

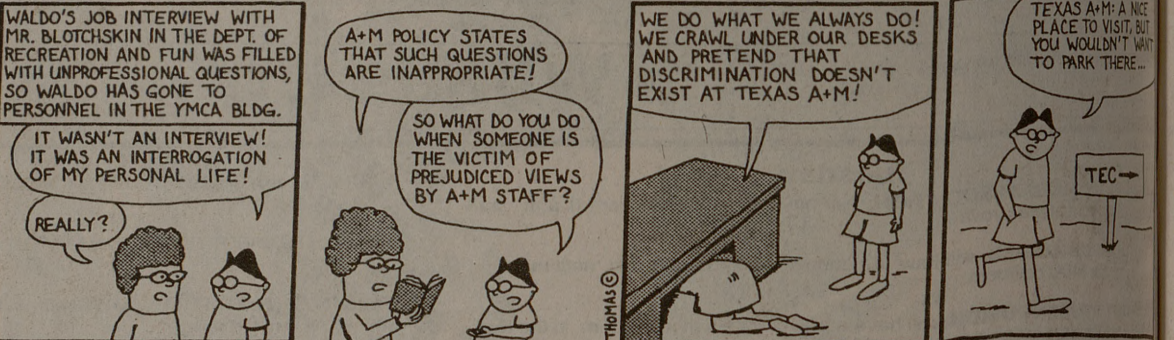
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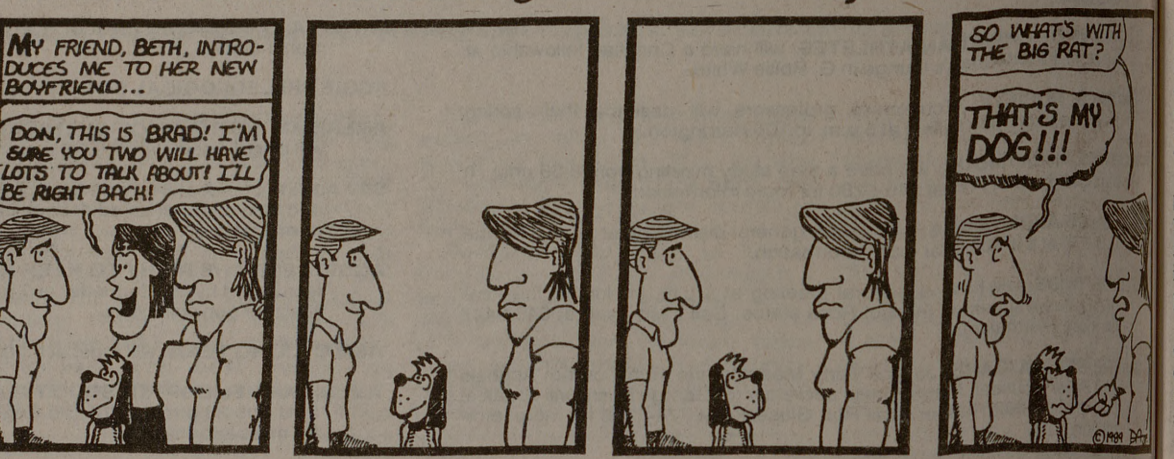
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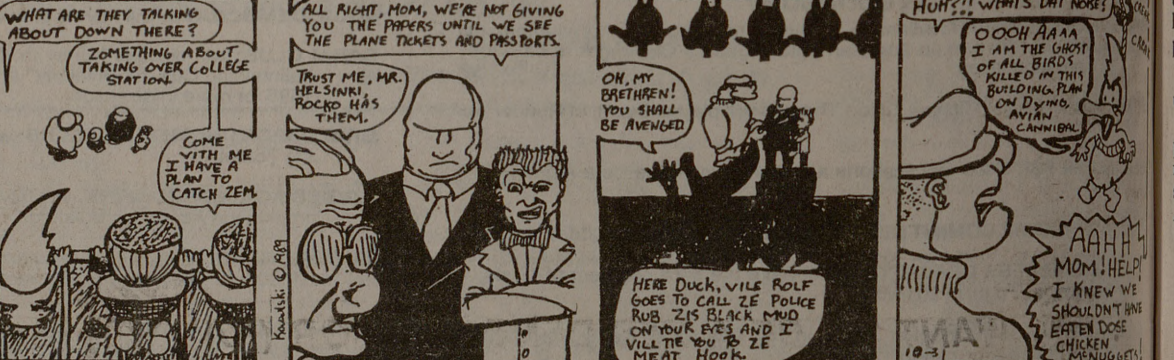
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Analysts say Austin leads race for site of U.S. Memories plant

AUSTIN (AP) — Several industry analysts say Austin looks like the city to beat in the battle for U.S. Memories Inc., the new consortium to boost American production of computer memory chips.

Austin and three other cities — Phoenix, Colorado Springs, Colo., and Middletown, N.Y. — last week were named to the "short list" of candidates in national competition for U.S. Memories' \$500 million headquarters.

Corporate relocation specialists, economic development experts and officials from the four cities in the running said Austin has taken an early lead in the race, according to the *Austin American-Statesman*.

They credit the city's strong local incentive package and close ties with the U.S. Memories official who will make the final decision.

"My money's on Austin," said Mike Feibus, a semiconductor analyst with In-Stat Inc., an Arizona high-tech market research firm. "It's Austin's to lose."

Fifty-seven communities in 15 states bid for the project, all lured by the promise of 3,000 new jobs, a \$500 million computer chip manufacturing plant and a shot at joining the list of America's high-tech elite.

U.S. Memories President Sandy Kane, the man who will decide where the project will go, led the team that chose Austin as the home of Sematech, the semiconductor research consortium that located in Austin last year.

While there are differences between the two projects — Sematech is a non-profit research venture and U.S. Memories hopes to make money — Kane's site searches have been similar, emphasizing financial incentives, tax breaks and a fast-track development schedule.

Local officials also say Austin's high-tech community has matured to the point where it is ready for U.S. Memories. They cite an adequate pool of workers, a growing number of semiconductor industry suppliers and a political community finally willing to work with the industry.

But leaders in the bid for U.S. Memories are cautious.

"The biggest mistake we can make is to underestimate the competition," Angelos Angelou, chief economist for the Chamber of Commerce, said.

Program paying students to learn may violate rules

FORT WORTH (AP) — Some Fort Worth students who are being paid to improve their basic reading and math skills may be participating in a city program that is violating federal regulations.

About 50 teen-agers are receiving \$2 an hour from a pool of federal job-training funds to take after-school remedial classes.

The money is being taken from \$425,000 in federal money available this school year.

But the Texas Department of Commerce said that program is one of three it mistakenly approved in Fort Worth this spring — although Congress barred cities from doing out such wages seven years ago.

"We didn't give them the proper guidelines," said Enrique Barrera, an associate director for training in the Commerce Department's work force development division.

Because other cities may be operating similar programs, the Commerce Department plans to review all Texas youth programs.

"We're going to have to look at all the plans and see how many have problems," Barrera said. "We see this as a problem that needs to be addressed."

"Right now, it looks like this will lead to a change in our planning guidelines and the review process."

City officials say they didn't know they were doing anything wrong.

The city's Department of Employment and Training has been paying students for this type of study for years, city officials said.

Three new programs which pay students, mainly dropouts, to improve their academic performance and study for the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills, began this year.

The students in these programs receive paychecks from the city in exchange for performing drills in workbooks and on computers.

But federal regulations state that money should be used only on a limited, individual basis when it's necessary to help a youth participate.

Anna Hall, the U.S. Labor Department official who oversees youth programs in Texas and four other states, said Fort Worth's payment policy had gone undetected until the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* brought it to her attention.

Federal officials say the policy will be changed and payment of hourly wages will be stopped. Federal regulations state that students qualify for training and study programs if they meet poverty guidelines. A family of four that earns less than \$12,670 is considered eligible.

Richard Sapp, director of the city's employment and training department, said he believed participants should be compensated in the programs.

Cadet found shot in head at rifle range

HARLINGEN (AP) — A student at the Marine Military Academy was in critical condition Monday after being found alone at an indoor rifle range with a bullet wound in his head, officials said.

Sean McKenna, 17, a senior at the military school, had shown up early for shooting practice about 4:30 p.m. Monday, said retired U.S. Marine Corps Col. Karl Miller, one of the academy's administrators.

"One of the other cadets came in and found him face down in a pool of blood," Miller said. "He had a gunshot wound to the head, to the face."

The wound apparently was from a .22-caliber rifle, the type used by the rifle team and the type of gun McKenna had checked out at the range shortly before the shooting.

Harlingen police would not immediately provide information on their investigation into the incident.

Miller said cadets at the school that incorporates U.S. Marine Corps-style training and is administered by former Marines, are not supposed to load their weapons until the instructor approves loading.

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