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THE BATTALION

Wednesday, December 8, 1993

Williamson County approves package for Apple

The Associated Press

GEORGETOWN — Williamson County officials Tuesday approved a financial package to lure Apple Computer. The vote came one week after they gained national attention for rejecting the computer giant because of its pro-gay benefits policy.

Apple said it would accept the new incentive plan. Political and business leaders and gay rights advocates hailed the commission's change of policy.

"Jobs prevailed over prejudice," said David Smith of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Apple spokesperson Lisa Byrne said after the commissioners voted, "As far as we can see, the project will move forward."

But others opposed the decision. "Once again, we see an entity of government that has sold out its moral beliefs for economic growth," said Jeff Fisher, state director of the American Family Association.

Last week, county commissioners voted

"Once again, we see an entity of government that has sold out its moral beliefs for economic growth."

—Jeff Fisher, state director of the American family Association

3-2 to reject a tax abatement that Apple had sought for its proposed \$80 million customer support center.

The three commissioners who voted against the abatement cited Apple's policy of providing health benefits to the domestic partners of its gay and lesbian employees.

Dozens of communities urged Apple to relocate to their areas, saying they either supported the company's policy or wouldn't interfere.

But Texas leaders, including Gov. Ann Richards, tried to control the damage and renegotiate with Apple, whose facility was expected to bring 1,700 jobs to the area by the end of the decade.

The negotiations apparently paid off. On Tuesday, the commissioners voted 3-2 for a

modified incentive plan that will reimburse taxes paid by Apple in exchange for giving the county the right of way for roads and other improvements on the Apple site.

Although both plans will affect the tax rolls, Commissioner Mike Heiligenstein, who shepherded the compromise, said the new plan is not a taxpayer-paid subsidy to Apple. "We can track Apple dollars specifically to Apple," he said.

He said the new plan will be worth about the same amount to Apple as the tax abatements would have.

Commissioner David Hays switched his vote. In a prepared statement he read during the commissioners' meeting, Hays said it did not represent a switch in his values.

"Last week I was asked to vote to use

taxpayer dollars to subsidize, and then tacitly endorse a benefits policy with which I disagree. Today's vote does nothing of the kind," he said.

"Apple's relocation to our county means millions of dollars each year that will be used to educate our children, build roads and bridges, and keep our economy strong," Hays added.

Williamson County, which has doubled in size and become more than twice as large as it was 10 years ago, is the most affluent and fastest growing county north of Austin.

The county of about 140,000 people is 75 percent white, relatively affluent and mostly Republican.

An opinion poll taken last week by the Austin American-Statesman found that 60 percent of the county's residents supported the commissioners' decision to reject the Apple tax abatements, while 39 percent approved.

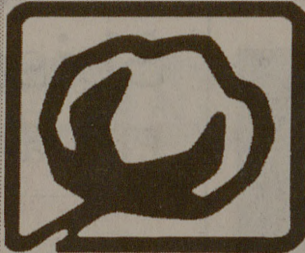
Construction of the Apple facility probably start next year and be completed in 1995.

1994 MOBIL COTTON BOWL

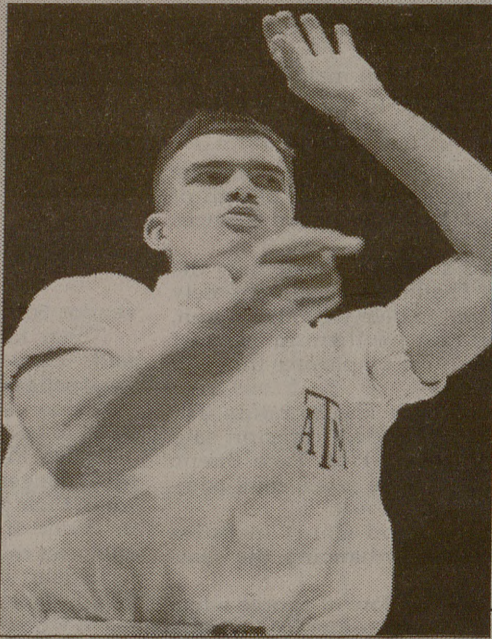
Cotton Bowl tickets still available

Mobil Cotton Bowl tickets are still available through the Texas A&M Athletic Ticket Office. Students with ticket options may purchase their tickets at the ticket windows in front of G. Rollie White, while the general public may purchase tickets inside the lobby of G. Rollie White. The ticket office is also taking orders over the phone with a Visa or MasterCard and Discover.

For ticket orders and information, contact the ticket office at 800-800-7928 or 409-845-2311. The ticket office is open from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. each day. Mobil Cotton Bowl tickets are \$42 each.



Midnight Yell Practice



For those faculty and students planning to travel to Dallas for the Cotton Bowl on Jan. 1, 1994 — Midnight Yell Practice will be held at the Sheraton Park Central, located at the intersection of Interstate 75 and Loop 635.

NASA installs parts to fix Hubble's nearsightedness

The Associated Press

SPACE CENTER, Houston — NASA's high-altitude repair crew installed replacement parts to fix half of the Hubble Space Telescope's nearsightedness Tuesday and then rested before going out to complete the job.

Even as they exulted that "we won the division and we are now in the playoffs," NASA officials cautioned against taking success for granted.

The result of the repairs by the Endeavour's crew should be a telescope that will live nearly up to the original promise of getting crisp images and detailed scientific data from the faintest and oldest bodies in the universe.

But NASA was stung before. The agency suffered its greatest embarrassment not long after the April 1990 launch of the

Hubble when it had to admit that the 94.5 inch-diameter lens had been ground to the wrong specifications, leaving the telescope blurry-eyed.

So officials went to great lengths to measure whether we have total success, or whatever," said the program scientist Edward Weiler. "I do not declare total success."

With ease born of hours of practice, spacewalking astronauts on the shuttle installed a new camera whose mirrors compensate for the flaws created by the telescope's misshapen main mirror.

A second team was set to install a device that intercepts incoming light and corrects it before it hits three other optical instruments.

Jews to celebrate Hanukkah with menorah tree lighting

By James Bernsen

THE BATTALION

As Christians prepare to celebrate Christmas, Jews are preparing to celebrate Hanukkah with friends and family.

Reuben Ehrlich, vice president of the Hillel Jewish student organization, said Christians think Hanukkah is a Jewish Christmas, which is a mistake even though the two holidays share similarities.

"We give gifts at Hanukkah because giving gifts is fun," he said. "But that's not the emphasis of the holiday at all."

Rabbi Peter Tarlow said Hanukkah is one of the smaller Jewish holidays, but it gets more recognition because of the time of year in which it falls.

"It's around Christmas," he said. "It happens to have similarities, and the commercialism makes it seem bigger than it really is."

Hanukkah dates back to 100 B.C., when the Jews rose up against the Assyrians for religious freedom.

A Jewish tribe, the Maccabees, captured Jerusalem and prepared to celebrate by lighting the traditional menorah (candelabra), but there was only enough oil for one day.

The candle was lit anyway and was miraculously lasted for eight days. Jews light candles to celebrate every day for eight days, starting on the 25th of Kislev, the first Jewish month of winter.

The light of the candles symbolizes freedom, both in the general sense, and freedom from the Assyrians.

Hanukkah is celebrated every December to remind Jews of the miracle, but it is overshadowed by Christmas.

Tarlow said the minority status of Jews and other non-Christians makes them uneasy with the prevalence of Christmas symbols and songs during the holidays.

"It is very hard to be a non-Christian during Christmas, but at least this gives something," he said.

Ehrlich said Hanukkah is not a replacement for Christmas.

"For me, it was always a completely separate thing," he said. "Probably Jewish people see it that way."

Hillel will sponsor a menorah lighting for each of the next eight nights, starting Wednesday at 5:30 in the Hillel Center, George Bush Drive.

"It gives us a chance not only to celebrate the holiday but to get a break from studies as well," Ehrlich said.

THE BATTALION

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