



PHOTOGRAPH: Shannon Castle

**Don't 'drop' it**

Ashley Madden, Amy Moore, Lacey May and Krisitin Loveless build a gumdrop-and-toothpick structure Thursday at the Society of Women Engineers Camp.

**MTV prepares Austin-based show**

BY DIANE HOLLOWAY  
AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN

AUSTIN — They have already conquered the Austin comedy club scene, and this fall they hope to become players in the national sitcom scene. As the principal writers and stars of *Austin Stories*, MTV's first scripted situation comedy, three local standups are wrapping up three months of writing in Los Angeles and preparing to return to Austin to film 13 episodes of their brand-new series. "It's just now starting to hit us," Laura House said after MTV programming executives announced the show to the Television Critics Association and introduced the cast. "This kind of makes it seem real." House, who taught at Bailey Middle School while writing and performing comedy, is teamed with Brad "Chip the Wonder Boy" Pope and Howard Kremer in an offbeat series in which they

play characters loosely based on their own lives — three twentysomething friends living and working in Austin. It's sort of an MTV-style cross between *Seinfeld* and *Friends*. Laura is described as an ambitious journalist who works at a fictional newspaper called the *Austin Weekly*. House says the paper is not supposed to be the *Chronicle*. Chip stumbles through odd jobs, while Howard is a would-be lothario. Kremer says is a "renegade capitalist" who somehow thrives without benefit of a job or permanent residence. The show has been percolating for a couple of years, starting with a visit to Austin by MTV talent scouts who saw the three performers separately and decided to put them together. House, Kremer and Pope all knew each other but had never worked together. The transition from solo standups to rulers of their own small sitcom domain has been an adventure.

"Our growing pains have come from doing this for the first time," said Kremer, the only non-Texan of the trio. He started out as a rock musician in his native New Jersey. "We've had to work with a lot of other writers and get used to the collaboration." Although the characters and many of the stories come from the actor-writers' lives, they point out that they are not really playing themselves. Nor are they duplicating their stand-up personas known to many Austinites. "If the three of us were playing our stand-up characters, that would be really annoying," Pope said. The series, which debuts Sept. 10 at 9:30 p.m., begins filming Monday. Besides shooting at locations around Austin, the production will film on sets at a studio that used to be the HQ Fitness Center on East Riverside Drive. Unlike traditional sitcoms, "Austin Stories" will have no laughtrack or studio audience.

**Home for poor destroyed despite wishes of donor**

*Group promised house would shelter elderly woman*

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A nonprofit group that wants to build housing for the homeless on Kelly Air Force Base promised an elderly woman that her home would become a sanctuary for the elderly poor if she signed it over to the group, the San Antonio Express-News reported Sunday. Instead, the house was demolished and Senior Resource's founder and president Patrick LaCombe sold the lot two years ago for \$64,000 in cash, records show. It's not clear how the money was spent, the newspaper reported in its copyright story. LaCombe had not released the nonprofit's tax returns for review.

It was LaCombe's volunteer work in homeless homes that brought him in contact with the woman who eventually signed over her home to him in November 1992, the newspaper said. The woman was a regular patient at the clinic office where Blanca Guajardo was a nurse. She struck her. Guajardo said the woman needed help with care of her bills while in the hospital. When she was transferred to a nursing home, LaCombe befriended the woman, taking her to his home for dinner and on family outings.

He told the Express-News that his plan to turn the woman's Alamo Heights home into a shelter didn't work out. "It was in such poor condition, structurally and otherwise, it wasn't cost-effective to renovate," LaCombe said, adding that an architect and Alamo Heights city engineers advised against restoring the structure. The newspaper also reported that Senior Resources promised to ensure the woman's funeral as part of the deal involving her home. The newspaper did not reveal the identity of the 91-year-old woman but said she lives in a nursing home and is barely able to respond. The Express-News said it could not reach her legal guardian.

**"It was in such poor condition, structurally and otherwise, it wasn't cost effective to renovate."**

**Patrick LaCombe**  
President of Senior Resource, a nonprofit group that wants low-cost housing built at Kelly AFB

LaCombe would not say if he promised the funeral arrangement, citing confidentiality rules concerning clients and donors. LaCombe and Senior Resources have made headlines recently because the group wants free land and buildings on Kelly to use as a site for a modular house building and a job training facility to benefit the homeless poor. The small nonprofit group, which LaCombe described as a charity, has spent the last eight years mostly buying and selling real estate acquired from government agencies at bargain prices, the newspaper said. It operated in obscurity until last month when a Washington federal court blocked the \$108 million transfer of Kelly AFB to the city. U.S. District Judge Harold Greene temporarily blocked the transfer on June 26 after LaCombe contended the Greater Kelly Development Corp. board violated the federal base closure law when it sidelined his proposed plan to train homeless workers and build low-cost housing on the base. Greene set Monday as the deadline for GKDC officials and LaCombe to reach an agreement, threatening to impose a settlement if one is not reached.

"She signed the house over to him," Guajardo said, adding LaCombe promised the woman would get the kind of funeral and burial she wanted. LaCombe also promised the woman that restoring her property, he'd help her leave the nursing home and return to live at her former home, Guajardo said. The Express-News reported that it found examples that LaCombe's efforts have benefited the elderly or homeless. "I have never seen a charity in America do this kind of vicious attack," said LaCombe in reports of his court fight with GKDC officials. LaCombe said he created Senior Resources in 1989 to help the elderly poor, planning to use status as a nonprofit organization to acquire property taken over by the federal Resolution Trust Corporation in the wake of the savings and loan industry collapse. Senior Resources bought dozens of properties at little or no cost, selling many for much higher prices. LaCombe also acquired property for himself from the RTC, the newspaper said.

**GOP**

Continued from Page 1

DeLay has refused to talk about the back-room intrigue. On Sunday, his spokesman John Feehery said, "Mr. DeLay has consistently been one of the speaker's more ardent defenders, and he continues to support the speaker fully. He was simply trying to act as an honest broker." So far the only casualty has been Paxon, R-N.Y. He resigned his leadership post after admitting mistakes in his handling of the episode. Speaking on NBC's "Meet the Press," Paxon strongly denied any role in an attempt to overthrow Gingrich. His error, he said, was that "I didn't inform the speaker of the problem early enough. I certainly didn't anticipate when it blew up that it would have the impact that it did on our agenda and our conference." "Certainly when I looked in the speaker's eye it was clear that he had lost confidence in me," Paxon said. Paxon, a conservative who gets along well with GOP moderates from the northeast, "is one of the most incredibly honorable men that I've been fortunate to know," Salmon said. "If Newt Gingrich is not speaker, I think Bill Paxon would make an excellent speaker." Scarborough agreed that Paxon would be "a natural choice to succeed the speaker whenever the speaker decides to move on." Paxon's name surfaced as the leading candidate to

succeed Gingrich to the office third in line to the presidency if the speaker were driven out, but he said Sunday he is not interested in the job. "No. Period," he said. "I never have been interested and don't intend to be." Paxon twice dodged questions about whether Majority Leader Dick Armey, R-Texas, was involved in the plot. "I'm not going to rehash the events of the last two weeks," Paxon said. Armey has denied any role in the anti-Gingrich talks. Paxon stressed that the party must now lay aside this "party intrigue" and concentrate on getting the best deal with the White House in the balanced-budget and tax-cut negotiations. Rep. Peter King, R-N.Y., who led an attempt to unseat Gingrich last winter when the speaker faced ethics problems, agreed that Republicans must stick together, at least through the budget talks. "I think we're just really becoming the gang that can't shoot straight," he said on "Fox News Sunday." Also on Fox, Rep. Jim Nussle, R-Iowa, said a possibility still exists that House Republicans could hold a vote of confidence for other GOP leaders — Armey, DeLay and Rep. John Boehner, R-Ohio. "It's possible that a group of members may want to call them to be personally responsible, as Bill Paxon was," Nussle said. Democrats have so far been content to stand on the side and enjoy the Republican slugfest. But White House budget director Franklin Raines, on ABC, expressed concern the infighting could spill over into the budget talks.

**WEATHER OUTLOOK**

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly Cloudy High: 95° Low: 75°	Thunderstorms High: 95° Low: 75°	Partly Cloudy High: 102° Low: 75°

**Sketch**

**By Quatro**



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