

SPENCER VS. ALI : THE FIGHT THAT NEVER HAPPENED

By JOY RAMOS

It was 1967. The title of World Heavyweight Champion was up for grabs and Thad Spencer had it within reach. Thad was considered the next Joe Louis of Boxing, the pride of Portland. Our local favorite challenged only the best in "a sport for kings."

By Thad's analysis, "I was hard for anyone to beat. I was aggressive. Sports experts say I have the fastest hands in boxing." Thad Spencer was pitted against an opponent who could "float like a butterfly and sting like a bee."

"Muhammed Ali would have had hell on his hands. 'cause my hands were quicker than Ali's," remarked Thad. Thad's mountain climb to the top required absolute excellence. There were many fights in the ring where he boxed purely on heart's desire and single-minded determination. This time would be no different.

The contract was signed. Both men agreed to compete in the Spring at San Francisco, California. Whoever wins would receive the coveted title and \$500,000. Beyond these tangibles, only one man would be propelled to legendary status.

Thad trained hard in San Jacinto, California. "It was a closed camp. No women, no booze, no dope," he explained. He lived like an ascetic, mastering his craft with disciplined



Muhammed Ali



Thad Spencer

love and passion for boxing. Nearing the day of the event,

moral obligation. After refusing military induction,

"Muhammed Ali would have had hell on his hands. 'cause my hands were quicker than Ali's,"

Muhammed Ali had a score to settle outside the ring. He wanted recognition as a Muslim. In the name of Allah, he set aside the charismatic bravado to stand firm against the Vietnam War and declare himself a "conscientious objector." It was his

Muhammed Ali was stripped of his boxing title and privilege to professionally compete. "They wanted to put him in jail, but the public wouldn't stand for it," remembers Thad.

Thad Spencer came close to a fight that never happened. "All I

wanted to do was fight Muhammed Ali, I knew I could beat him," he remarked. He didn't blame Life's cruel manipulations. This lesson only tempered him to continue as a champion in deed and spirit.

Thad channeled his passion for boxing as a promoter of 38 professional tournaments. He furthered the career of men like George Foreman, Roy Jones and other greats. His focus is on a new program call "Last Chance To Get A Life." This is his hope for troubled youth to be able to come together and learn how boxing can be a vehicle for enhancing their lives. It is also a chance to bring respectability to a sport many have wrongly deemed as dangerous and corrupt.

Many years ago, Muhammed Ali confronted Thad in California during a boxing event to say, "All through my career, you kept calling my managers. You're lucky you never met me. Boy! Let me tell you something, if you ever dreamed you fought me, you'd better wake up and apologize." As a comedic comeback, Thad responded, "You're the one who needs to apologize because you lied to me. You told me you're next. You never showed up, baby!"

Jefferson High To Become Three Schools

CONTINUED FROM METRO
Each school is expected to contain approximately 350 students, he added. Current enrollment is approximately 900.

Interviews for the three principals were scheduled to begin this week, with participation by parents, teachers and community representatives.

Local and statewide tests and assessments show Jefferson is one of several schools that are not "on track" to prepare students to meet standards required by state mandated Certificates of Initial Mastery, according to the Jefferson Redesign Plan.

The study notes 85 percent of Jefferson's students are at an economic disadvantage, can't afford lunch, and many skip school on a regular basis. More than 1,300 student disciplinary referrals were made last year. Numerous families in Jefferson's neighborhood are sending their children to other schools.

The plan was created by staff, parents and administrators, Frederick said, and has been discussed for several years. The plan recognizes work

done by a "design advocates committee" and a "curriculum and instruction council." The plan was approved last Wednesday.

The school's site council, which reportedly has struggled to maintain memberships, was given the task of analyzing much of the data, according to the document.

Several schoolwide faculty meetings were held in the past year to share and discuss the reorganization issues, recommendations and concerns.

Two meetings were held with families and other community members in the Jefferson area. And two meetings were held to get student input.

The announcement of the school split called it the first level of a five-year restructuring effort. Revisions are expected as the plan progresses.

"The funding has not yet been worked out completely," said Frederick.

Jefferson officials are also considering establishing a mandatory dress code, where all students and staff would wear uniforms.

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Inventory of household allergy triggers can ease suffering

Allergy sufferers can help control allergy triggers by doing a "household inventory."

"Your home should be a safe place, but for sufferers of allergies and asthma, it can be a source for triggers that set off a reaction," said Dr. Robert Moore, a pediatric pulmonologist at Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital in Houston. "One of the best things you can do to control allergies

and asthma is to do a thorough inventory of household triggers."

Knowing what is most likely to bring on an attack is crucial. This may involve keeping an asthma "diary" of possible causes or skin testing for allergies to narrow down the suspects.

"Finding triggers isn't always easy," Moore said. "Once you have a good idea, though, it's important to limit your exposure."

Common household allergy and asthma triggers include:

- *Overstuffed furniture, shelves and other dusty surfaces
- *Excessive humidity which spurs dust mite growth
- *Rugs, another dust mite source. Bare wood or tile floors are best.
- *Pet dander.
- *Tobacco smoke
- *Poor household ventilation
- *Infrequent changing of heater and

air conditioner filters

*Clothes not properly stored. Keep clothes in closed closets and woolens in plastic bags.

*Bedding. Use washable synthetic blankets and pillows and cover mattress with aired-out plastic.

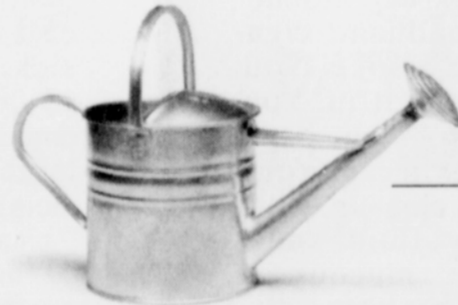
*Household cleaners. Common cleaners such as ammonia, baking soda, and nonchlorine bleach are less likely to trigger an attack than will more chemically based products.

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