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STUDENT COUNSELING SERVICE

...a Department in the Division of Student Affairs
Texas A&M University
114 Henderson Hall
845-4427 ext. 108
scs.tamu.edu

Individual Career Counseling

Students may schedule an appointment with a career counselor to discuss concerns regarding their choice of major and choice of career. Other issues for exploration may include career planning, decision making, and dealing with family pressure.

ACE (Academic & Career Educator) Student Volunteers

ACE student volunteers assist students in the Career Counseling & Testing Center by helping them explore various academic majors, career options, and career information. No appointment is necessary to speak with an ACE volunteer.

DISCOVER

DISCOVER is a multimedia career exploration tool which provides a personalized list of occupations and majors based on responses to questions about interests, abilities, and values. DISCOVER computer time must be scheduled in advance. Personalized information can be saved to a computer disk. (Bring your own 3.5" disk.)

Career Self-help Resources

The Career Counseling & Testing Center contains a variety of books, handouts, and computer programs on career choice and occupational information that students may use at their own pace. The resources are available for use during regular business hours. No appointment is required to use these materials.

Environmental agency admits to toxic mistake

HARLINGEN (AP) — The Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission said it made a mistake after a chemical spill in Brownsville last month by failing to give the Coast Guard updated calculations on what levels of the chemical furfural were safe for fish.

The Coast Guard, operating on TNRCC figures that put the threshold around 7 parts per million, released water from the spill that had furfural levels of 2 to 2.5 parts per million, said Capt. Adan Guerrero, federal on-scene coordinator for the spill.

A TNRCC memo dated two days after the spill determined that .53 parts per million was a safe level for "the most sensitive organism." That memo came from Austin to a regional office in the Rio Grande Valley, but the information was not immediately forwarded to the Coast Guard.

"I can't really tell you that we know exactly what happened and we'll correct it in the future... but there is an acknowledgment that the information should have been passed on," said TNRCC spokesman Patrick Crimmins. "It was just a mistake."

The released water ended up in San Martin Lake in Brownsville, where several million fish died. The Coast Guard is investigating whether the released water killed the fish.

On Jan. 25, a truck from Mexico carrying about 9,000 gallons of furfural, a toxic agricultural waste derivative and

chemical manufacturing raw material, overturned into a Brownsville drainage canal that flows into San Martin Lake. Officials dammed up the ditch at several places.

On Feb. 4, the Coast Guard released the first of three dams holding back the contaminated water. On Feb. 7, the day after water was released from the last dam, dead fish turned up in the lake, and the dam was built back up.

On Feb. 8, the Coast Guard finally heard about the TNRCC memo, Guerrero said.

Around 5 million fish in the lake died, said Smiley Nava, manager for the resource protection division of Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Nava said parks and wildlife officials believe the fish, mostly forage fish like the tiny Gulf menhaden, died from the spill.

Meanwhile, the Coast Guard, TNRCC and Cameron County crews continue clean-up efforts. Samples taken since Friday have shown no detectable levels of furfural in the ditch, San Martin Lake or the cut leading between the lake and the Brownsville Ship Channel, the Coast Guard said.

Cameron County Judge Gilberto Hinojosa said the memo mix-up shows that the federal, state and county agencies needed to work together more closely.

"We know our community," Hinojosa said. "We know how sensitive our marine life is there. We feel we would have been able to provide some positive input."

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— Gilberto Hinojosa
Cameron County Judge

New organizations ask judge to open gunfire test to the public

WACO (AP) — News organizations asked a federal judge Tuesday to open to the public an upcoming field test that is likely to resolve the key outstanding question from the 1993 Branch Davidian siege: whether federal agents fired on the compound in the final fiery moments.

In a motion filed in federal court, lawyers for *The Dallas Morning News* and *The Associated Press* argued that the public's interest in the case trumps any secrecy claims that the government could assert concerning its conduct during the 51-day standoff.

But the request appears unlikely to be granted by U.S. District Judge Walter Smith of Waco, who last week rejected a request by the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* to open the test.

"I am advised that for national security and safety reasons, access will be strictly limited," Smith wrote in a Feb. 8 letter. "Neither the media nor the public will be permitted to attend."

The question of government gunfire is the focus of a Waco reinvestigation by Congressional committees, the special counsel appointed by Attorney General Janet Reno and Branch Davidian survivors suing the government.

Branch Davidian leader David Koresh and some 80 followers died in an inferno at their compound near Waco, ending the standoff with members of the FBI and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. Some died from fire, others from gunshots. The government has said all along that the sect members were responsible for their own deaths.

Smith is presiding over the wrongful death lawsuit, which is due to go to trial in mid-May.

The judge, who ordered the field test, was to meet with lawyers, scientists and special counsel John Danforth on Wednesday in St. Louis to iron out details. The test is expected to take place at Fort Hood early next month.

The government long has insisted that none of its agents fired their weapons. But the Branch Davidian plaintiffs, backed by infrared experts, contend that aerial surveillance footage the FBI filmed captured bursts of light that can be nothing other than gunfire — a claim the government denies.

The airplane and infrared camera used by the FBI to record surveillance footage during the 1993 standoff will be used for the upcoming field test, as will a similarly equipped British Royal Navy helicopter. Weapons like those carried by federal agents and the Davidians during the siege will be fired during the field test. Footage recorded from the two aircraft will then be compared with the 1993 video to determine if the bursts of light represent gunfire.

Issues surrounding the siege and its deadly end continue to be of enormous interest to the public, Dallas attorney Paul Water argued in Tuesday's filing on behalf of *The Dallas Morning News* and the AP. The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and *Waco Tribune-Herald* also planned to press the case for public access.

"Shrouding the test in secrecy serves only to undermine the public's confidence in any such findings or conclusions," the news organizations said in the filing.

"The public's interest in having an independent and objective source for information about the field test far outweighs any reason that might be offered for prohibiting media access."

The media will be no closer to government equipment during the field test than they were during the 1993 siege, the news organizations said.

State sues insurance companies

AUSTIN (AP) — Attorney General John Cornyn sued 16 auto insurance companies Tuesday, claiming they illegally deducted money for repairs from policyholders' disbursements.

Cornyn is seeking refunds for consumers as well as fines. The maximum fine is \$10,000 per violation.

Named in the lawsuits were State Farm, Allstate, Farmers, USAA, Progressive County Mutual, Farm Bureau State and County Mutual, Travelers, Trinity, Nationwide, Old American County Mutual, Home State County Mutual, Sentry, Maryland Casualty, Consumers County Mutual and CNA.

The attorney general's office is still determining how many customers could be affected by the lawsuit or how much the fines could total, state spokeswoman Heather Browne said.

An industry spokesman said insurers are properly charging customers for costs associated with restoring damaged vehicles to the pre-accident condition.

At issue is whether it is legal for companies to keep part of the money awarded to a policyholder for repairs when a damaged vehicle is fixed with newer parts.

The standard Texas auto policy prohibits such deductions, and a recent Texas appeals court opinion says the so-called betterment deductions are illegal, Cornyn said.

"Deduction for betterment or depreciation on policyholders' auto repairs has been an industry custom in Texas, but the personal auto insurance policy does not allow it," Cornyn said. "We would certainly disagree with the attorney general's opinion. It is our responsibility as insurers to repair that vehicle to bring it back to the condition [before] the time of the accident," said Jerry Johns, president of the Southwestern Insurance Information Service in Austin, a trade group that represents several of the companies being sued.

Often restoring the vehicle to its previous condition adds costs, Johns said.

"If we were required to replace an engine in a 1996 vehicle with a 2000 engine that cost is going to be considerably higher," and will drive up insurance rates Johns said.

Cornyn said he applauded recent steps by several companies to stop taking betterment deductions. "However, I intend to make sure that policyholders get the refunds they are entitled to and that all companies play by the same rules," he said.

Career Safari

This workshop will provide you with the tools to track elusive occupational information and capture the right career for you. The focus of this workshop is more comprehensive than Choosing A Major in that skills confidence and work values will be assessed and considered in addition to interests. The focus goes beyond helping you with the immediate task of selecting an appropriate major. The intent of this workshop is to provide you with long-range, life-time career planning skills. **Pre-registration and completion of interest inventory five working days prior to the workshop are required.**

Feb. 14th	Mon.	4:30-6:00 p.m.
Mar. 2nd	Thur.	2:15-3:45 p.m.
Mar. 28th	Tues.	4:00-5:30 p.m.
Apr. 10th	Mon.	4:00-5:30 p.m.
Apr. 19th	Wed.	3:00-4:30 p.m.
Apr. 24th	Mon.	4:00-5:30 p.m.

Choosing a Major

This workshop will cover the factors to consider and steps involved in making a career decision. Your interests will be matched with appropriate academic majors and occupations. **Pre-registration and completion of interest inventory five working days prior to the workshop are required.**

Mar. 7th	Tues.	3:45-4:45 p.m.
Mar. 29th	Wed.	4:00-5:00 p.m.
Apr. 4th	Tues.	4:00-5:00 p.m.
Apr. 14th	Fri.	3:00-4:00 p.m.
Apr. 25th	Tues.	2:30-3:30 p.m.

Do What You Are

This workshop is based on the best-selling book and teaches participants how to incorporate their unique personalities in career planning. Profiles will be provided that include a brief personality description, strengths and weaknesses, criteria for a satisfying career choice, careers to consider, and recommendations for the job search. **Pre-registration and completion of personality measure five working days prior to the workshop are required.**

Feb. 24th	Thur.	2:30-3:30 p.m.
Mar. 6th	Mon.	4:00-5:00 p.m.
Mar. 24th	Fri.	3:00-4:00 p.m.
Apr. 3rd	Mon.	4:15-5:15 p.m.
Apr. 18th	Tues.	3:45-4:45 p.m.

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