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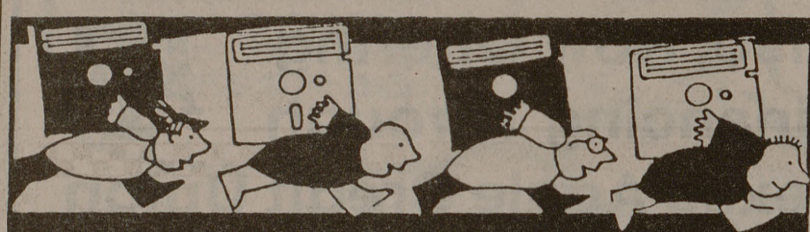
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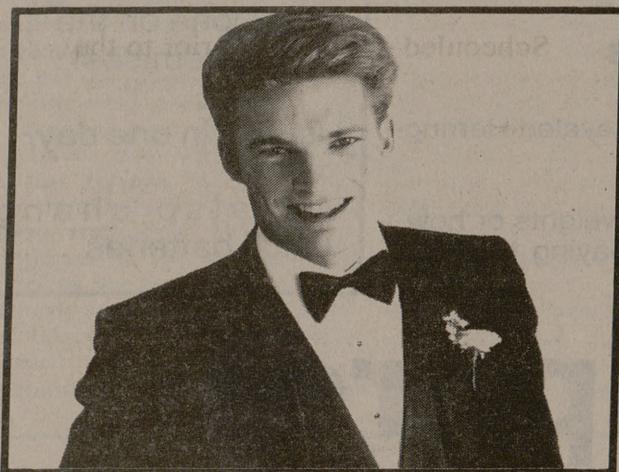
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Next To Post Oak Mall

The Battalion

STATE & LOCAL

Monday, August 28, 1989



Photo by Phelan M. Ebenbach

Keeping their heads above water

Freshmen members of the Naval ROTC First Regiment take part in water lifesaving exercises at the Wofford Cain Pool Wednesday morning during Freshman Orientation Week.

All prospective Navy/Marine Corps members must pass the water lifesaving course before they are recognized as full members of the Corps of Cadets.

Hispanics suffer yet have only 7% of public housing

HOUSTON (AP) — Only 7 percent of the families living in Houston's public housing projects midyear were Hispanic, the largest segment a recent study found from the worst housing conditions in the city.

"We know Hispanics are underrepresented in public housing," Fitzgerald, acting director of housing authority, said.

A University of Houston study found Hispanics in Houston pay most for the least amount of housing and have the greatest need for affordable homes, the Houston Chronicle reported Sunday.

Despite statistics which show Hispanics are the fastest-growing segment of the city's minority community, poor Hispanic families are getting a large percentage of units in the city's public housing projects.

Fitzgerald said one of the reasons so few Hispanics live in the city's housing projects is because there are not that many on the waiting list for a unit.

"Certainly our intent and the commissioners' intent is to open an agency that serves the public, not one segment of the public," Fitzgerald said. "But we must comply with federal regulations which require us to house from the waiting list."

Of the 2,237 families living in the city's 12 projects at midyear, 7.4 percent were Hispanic. The families totaled 1,904 families, 85.1 percent.

The waiting list tells a similar story. Of the 5,019 families now waiting for their chance to move into a project, 84.6 percent are black and 8 percent are Hispanic.

Administrators say they cannot force people to apply, but they have launched marketing efforts that include updated brochures in Spanish for distribution to agencies and groups in the Hispanic community. Notices have been posted in club bulletins with Hispanic congressionals.

In addition, Fitzgerald and other top administrators met with local Hispanic journalists a few months ago to seek ideas for countering the problem.

Felix Fraga, director of the Right House project in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood, said the root problem is the widespread perception of the housing authority as an agency run by blacks primarily for blacks.

Texas Department of Commerce will open new office in Tokyo to promote investment

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas Department of Commerce will open an office in Japan later this year, and officials expect it to have a "substantial long-term business impact" on the economy back home.

Dana Shelton, the department's division manager for business development, says the Tokyo office, scheduled to open Oct. 17, will promote direct Texas investment and trade with Japan.

The office also is expected to generate Japanese interest in the maquiladora program, which allows companies to use Texas as a distribution point for products manufactured in U.S. assembly plants located in Mexico.

Department officials say about 235 Japanese firms are operating in

Texas, 35 of them in manufacturing, according to Shelton.

The director of the state's new Tokyo office will find export markets in Japan for Texas firms and provide information for Texas companies wanting to do business with the Japanese.

Officials also hope the office encourages Japanese tourists to visit Texas.

"This office provides the opportunity for substantial long-term business impact," Shelton said. "But we need to be in Tokyo for about two years to be considered a player."

Department officials say the Japanese tend to do business only with those with which they have established long-term personal relationships.

"They have different business practices," department spokesman Rebecca Allmon. "They believe it's best to deal with an entity face-to-face. That has been most successfully achieved with an office in same city."

Though the department hasn't found a site for the office and has yet to hire its director, officials say the Oct. 17 opening — which coincides with a planned Japan-Texas Conference in Tokyo — won't be delayed.

The department dismissed Bill Luttrell, who opened an interim Texas office in Tokyo using funds from Texas businesses, in December. Department officials offered no direct criticism of Luttrell's performance.

"We just felt it was necessary to make a change because we felt the marketing direction had changed," he said.

Shelton said the new director would be someone with "outstanding knowledge of Texas, outstanding marketing skills and outstanding communication skills."

"The key to our success will be dissemination of information," Shelton said.

Shelton spent part of July visiting Tokyo for an office location that is affordable and located near a central business district. He said the office needs to be near a landmark because Tokyo is "a very confusing city."

Forty other states have offices in Tokyo, and some have been established there for 20 years.

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