



The Galveston Daily News

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MONDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 17, 1986

Texas' Oldest Newspaper

25

The Galveston Daily News 11-A

'Peace swimmers' visit isle on world campaign

By ARLENE BATTISTA
News Staff Writer

GALVESTON — A trio of United Nations staff members swam in the 58 degree waters of the Gulf of Mexico off Galveston Island Sunday as part of their "peace swim" tour of the world.

Achiratha Keefe, 38, Sunil Davidson, 38, and Shradha Howard, 32, arrived in Galveston Sunday afternoon, fresh from a one-mile swim earlier that day in Mobile, Ala.'s 52-degree water. Howard swam in the chilly Gulf water for an hour, covering two and one-half miles. The other two adhered to their one-mile plan.

Peace Swims were started as a way to promote public awareness that the UN has declared 1986 as the International Year of Peace, Howard said. They began on Jan. 1 in Hiroshima, Japan, while the

UN staff members were participating in a Peace Concert Tour.

"It seemed like a perfect place to start swimming to draw attention to world peace," Davidson recalled. Hundreds of people watched as they swam 1.25 miles around Hiroshima's sacred Itsukushima Shrine on Miyajima Island, the site where the Americans dropped an atomic bomb to end World War II.

The overwhelming reception was encouraging, so they went to Nagasaki, another bombed Japanese city. When small children entered the water carrying signs for peace, they decided to continue.

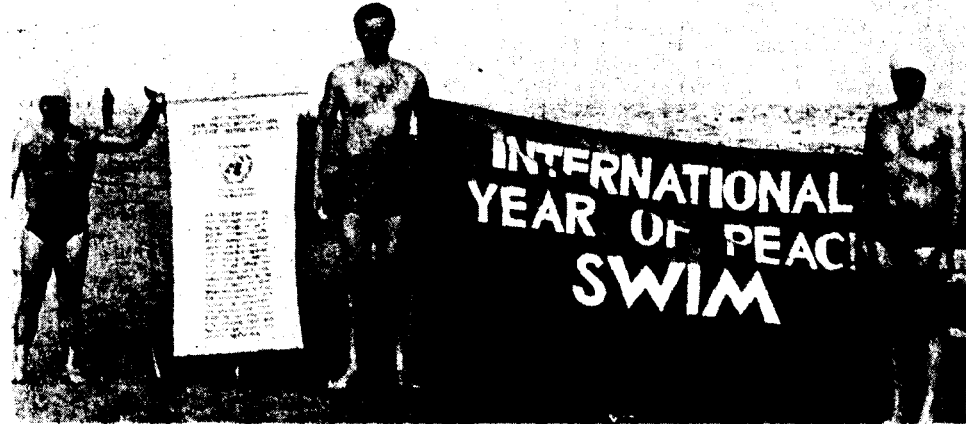
American swims have taken them to Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and now Texas. Future weekend peace

swims will take them to Bermuda, Puerto Rico, Panama and the Virgin Islands.

Swimming is a great love of all three, and was easily selected as their way to help spread the word for world peace, Davidson said. He and Howard are training to swim the 21-mile English Channel in September; Keefe is planning to swim the channel for a second time. Last year's swim took him 14 hours, 53 minutes.

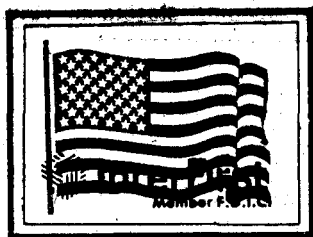
Before entering into the Gulf water, the swimmers paused to meditate, praying for world peace and readying their minds and bodies for the upcoming chilly water.

Keefe and Davidson are UNCTF staff members at the UN; Howard is a color lab technician at the UN secretariat. Their traveling partner is Dhruva Hoin.



Staff photo by Arlene Battista

Howard, Keefe and Davidson ready to swim



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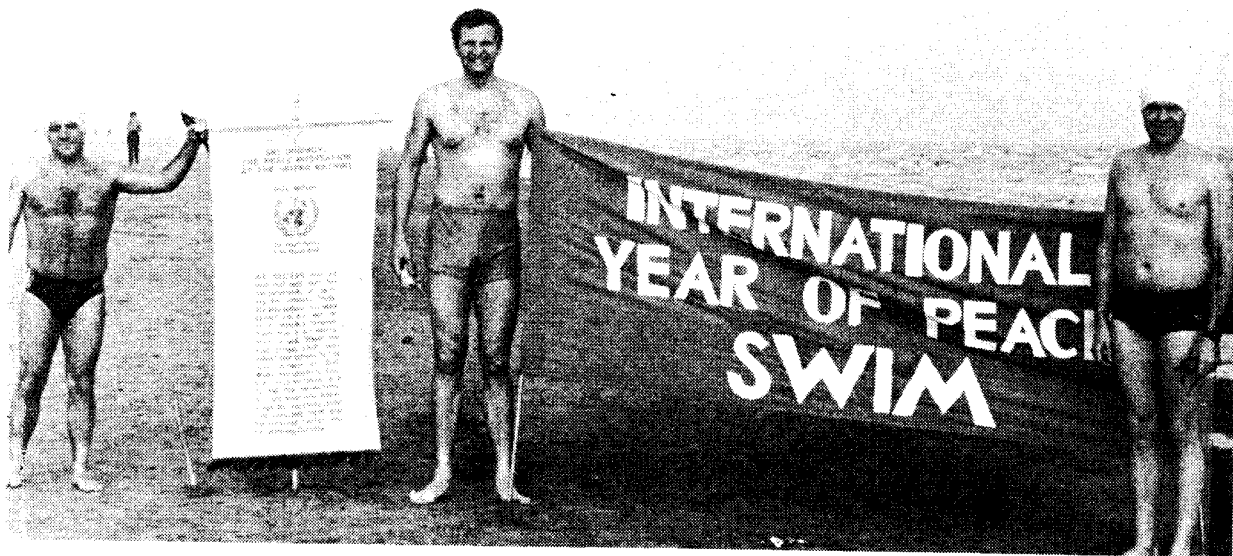
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