

State / National



Staff photo by Daniel Sanders

A little higher please

Stacy Dumas, top, a freshman accounting major from Round Rock, and Katrina Davis, a freshman pre-med major from Round Rock, try to get some mistletoe from the top of a tree in front of the Academic Building.

Residents alarmed at fireball

Meteor crosses four states

United Press International
SHREVEPORT, La. — A huge fireball streaked across the sky Wednesday about 6 p.m., sending residents of four states running to their telephones to report a possible meteor or unidentified flying object.

"It looked like a ball of fire with a flare coming out of the tail," a witness in Shreveport said. Another described it as "a huge object with green and yellow lights."

News agencies were flooded with calls from Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma residents reporting the object, which zipped across the sky from east to west.

Dr. J. Allen Hynek, of the Center for UFO Studies in Evanston, Ill., said he had received several calls from people who reported seeing a yellow-white object with

a blue or green tail flying across the sky.

Hynek, an astronomer, who has studied UFO sightings since 1948, said from the descriptions given, the object probably was a fireball — a meteor that flies low and is very bright.

"I would say there's a sizable bet that this is nothing more than a bright fireball," Hynek said. "The color is right, the tail is right, the duration, the fact that it was seen over several states, goes right along with that. At a height of 75 to 100 miles it would, of course, be seen over quite an area."

Assistant Police Chief Larry Masten of Longview agreed.

"It was a meteor that came out of the northeast and lasted about five seconds after it hit the atmosphere and disappeared," Masten said. "One of the people (at the Gregg County Airport) saw it. We

have no sound proof but the people here and some of the pilots said it was a meteor."

Masten said there have been several meteor showers during the summer, but none as spectacular as the sighting Wednesday.

The National Weather Service in New Orleans also said the object probably was a meteor. However, nothing was picked up on the NWS radar, officials said.

Hynek said he believed the ob-

ject must be a meteor instead of satellite, because it traveled east to west and satellites are launched to travel west to east.

"Most people do not realize that some meteors can be extremely bright, and they're called fireballs," Hynek said. "The typical meteor is a streak of light across the sky, but occasionally a fair large chunk of material enters the atmosphere and burns up through friction."

Space Center planning layoff

United Press International
HOUSTON — Anticipated budget cuts have forced officials at the Johnson Space Center into planning a 10-man layoff in the planetary and earth sciences division.

The 10 are among about 80 contractor employees at the division, which also employs 150 government workers.

Division Chief Michael Duke said Wednesday he has heard the budget may be cut as much as \$1 billion from the \$5.5 billion anticipated for fiscal year 1982.

The lower funding level is likely to raise a number of very difficult problems, Duke said. Planning anything becomes a difficult problem when everything is so uncertain, he said.

The president's science adviser recently recommended halting all new planetary space missions for

at least the next decade. Duke said two programs have been planned for the 1980s, on which relatively little money has been spent. The Venus Orbiting Imaging Radar program and Galileo, a dual spacecraft mission to Jupiter, would take more than \$100 million.

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Fare gone; judge calls a mistrial

United Press International
COLUMBUS — After five days of testimony, a \$200,000 civil suit was declared a mistrial because a juror who said she didn't have 60 cents for bus fare missed a court session.

Franklin County Common Pleas Court Judge G.W. Fais declared the mistrial Monday after waiting 90 minutes for Debra Shuman. The jury was hearing evidence in a loan default suit by Huntington National Bank against Ewing Lumber Co. of Pickerington.

Shuman appeared at the Hall of Justice Tuesday and told Fais she was absent Monday because she did not have 60 cents for bus fare.

Shuman said she spent her last 60 cents on telephone calls trying to reach court officials to tell them she would be late.

"I'm a very broke person," Shuman, 18, told the judge.

She said she went to the courthouse Tuesday to pick up her \$37.50 check for the previous week's five days of testimony.

Shuman told Fais that she planned to cash the check so she would have enough money to serve the remainder of her two weeks of jury duty.

However, Fais excused her from jury duty and she was allowed to keep the check.

A bank attorney had asked Fais to send a deputy sheriff to get Shuman but the judge declined saying he could not wait any longer. Fais said he had to declare a mistrial because the defense attorney would not agree to proceeding with seven jurors.

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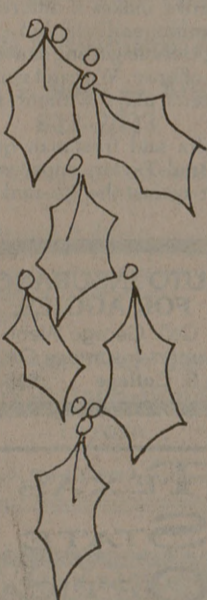
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