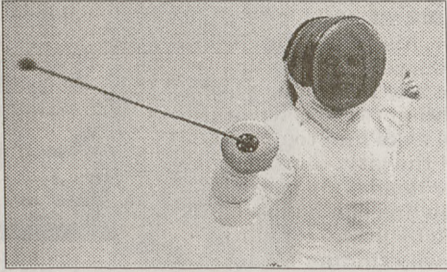


## En garde



### Students take a stab at fencing club and classes

By Amy Protas  
THE BATTALION

It's not every day that students get to practice their favorite sport with an Olympian. The A&M fencing club gets to practice every Tuesday, however, with a member of the Egyptian Olympic team.

Allison Williams, a junior architecture major, said the club was lucky to procure the coaching services of Mauro Hamza.

"Most coaches of Hamza's caliber can't be found in the United States," Williams said. "He's making a name for himself and helping us become a great team."

Many of the club's 20 active members joined after taking fencing classes. Students usually enroll in the class because it is different than traditional kinesiology courses.

Christiana Baker, a junior elementary education major, said she didn't realize how much she was going to enjoy the class.

"The class is so much fun," Baker said. "Every move has to be calculated. It's such a challenge, and you have to know exactly what your opponent is going to do."

Williams said her grade in the class improved after she joined the club.

"There was a list of the top ten reasons to join the club," Williams said. "One of the reasons was to make an A in the class. I went to a meeting, and I never left."

The club practices eight hours a week and competes on the weekends. Members are working toward the national competition at the end of the year.

Steve Mazzucco, a senior computer science

major, said the constant travel has helped the members form friendships.

"We really have a good atmosphere of camaraderie and fellowship," Mazzucco said. "You have to be friends with each other because you hit each other with large metal objects."

Last year, the team won nationals for the first time in A&M history. The biggest surprise was beating the University of Texas, which traditionally has a stronger team.

Mazzucco said beating the Longhorns was a sweet victory.

"Texas came to the tournament expecting to win again," Mazzucco said. "We stole their title, and it was wonderful completely demoralizing them."

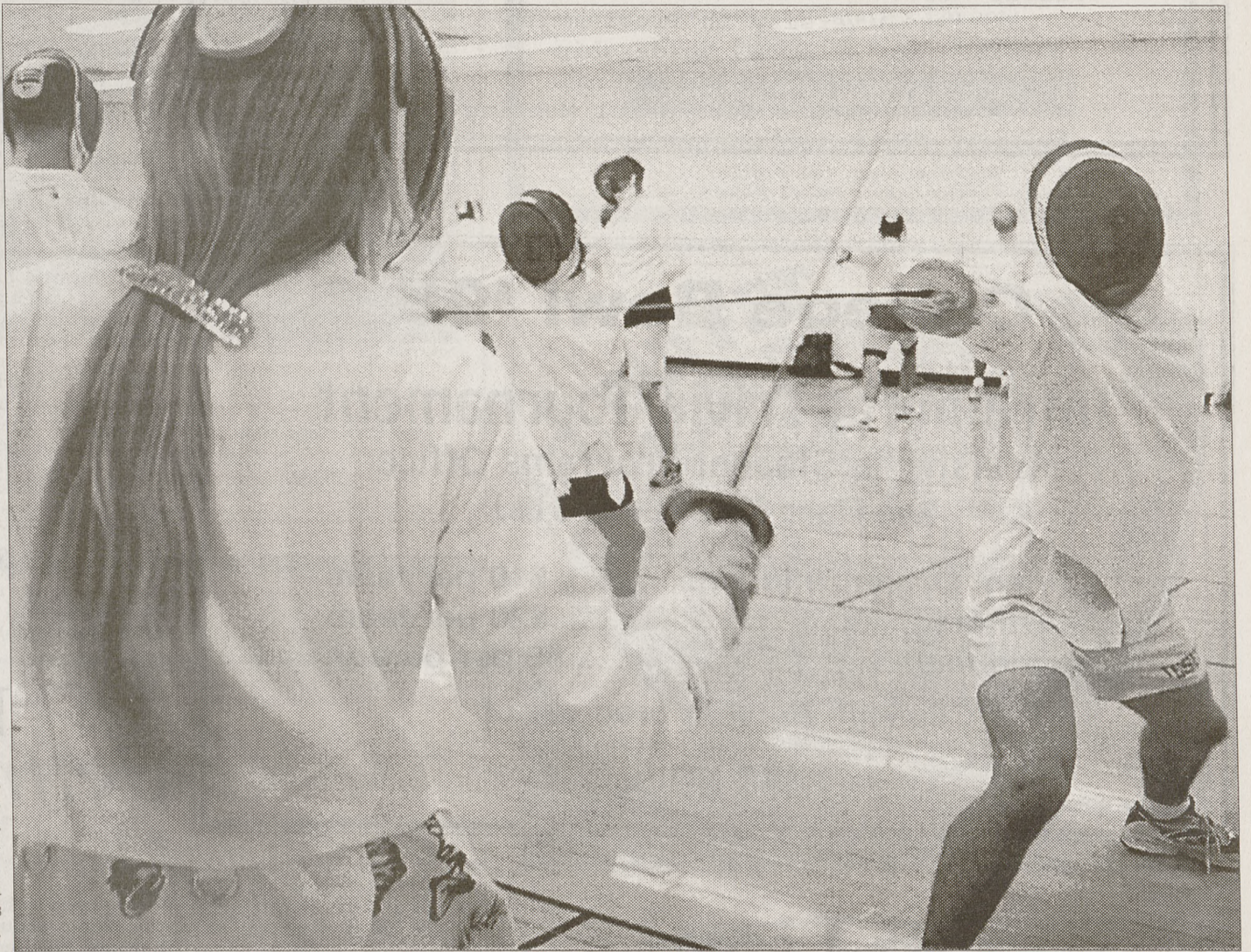
Fencing may be considered a sport, but many fencers say it's thrilling because it's a mind game.

Mickey Stratton, a senior lecturer in health and kinesiology, said in order to be good, fencers must think of it as a game.

"Fencing is a game of the mind," Stratton said. "It's a chess game with weapons. An old man can beat a young man in better shape if he has a better mind."

Shalyn Shourds, a senior microbiology major, said he became interested in fencing because it was a sport he can succeed in.

"I'm more attracted to the uniqueness of fencing," Shourds said. "I'm small, and I have found a



Photos by Robyn Calloway, THE BATTALION  
Omar Rivera, a sophomore environmental design major, lunges at Jennifer Market, a junior physics major, during their fencing class. (Left) Market stands in the 'en garde' position.

sport where you don't have to be big."

Fencing offers many club members an outlet from the stress of school. The team practices Tuesdays and Thursdays for four hours.

Williams said she looks forward to these practices as her weekly tension relievers.

"As an architecture major, I spend most of my time bent over a desk at Langford," Williams said.

"I look forward to being able to blow off steam."

Allyson Breech, a freshman psychology major, said she started fencing in high school and was thrilled A&M had a team. She said people looking for something different should try fencing.

"Fencing is really off the mainstream," Breech said. "A lot of people don't know about it. If you're looking for something unique, you can do this."

### Loeb shows she has staying power with thoughtful *Tails*

By Amy Uptmor  
THE BATTALION

Lisa Loeb gained overnight stardom through the soundtrack to the movie *Reality Bites* with "Stay (I Missed You)," the song that was so instantly captivating, it made people stick around to watch the movie credits as it played.

And despite the apparent problems of "Stay" — such as one of the worst cases of overplay in the history of radio, along with one of the most irritating videos ever seen on MTV — for some reason people couldn't take their eyes off Loeb.

Okay, so maybe it was the glasses. But with her debut album, *Tails*, Loeb shows many more intriguing characteristics than her trademark lenses.

Namely, Loeb's powerful voice and incredible knack for making beautiful melodies combine for a solid debut album.

#### ALBUM REVIEW

**Lisa Loeb & Nine Stories**  
*Tails*  
DGC  
\*\*\* 1/2 (out of five)



Sure, Loeb's lyrics aren't exactly philosophy. The lines of "Stay" (which concludes this album) rarely surpassed six words and were characteristic of the rantings of a woman having a bad PMS day. But Loeb's talent lies in her ability to almost create dialogue with her personal lyrics.

The perfect example is "Lisa Listen," Loeb's self-encouragement song, with a chorus of "Lisa, won't you listen? / The moon shines for you / You're tipsy, you're turning, you are alive, you are burning /

You've always wanted more."

But sometimes, Loeb takes the personal approach to lyrics too far. Aside from the fact that any listener of Loeb will gather that she's bitter, you pretty much have to be Loeb to understand exactly where her songs are coming from.

For example, her first release from *Tails*, "Do You Sleep?" is hard to understand. Those who can easily decipher lyrics such as "You sat on the corner of my bed, and / You smoked with the ghost in the back of my head" must be on the same level as Loeb. The song is catchy, but it just doesn't make a lot of sense.

But every once in a while, lyrics come up that a listener can't help but love.

Take, for example, the first lines of "Sandalwood" — "She can't tell me that all of the love songs have been written / 'cause she's never been in love with you

before." Sure, it's cheesy, but that's what love songs are all about.

Then there's one of the better songs on the album, "Hurricane." Loeb's songwriting outshines her voice, for once, on the single. With lyrics like "I've compassion for strangers, an affinity for danger — won't you be my sacrifice?" and "I'll twist you 'til you break," Loeb proves she can be witty rather than just whiny.

A large share of the credit for this album goes to Nine Stories, Loeb's band. Every song has a wonderful, unique sound regardless of whether Loeb's lyrics work.

But Loeb's talent should not be underestimated. She uses simple tricks in her writing and music, but those tricks work.

Loeb has earned some respect. She's a beautiful singer and songwriter, and if "Stay" wasn't enough to prove that, *Tails* offers 12 more songs that are surpassingly eloquent and thoughtful.



Loeb

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**Don't miss this opportunity to meet with recruiters from these companies:**

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