the street;

■ Cross the street only in a marked crosswalk or at a corner, not mid-block;

■ Follow the instructions of crossing guards and school safety patrols; and

■ Remind your children that bicyclists under the age of 18 must wear a buckled helmet.

Route maps

Students at 11 local elementary and junior high schools should be receiving a Suggested Routes to School Map from their school site. This map has been created with community input to recommend the

safest routes for all students to get to school — whether they're arriving in a car, on a bike or on foot.

Please refer to the map for suggested routes, travel with a neighbor or friend, and use the suggested routes to help create a critical mass of students traveling together. PDFs of the maps can be found on the websites of the city of Davis, the Davis Joint Unified School District and at each school. Ask for a hard copy in your school office if you didn't receive one at registration.

Safety resources

The city of Davis Street Smarts website has loads of great information in both English and Spanish on creating a "walking school bus," how to properly fit a helmet," fun classroom activities and more.

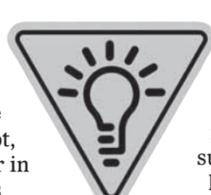
Street Smarts is the Safe Routes to School Program for the city of Davis. Visit <http://www.street-smarts.cityofdavis.org> to learn more about programs and resources.

Background

Safe Routes to School is a national and international movement to create safe, convenient and fun opportunities for children to bicycle and walk to and from schools.

In 1969, approximately 50 percent of children walked or bicycled to school, with approximately 87 percent of children living within a mile of school walking or bicycling. Today, fewer than 15 percent of schoolchildren walk or bicycle to school. As a result, kids today are less active, less independent and less healthy.

For more information, contact the city of Davis Street Smarts Program at 530-757-5640.



Street Smarts