

viewpoint

By MARK PATTERSON
Battalion Staff

Ali's still knockin' 'em out

I dry up a drink of water,
I'll a dead tree,
Don't mess with Muhammad Ali.
— "The Greatest" Sept. 25, 1979

I want to publicly thank the members of both the Great Issues Committee and Black Awareness for bringing Muhammad Ali to campus Tuesday. Meeting "The Champ" is the highlight of my short career.

As Ali pointed out to the members of the press he addressed Tuesday afternoon, there is an entire generation of people in this country that has grown up hearing stories of Ali, boxing's only three-time World Champion.

I was seven years old when Ali, fresh from winning the gold medal in the 1964 Olympic Games, defeated Sonny Liston for the heavyweight crown.

For the past 15 years I have followed his career, once reaching the point that I had my brother, then working as a sports announcer on a radio station in Dallas, call me after each round of the first Ali-Joe Frazier fight to read the round-by-round wire reports.

The man had me in his power.

Last week, I murdered a rock, injured a stone,
capitalized a brick,
so mean I make medicine sick.

After being around Ali for 10 minutes, I could see how complex the man really was. I had only seen the show-business Ali, the clown that made brash statements about his prowess and boxing expertise. But when off camera and away from the stage, Ali let his inner person out.

His reason for coming to campus Tuesday was to give a talk on future world peace. He was asked by a member of the local media what his qualifications were to speak on such a subject, being a boxer by profession.

Ali answered frankly and honestly. He is the most recognized personality in the world. Because of that reason, he has been able to meet with the most powerful men on this planet.

Ali had just recently returned from the Soviet Union where he was invited by the heads of that country to come and stage a boxing exhibition. It was the first time a professional athlete had ever performed in the USSR.

After the exhibition, he was invited to visit with Leonid Brezhnev at the Kremlin. Following their public talk, Ali asked, and was granted, that the press leave the room so he and Brezhnev could speak in private.

They did, for 45 minutes, one-on-one. Ali does carry some weight in this world.

The heart is like a net
where fish of love are caught

Those of you who attended his talk on world peace Tuesday night heard the spiritual side of Ali. As he pointed out, he speaks from the heart, using no notes for reference.

The man, who never finished high school, proved he is an orator.

If all you saw was Ali's speech, you missed a lot of the real Ali.

You missed Ali walking through campus talking to anyone who wanted to stop and talk. You missed Ali going over to Kyle Field to see the football team as they worked out.

You missed Aggie head coach Tom Wilson give Ali an A&M hat and watch "The Champ" wear it around Kyle. You missed Ali squaring-off with Aggie basketball player Vernon Smith doing a little play-boxing. And you missed Ali, with the Aggie team gathered around him, verbally sparring with anyone who wanted to challenge him at a game of wits. There were few takers.

I was able to talk to him, listen to his questions and comments and talk to the man who I feel I've known for the past 15 years.

Before he left, he signed two pictures of himself for me. Somebody may be able to take those pictures from me, but for as long as I live, I'll always have the memory of meeting the greatest; Muhammad Ali.

If I tell you that a mosquito can pull a plow,
Don't ask how,
Just hitch him up.

Aggies to take on top Texas teams

By CAROLYN BLOSSER
Battalion Staff

The women's volleyball team will host the Texas A&M Invitational Tournament this weekend at G. Rolie White Coliseum. The Aggies will compete against Lamar University and the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA), two of the top 20 teams in the nation according to A&M coach Dave Schakel.

A&M begins play Friday at 2:30 p.m. against Lamar and faces UTA at 7:30 that evening. Lamar will have a match against UTA at 5 p.m.

On Saturday the Aggies play UTA at noon and Lamar at 3 p.m. UTA faces Lamar at 9:00 in the morning.

Schakel expects an intense tournament with no easy matches.

"Every match will be 3-out-of-5 games and will be against the top teams in the state and two of the better teams in the country," he said.

Last weekend the Aggies tied for first in the University of Houston Tournament. After being shut out 0-15 in the first game of their match against Houston, who is ranked ninth in the nation, the Aggies rallied to win the next two games and the match, 15-9 and 15-10.

A&M also defeated UTA and Texas Lutheran two games to one. In their final match of the one-day tournament, the Aggies faced Lamar after having played five hours straight in three back-to-back matches. Lamar defeated A&M 15-5, 8-15, 16-18, but later lost to Houston, thus making it a three-way tie for first.

Going into the tournament this weekend A&M's season record stands at 8-3. Lamar is 9-3 and UTA 5-6.

Schakel says he has already seen a lot of improvement in his young squad during the three weeks they've been playing. With only three of last year's players returning to the 1979 team along with six new freshmen, it was questionable whether the Aggies could maintain their top ranking of eighth in the nation and continue to be the top team in Texas.

As the season progresses, any doubts that the Aggies won't be able to repeat last year's performance are slowly disappearing.

Schakel singled out his three "veteran" sophomores for sparking last weekend's play.

"Nancy Dunn was the outstanding player for A&M in the tournament," he said. "I felt her spiking was the best in the tournament."

He also cited Kristen Bloom's setting as the best in the tournament. "She's by far the best setter in Texas and one of the top setters in the country," he said.

One of A&M's most dangerous

threats is the spiking of Krista Sodich. "She plays with such intensity and spikes the ball so hard, that many opponents can't protect themselves from being hit by the ball," Schakel said.

The three starting freshmen for A&M are Sue Wetzell, Ann Yardley

and Elizabeth Echternach. "All three have improved a great deal in three weeks and have been a contributing factor to our success at this point," Schakel said. "Suzanne Askew has come off the bench several times to spark victories and has helped in several clutch matches."

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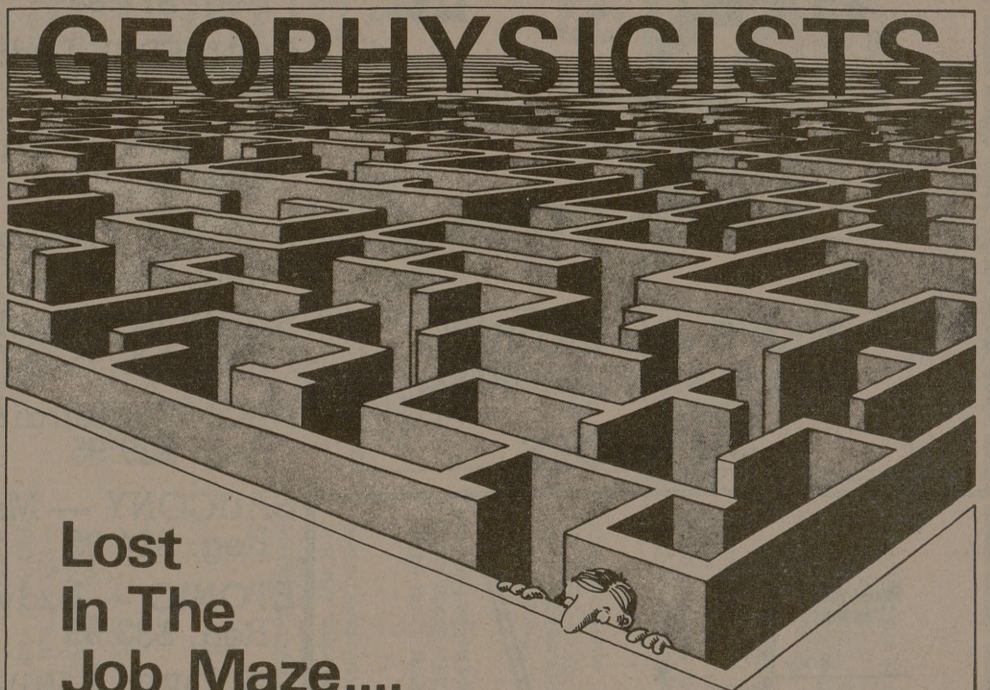


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