

# State and Local

Disabled athletes hope to revive club

## Wheelchair dribblers still 'on a roll'

By Julie Vass  
Reporter

Basketball players Jim Magdalenski and Sam George aren't just on the ball, they're on a roll — in wheelchairs, that is.

George and Magdalenski are the only members of the Association of Handicapped Athletes, an almost extinct club in the College Station area. Magdalenski says the organization began in 1981 with a membership of about 25 people that included non-handicapped as well as handicapped people.

George says membership, which is organized through the A&M Intramural Office, has dropped drastically in the last year.

One reason for the membership drop, George says, is that many handicapped students think they are too disabled to become involved.

"We cannot stress enough that anybody with any kind of disability can join," George says. "We never say or think that someone can not participate."

People in electric wheelchairs who are not able

to use their upper bodies to play sports, can also participate by keeping score, George says.

"There are some handicapped students on campus who could be good wheelchair basketball players, but they are just not interested," he says.

George says that often handicapped people do not realize they have the ability to play a competitive sport.

Magdalenski agreed. "Some people may not know what they can do until they are actually doing it," he says.

George, who was crippled with polio in his childhood, says he has been playing wheelchair basketball for three years and also has competed in several wheelchair marathon races.

He says the association is not only suffering from a lack of membership, but also from a lack of interest.

To address this problem, Magdalenski says the group is trying to establish more contact with students. It also is working with the Bryan-College Station Mayors' Committee for Disabled Persons to try to get people in the community involved in handicapped athletic activities.

Those who have never watched wheelchair basketball, George says, may be surprised to find out how fast-moving it is.

George, who has been knocked out of his wheelchair on more than one occasion, says, "They're wrong if (they) think it is a non-contact sport."

Rene J. Jaime, a non-handicapped A&M student who has played wheelchair basketball with George and Magdalenski, says the reason for the lack of interest could possibly be that people are ignorant about the sport.

Jaime says some people may think it is unfair to the handicapped person to play against a person who is able to walk.

"The rules and the way the game is set up are such that being able-bodied is no advantage," he says. Learning to control the wheelchairs makes the game not only more difficult but more of a challenge, he says.

George says practice is held on Thursdays at 8 p.m. and on Saturday afternoons in DeWare Field House. Wheelchairs are provided for those who do not have their own.

## Teacher enjoys roles in classroom, pulpit

By Fawn Haynes  
Reporter

Several plaques adorn the walls of the neat and ordered basement office in Scoates Hall. Two plaques, one from the state of South Carolina and the other from Missouri, read "Honorary State Farmer." Another reads "International Clergy Appreciation Week."

The office belongs to Dr. Alvin Larke Jr., an assistant professor of agricultural education.

Larke, 39, has two professions — that of a teacher and that of a preacher.

"I guess it (preaching) was a calling early, but it was the accepting of it that took a while," Larke says. He says he has been preaching since 1982.

Larke, who preaches in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, says he thinks that his roles are complementary.

"Preaching is a form of teaching," he says, "and teaching is a form of ministering."

He adds, however, that he is care-

ful not to bring his preaching into the classroom.

One of Larke's classes, Agricultural Education 440, Principles of Technological Change, deals primarily with the introduction and adoption of change in society.

"My class deals with controversial issues," Larke says. "I try hard not to let my values and beliefs flow into the class lectures."

Larke says he restrains any tendency to preach in class by following his lecture notes.

He says he does a lecture each semester on ethics. And when the class discussion is about what is right or wrong, he tends to get caught up in that lecture because he lives the biblical way of life, he says.

"But I have done it (given the lecture on ethics) for so long that I won't tell you that something is wrong," he says. "There are times that you want to say how you feel internally but you can't — because you know your opinion will be biased be-

cause you relate everything to the biblical doctrine."

Larke says he has had very few students write on their teacher evaluations that he preaches too much in class.

Sometimes he has to ask his students if they want the minister's point of view or the professor's point of view, he says. The answers could be different or the same depending on the question, he says.

Larke says he has many students approach him with their problems partly because he is a Mentor, a person students are encouraged to look to for informal guidance and counseling.

He earned his master's in special education from South Carolina State College and his doctorate in agricultural education from the University of Missouri.

Larke, an advisor for Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., says he can see himself as a role model for the group of young men. The fraternity consists of 20 members who share

the same common bond of scholarship and love of all mankind, he says.

He also is an active supporter of the gospel group, Black Awareness Voices of Praise. The gospel group is made up of about 60 A&M students.

Larke also is a member of Faculty Friends, a group of faculty members united by Christian beliefs.

Larke preaches in churches in both Hearne and Calvert, with one service at 9 a.m. and the other at 11 a.m.

He says his type of preaching has resulted in his being labeled a teaching minister, because he incorporates teaching in his preaching.

Larke says he has goals for both his role as a teacher and his role as a minister.

He says he would hate for his church to tell him they need him all the time. He also says he would hate for his dean to say "teach or preach."

"I hope I never have to make a choice between the two," he says.

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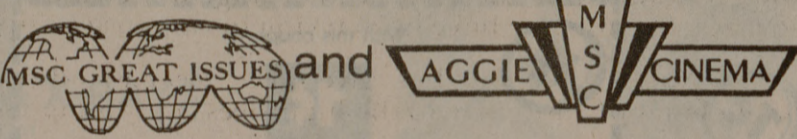


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