

Muhammad Ali: a legend in his own time

by Nathaniel Scott

The greatest. Three-time heavy-weight champion of the boxing world, a legend in his own time, came to Portland last week. He came fighting a different fight. He floated like a butterfly and stung like a bee. When it was over, he left as he had come: the greatest.

Muhammad Ali was in town last week. He came in support of the Future Boxing Champs of America which was the "debut card" of boxing promoter Sandy Barr. Ali came as a man on a mission.

He said, "All the things I did as a boxer brought me to where I am today. I am propagating my religion; I am spreading the faith."

Ali took the world by surprize when he announced his conversion to the Islamic faith after taking the heavyweight championship crown from Sonny Liston. And now at the age of 43, he says: "I am a man on a mission of faith."



Ali signs autograph for young fan.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)



MUHAMMAD ALI
(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Ali's press conference at the Lloyd Center Red Lion Inn last Thursday was a mixture of boxing; past and present, and where he, the former three-time heavyweight champion of the world is going.

He said the best scientific boxers he fought were Zoro Folley, Floyd Patterson and Cleveland Williams. He maintained that Jack Johnson was the "greatest fighter" to ever climb into the ring. "He was bad, bad," Ali said.

"Boxing was the vehicle I used to get where I am now. My life is just beginning," Ali said, as he outlined a world he sees as confused.

He said in this age of scientific enlightenment, we live in a world of separation. We live in a confused state of Black and white. Ali attributes this to the fundamentals of teaching, including the practice of religious doctrine.

"All the pictures of Christ are white," Ali said. "Nobody challenges it Why? Why is heaven still all white? Everything is being changed except heaven. 'The Last Supper' is still all white. We live in a white society. We live in a society that's totally brain-washed."

Ali said his mission was spiritual. "The Bible says the truth will set you free. [Yet] my people are still crying the blues," he said.

Ali said he sold his home in California and that he has gotten a motor home. He plans to tour the country, visiting schools, hospitals, jails, prisons and similar places. He intends to go to the people with his message of faith.

Ali said he will return to Portland next spring at which time he hopes to get a chance to do what he enjoys doing: to meet the people.

NAACP meeting Blanket drive for homeless

The regular monthly meeting of the Portland Branch NAACP will be held at the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, 5935 N. Minnesota at Ainsworth at 4:00 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 17. Reverend Felton Howard, the host pastor, has asked the Antioch Choir to provide music.

Mrs. Ora Nunley, emphasizing the Portland Branch's continued interest in the Portland Police Department, has invited Michael Benjamin of Michael Benjamin & Associates. Mr. Benjamin holds the present contract with the Police Department for cross-cultural communication training. As usual, the public is invited.

The annual Blanket Drive for the Homeless for the City's estimated 3,000 homeless men, women and children began on Monday, Nov. 11 and ends on Tuesday, Nov. 26.

Co-sponsored by both KEX 1190 Radio and G.I. Joe's, the "Blanket the Homeless" campaign hopes to have 2,000 new or used blankets donated to help keep the homeless warm during the winter season. Last year's drive netted 700 blankets.

People wishing to donate blankets may deliver the blankets to the lobbies of either the KEX studios, 4949 S.W. Macadam Ave. or at Portland-area G.I. Joe's.

All the donated blankets will be delivered to Baloney Joe's, 313 East Burnside St. on Wednesday, Nov. 27 (Thanksgiving Eve) at 4 p.m.

Blankets will then be distributed to the following agencies and missions serving Portland's homeless citizens: Baloney Joe's, Blanchet House, Burnside Projects, Central City Concern, N.W. Pilot Project, Outside In, Portland Peniel Mission, Portland Rescue Mission, St. Francis Outreach Ministry, Sisters of the Road Cafe, West Women's Hotel/Emergency Shelter and the William Temple House.

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