Looking for Links Between Environmental Hazards and Birth Defects

The relationship between birth defects and environmental hazards in Texas may become clearer as the result of a three-year, $256,048 study to be conducted by two SWT researchers. The study will address whether living or working near hazardous waste sites or industrial emissions increases the risk of congenital malformations in offspring. Dr. Benjamin Zhan, Associate Professor of Geography, and Dr. Jean Brendler, Associate Professor of Health Services and Research, will conduct the study, funded by the National Center for Etiologic Control and Prevention via the Texas Research Center for Birth Defects. Brender and Zhan will study families who conceived or gave birth to children while residing near one of more than 100 federal or state superfund sites in Texas or one of more than 1,000 industrial sites.

The Ideal Job: Sociology Students Serve as They Learn

After working for several years, Stacey Fondren decided to come to SWT for a sociology degree. Her work experience told her that she would have a hard time getting a job in a new field without prior experience. So, she used an internship that she found through the Sociology Department’s well-respected internship program to gain that experience. As a result, her internship employer offered her a job.

Sociology interns regularly receive job offers and high praise, and Internship Coordinator Kelly Mosel helps them to find an internship doing that job. Students provide real service, so they are in high demand by employers. In fact, demand for sociology interns is so high that Hickman and Mosel can’t fill all employers’ requests.

Student Archaeologists Make Discoveries

When SWT’s Center for Archaeological Studies opened for business in 2000, anthropology major Jimmy Barrera was among the first to volunteer for the Center’s excavation projects. He knew he wanted to be a field archaeologist, but he needed actual field experience. Barrera’s expertise has grown along with the Center. He became an employee of the Center, now a major archaeological contractor with government and private entities that must conduct cultural surveys prior to disturbing land. With as many as 30 contracts at one time, the Center has not only fulfilled its research function but trained students for exciting archaeological careers. Contracts for archaeological investigations are leading Barrera and other SWT archaeological students all over Texas, where they’re making significant discoveries. Contracts for archaeological investigations are leading Barrera and other SWT archaeological students all over Texas, where they’re making significant discoveries. Contracts for archaeological investigations are leading Barrera and other SWT archaeological students all over Texas, where they’re making significant discoveries. Contracts for archaeological investigations are leading Barrera and other SWT archaeological students all over Texas, where they’re making significant discoveries.

“We’re able to teach students the techniques that they often don’t learn in short-term field schools or in lecture halls,” said Center Director Britt Bousman. The exhibit paid tribute to Texas country music from the early 19th century to the present.

Alibee Neal and the Ranch Girls.

Continued on outside panel . . .
France Invites SWT Students to Teach

Seven SWT students are among the 1,500 U.S. college students selected by the French Ministry of Education to teach in primary and secondary schools throughout France. They are teaching conversation-al English for seven to nine months, under the guidance of an English professor at the school. Another five or six SWT students are expected to participate in Fall 2003.

“It’s a significant experience – a more complete cultural immersion than one usually gets from a short-term study-abroad program – and I am told that our students are doing very well,” said Dr. Carole Martin, SWT professor of French, who coordinates the application process at SWT. “The students must adjust to teaching and to the language and culture of a foreign country. They are also encouraged to enroll in the local university, to finish undergraduate credits or to begin graduate studies. The experience requires a high degree of responsibility and maturity, which our students demonstrate.”

Poster contest winner Michael Hseih of Plano, Texas.

Poster contest winner Michael Hseih of Plano, Texas.

More than 80,000 Texas school children recently submitted posters to be judged in a National Geographic Society contest recognizing Geography Action Week. Final judging was coordinated by the SWT Department of Geography and the Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education, located in the department. Winning posters will be displayed at geography and social studies conferences throughout the year.