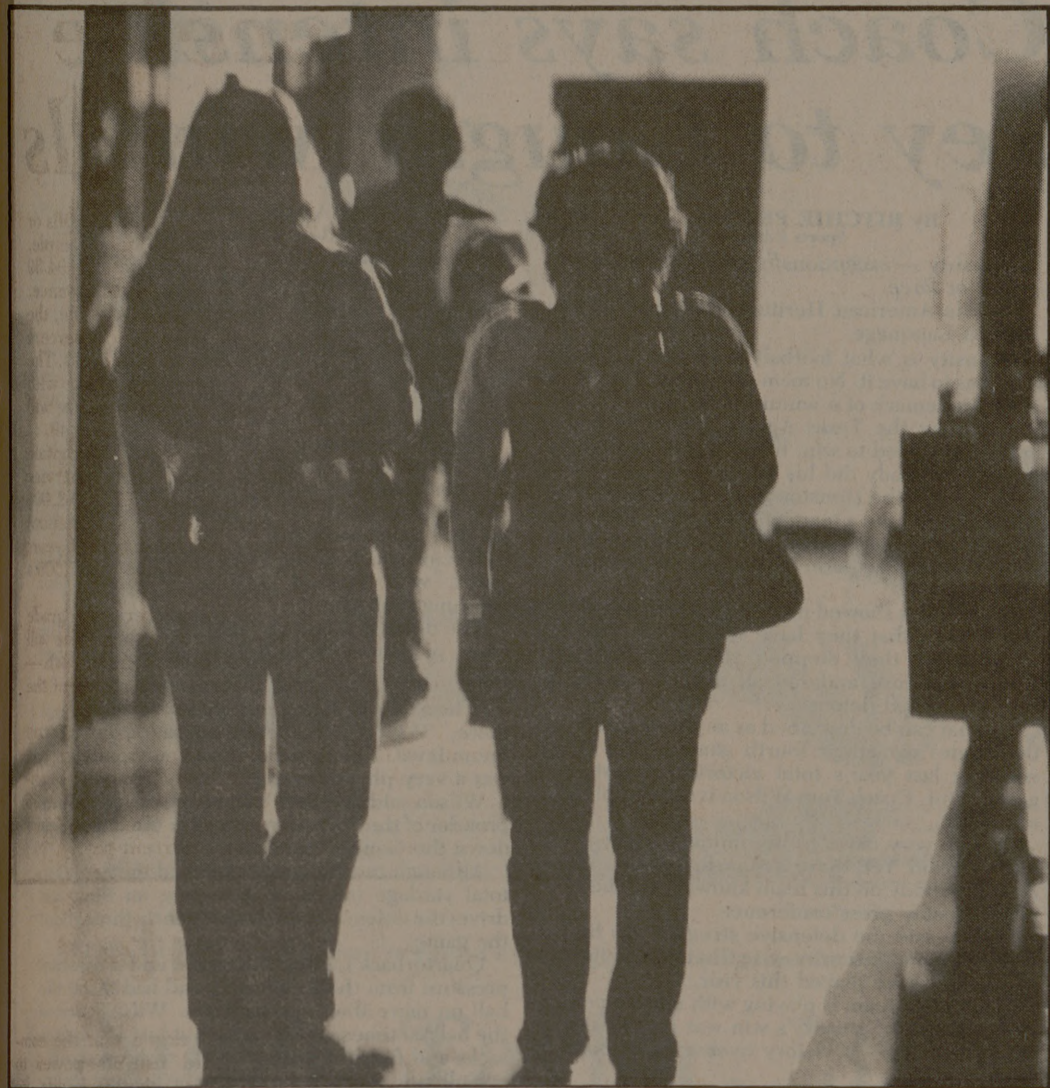


State / National



Where were you?

Staff photo by Becky Swanson

Suzanne Garnsey and Athena Vourvoulais were in the basement of the Reed McDonald building Monday evening when the power went off for a few minutes. Emergency lights at each end of the hall came on to provide light for those on the windowless floor. Garnsey is a senior animal science major; Vourvoulais is a sophomore general studies student.

Housing market gets boost as alternative to rising rents

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Soaring rents are one reason why a high percentage of first time buyers are now active in the housing market. And new market studies show that some rent-paying families are pooling their incomes to buy structures and set up multi-home dwellings.

"First-time buyers represented less than 10 percent of the market in 1970," said Jackson Goss, president of Investors Mortgage Insurance Co. of Boston.

The same types of buyers increased to 21 percent in 1979, hit

19 percent last year and "thus far in 1981 are past the 35 percent mark," Goss said.

Studies now project that the number will increase to 40 percent by the end of the year.

Asked about the upsurge in first-time buyers, Goss said there were three main reasons: a growing shortage of rental units and their soaring prices; a feeling that it is better to buy now than later, and a belief that owning a home is still the best investment.

Studies of first-time buyers by the mortgage insurance co. found that more than half of the purch-

ases were by families or groups with two incomes or more. Ninety-three percent are between the ages of 21 and 35, with one of five being single.

The volume of sales to first-time buyers is largest in the Sun Belt. New England is the only section reporting a decrease in first-time buyers.

"We are already beginning to receive reports of builders using creative designs to appeal to young marrieds and singles," Goss said. "Some are share-a-home concepts; others utilize an apartment design to build a villa-type

house. The two-story, two-home dwelling has evolved into the two-story, four-home residents."

Goss said first-time buyers have told industry executives that they are willing to pay more than the traditional 25 percent of their income in buying a home.

"This shift in household budgeting was demonstrably a necessity during 1981," Goss said. He said high prices and high interest rates caused the shift. "We have bridged this gap by underwriting buyers who were budgeting one-third of their monthly take-home pay to qualify for mortgage loans."

Station wagon is home for family

United Press International
GARLAND — A family of five, living in a 1973 station wagon, said life in Illinois was never as rough.

The Tomas Perez family is unable to rent an apartment and establish an address, which is required for school registration and to receive emergency food stamps.

A station wagon is simply not a legitimate address, officials say, so the three children, ages 9, 11 and 13, cannot attend school. Perez's wife suffers from arthritis and wants to move to Tucson, Ariz.

Perez and his wife, Laurie, arrived from Springfield, Ill., a week ago. Perez is working two jobs as a waiter but has not yet received a paycheck. The family has been living on the tips he has been given.

Mrs. Perez said life in Illinois was never as rough.

even more to think of the kids."

The family intended to drive directly to Tucson, Perez, said, where the warmer climate would ease the pain of rheumatoid arthritis in his wife's knees and back. But the \$250 they counted on for the journey was lost while driving through the mountains of Kentucky asking directions to a freeway, he said.

The family was living in the car — attached to a trailer — on a church parking lot. A nearby fast food restaurant allowed the family to use its bathroom.

A church secretary, however, said Monday the family had left and "we have no idea where the people are." She said the Texas Department of Welfare had been calling the church trying to get information about the family.

Clayton campaigning for water trust fund

United Press International
AUSTIN — Before he leaves the post he has held for an unprecedented four terms, Speaker Bill Clayton hopes to give Texas one last legacy — a way to meet its future water needs.

Clayton has been traveling the state campaigning for voter approval of a constitutional amendment to create a Water Trust Fund. The fund proposal will appear as Amendment 4 on the Nov. 3 ballot.

If the proposal, which was the speaker's pet piece of legislation during the special session earlier this year, is approved by voters, 50 percent of the excess state revenue every biennium would be dedicated for water trust funds. The Legislature would be authorized to dedicate part or all of the remainder of the surplus funds for other purposes.

The proposed constitutional amendment also would authorize state credit guarantees for the repayment of locally issued water or flood control bonds.

Water for Texas, headed by Austin Mayor Carole McClellan, has collected about \$500,000 to campaign on behalf of the proposal.

Meanwhile, Clayton has been traveling the state urging voters to approve the constitutional amendment.

"I'm called to make a lot of speeches," he said. "I'm not particularly asked to speak on this issue, but I direct my speeches to the water trust fund."

Polls indicate the proposal is pretty well accepted statewide. I hope people realize the importance of it. Of course, it's not a water plan like some people think. It's a water trust fund."

Clayton, a Panhandle farmer, disagrees with opponents of the proposal who contend a Water Trust Fund would only help West

Texas, which is experiencing water shortage problems.

"A couple of years of drought and I guarantee you Houston would be in a box," the speaker said. "They've already had to go to water rationing in Houston during the past when there was a shortage of rain."

Opponents do not question the need for a comprehensive water program in Texas, but contend that backers of the Clayton's Water Trust Fund have overestimated the amount of water the state will need. They say the chief constraint on the state's water supply is not a lack of money to support water bonds, but rainfall.

The opponents also argue that the Water Trust Fund is a hastily developed program and other

alternatives have not been explored.

They contend that the Texas Water Development Board, which would administer the Water Trust Fund if voters approve it, has demonstrated a strong bias toward growth and reservoir development and not to conservation and more efficient water use.

But Clayton said the Water Trust Fund is prudent and would not be a waste of taxpayers' money.

"If it is not approved, I think water projects would be developed at a higher cost to local governments," the speaker said. "And I think water shortages would be more acute and come much quicker if the plan does not pass."

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