

Blinn To Offer Accelerated Semester

Blinn College expanded its school year by adding a winter minimester that will provide students the possibility to accelerate their education while still taking a holiday break.

The winter minimester will run Dec. 19-22 and Jan. 2-11 with classes on the Brenham and Bryan campuses.

Registration began on Nov. 16 online and by phone.

"The minimester is an excellent opportunity for the serious student to complete one course in a short amount of time affording them flexibility in managing their time in college," Blinn enrollment

management director Dr. Michel Zuch said.

Each highly concentrated class will be held 8-11:45 a.m.

The course offerings include government, history, math, philosophy, speech and other core curriculum and elective courses.

A complete list of classes is found at www.blinn.edu.

New students must apply to Blinn College by submitting an application, transcripts, and test scores or documentation of test exemption.

Students are also required to be advised unless they have passed all sections of the THEA

test or are exempt, in which case they may sign a self-advising waiver.

THC Awards Deadline Is December 8

Don't miss the Dec. 8 deadline to nominate your local history or preservation devotee for one of the awards presented by the Texas Historical Commission (THC).

These awards recognize accomplishments and leadership in historic preservation and will be presented at the agency's 2007 historic preservation conference held in Lakeway, April 12-14.

The THC honors individuals and organizations active in salvaging the treasures of Texas' rich history.

The Anice B. Read Award of Excellence in Community Heritage Development recognizes outstanding work in downtown revitalization, preservation planning and heritage tourism.

Other awards include the Award of Excellence in Historic Architecture, the George Christian Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award and the Award of Excellence in Media Achievement.

The Curtis D. Tunnell Lifetime Achievement Award in Archeology recognizes an individual for outstanding lifetime accomplishments in archeological research and/or preservation, including both professional and avocational archeologists.

The most prestigious award presented by the THC is the Governor's Award for Historic Preservation, which recognizes an individual's or organization's highest achievement in preserving Texas' heritage.

The Governor's Award is presented separately from the agency's annual conference at a special ceremony arranged with the governor's office.

Act immediately — the deadline for preservation award submissions is Dec. 8 at 5 p.m. For more guidelines contact the THC's History Programs Division at 512/463-5853.

To obtain a complete listing of awards available and a nomination form for submissions visit www.thc.state.tx.us.



WCJC Students Awarded Scholarships

Thanks to the generosity of Sylvan and Betty Miori two Wharton County Junior College speech students were recently awarded scholarships of \$500 each following a *Speak Out!* presentation. Eight students who took classes under the direction of Dr. Mary Austin Newman recently participated in *Speak Out!* They presented speeches on either careers or transfer universities. A panel of judges selected two speakers to receive the Miori scholarships. Scholarship recipients are Alesia Dorsey, left, of Wharton and Rachel Perry of Richmond.

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Playing it Safe this Holiday Season

Each year, more than 3 billion toys and games are sold in the United States, and more than half of those are sold during the holiday season alone.

Although the majority of toys are safe, they can become dangerous if misused or if they fall into the hands of children who are too young to play with them says Sally Garrett, County Extension Agent-FCS.

Safe Kids Worldwide states that it is important for parents to follow the age and safety recommendations on the labels of each toy.

The Child Safety Protection Act, a federal toy labeling law, requires manufacturers to place warning labels on toys that pose a choking hazard to young children. The following are tips from Safe Kids Worldwide:

Choose toys suitable to your child's age, abilities and skill level. Toys that are not appropriate for your child's age group may pose safety hazards.

Avoid toys with small removable parts, which could pose a choking hazard to children under age 3.

To be sure, use a small parts tester (available at a toy or baby specialty store) or the tube from a roll of toilet paper. If the piece fits

entirely inside the tube, then it is considered a choking hazard.

Look for high-quality design and construction. Make sure eyes, noses and other possible small parts are tightly secured.

Avoid sharp points or edges on toys for kids under the age of 8.

Avoid electrical toys with heating elements (batteries, electrical plugs) for children under the age of 8. These toys are a potential burn hazard.

Avoid toys that produce loud noises. Toy guns with high-volume games can permanently impair a child's hearing.

Avoid toys with strings, straps or cords longer than 7 inches, which can wrap around a child's neck and accidentally strangle him or her.

Be sure to read the labels on all toys. Be aware of age and safety recommendations, and use the information as a guide.

Many toy-related injuries occur when parents overestimate their child's ability to handle a toy designed for an older age group. Safe Kids Worldwide recommends the following guidelines for age-appropriate toys:

Infants under age 1: In the first few months of life, children are immobile. In the second six months children become more mobile and are at increased risk for choking.

The most suitable toys for the first year include activity quilts, stuffed animals without button noses or eyes, bath toys, soft dolls, baby swings, cloth books and squeaky toys.

Children ages 1 to 3: Children at this age are curious and have little sense of danger.

They like to climb, jump, throw and tumble. The best toys for this age group are books, blocks, fit-together toys, balls, push and pull toys, pounding toys and shape toys.

Children ages 3 to 5: Children at this age love to run. They begin to test their physical strength and develop skills such as the ability to ride a tricycle, finger control and the ability to build with large blocks and construction materials.

Toys that are most suitable for this age group include approved nontoxic art supplies, books, videos, musical instruments and outdoor toys such as a baseball tee, slide or swing.

Children ages 5 to 9: During the early years of this age group, children become more creative and more physically active.

They can write and play with arts and crafts. They are also able to use simple mechanical toys, such as cars and trains. Recommended toys include craft materi-

als, jump ropes, puppets, books, electric trains (after 8 years) and sports equipment.

Remember, children ages 8 and up can begin to use electrical and battery-operated toys. Don't allow children to change batteries.

Children ages 9 to 14: At this age, children enjoy team sports and games that require increased dexterity, such as pick-up sticks, marbles and jacks.

Strenuous physical activity is also popular for this age group. Children may begin to develop hobbies and a strong interest in scientific activities.

For this group, appropriate gifts include computers, microphones, table and board games, and outdoor and team sports equipment.

Ensure that older children's toys are kept out of reach of younger children, for whom they may present a danger.

Bicycles, in-line skates, scooters and skateboards are also popular gifts for the holidays. If children lack the proper protective gear or skills, injury and death can occur. If considering one of these as a gift consider:

Including a helmet as part of a gift. A helmet is a necessity. Bicycle helmets have been shown to reduce the risk of head injury by as much as 85 percent and the risk of brain injury as much as 88 percent.

The helmet should meet the standards developed by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Buy retroactive clothing, stickers or bike reflectors. Use a light and reflectors on the front, sides and back of the bike to increase the child's visibility to drivers.

Buy a bike horn or a bell as a stocking stuffer. This took is essential for warning motorists and pedestrians of a bicyclist's approach.

Do not forget to buy elbow and knee pads. Make sure to include wrist guards for in-line skates, roller skates and skateboards.

Give a gift of in-line skating lessons from a professional instructor or a community recreation center.

A class can provide invaluable instruction on how to skate properly and proper techniques.

Visit the website of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (www.cpsc.gov) regularly to obtain information on recent toy recalls.

Be sure to return the warranty and product registration forms for new toy purchases to ensure that you will be notified of any recalls.

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