

Editorials

City Aldermen Can Save By Spending ?

City Aldermen ponder a \$70,000 efficiency study that, supposedly, could save the city some \$2-3 million. That sounds like a fair trade on the face of it. Who wouldn't agree to spend \$35,000 (plus \$35,000 from the county) to save a million dollars?

What raises some questions (and doubt), however, is the implications of such a savings. No matter what the time span the savings cover, it is still a lot of money to save. The question (and doubt) is this:

If so much money is being needlessly squandered now, why does it take experts to show our city and county leaders where the wastes are?

Certainly, \$2 or \$3 million just isn't out there somewhere being wasted without somebody in government knowing about it. That much waste (and in these hard times, if we can do without that much money tomorrow it is a waste today) must stick out like a pregnant woman nine months gone.

The Aldermen ought to be able to see where that much money is being wasted and immediately set about removing the parasites who are using it up.

These are hard times (for those who may have overlooked it). It appears that a monopoly game is being played and the poor always loose out in the end.

Muhammed Ali 'People's Champion'

Muhammed Ali's vow to "fight for my people" is a living testament that should serve to show black people the need for unity. Ali said recently that he will donate the proceeds of his remaining fights to the poor.

Certainly, Ali has made a lot of money and will no doubt continue to. What is certain, too, is that whatever money he gives to poor people is not an obligation on his part.

Ali has attempted to demonstrate some values and principles to black folk everywhere. He has demonstrated that the power of one's convictions can surely set one free. He has demonstrated that there is something higher and more powerful than the almighty dollar.

Although Ali has been characterized as "the lip" and other names that depict him as a "big mouth" from Louisville, no one can deny that he acts in accord with his words. It is one thing to talk, but another to have the courage to act accordingly.

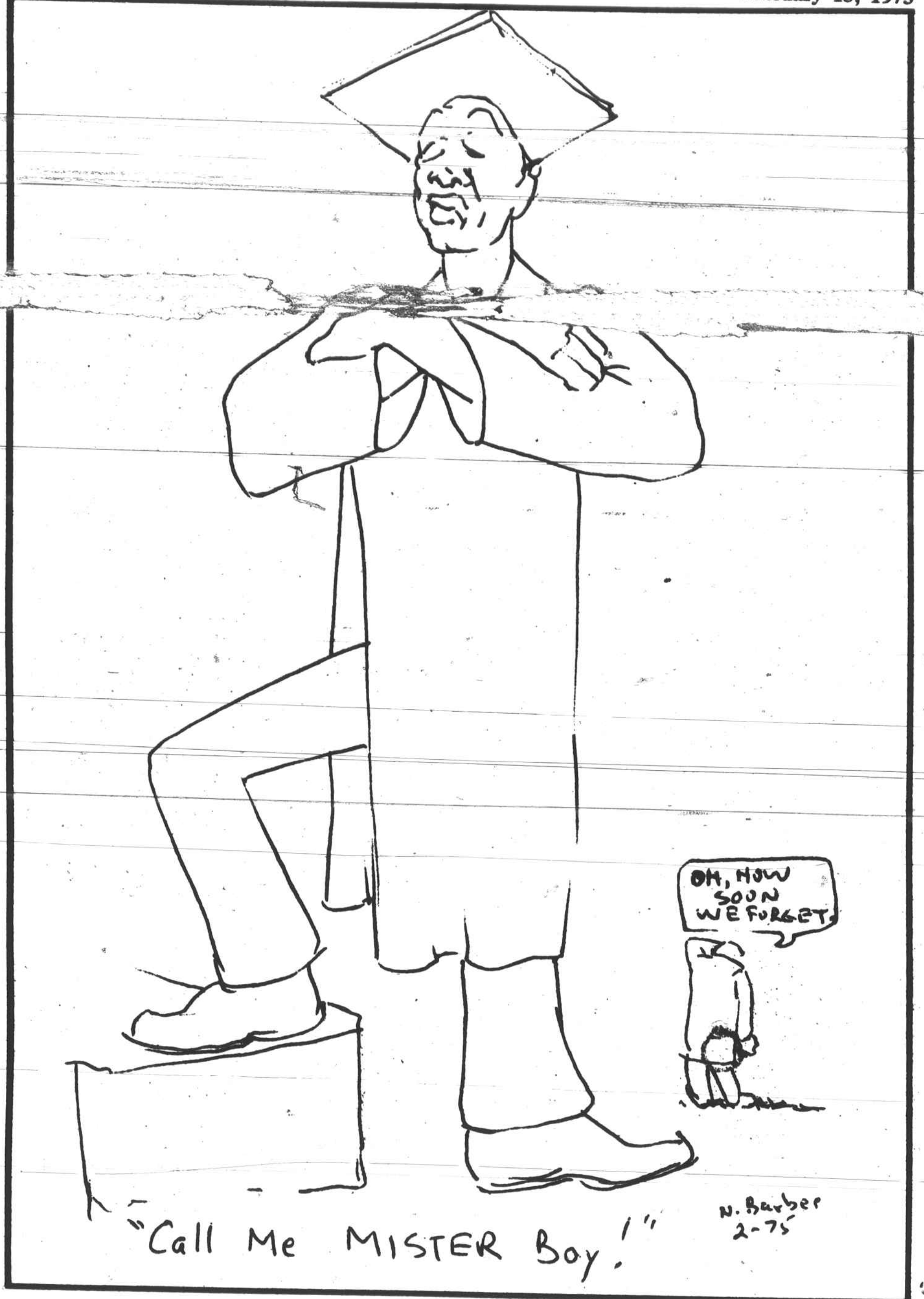
No matter what Ali is or thought to be, he must be viewed by the black community as truly "The People's Champion."

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TO BE EQUAL By Vernon E. Jordon, Jr.

Black History Week is an annual event, usually celebrated in schools with special discussions on black history and great black figures of the past and present. By and large, it is a positive step toward heightening the consciousness of black and white children of the great contributions made by black Americans to our common history.

What makes this year's Black History Week somewhat different from the past is that the core experience of black history itself has come up for re-evaluation by historians. And this new re-evaluation tells us a lot more about the current climate of attitudes toward blacks than it does to enlighten us about the past.

One of the most talked about studies of the past year was a book purporting to change our view of slavery by using computer-based studies. The authors, Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, come up with the rather

startling conclusions that the slave experience was not as bad as previous historians had painted it.

Their motives appear to be based on the feeling that portraits of docile slaves and brutal masters have to be revised in the light of their supposed new findings. They claim that it is wrong to blame the present plight of black people on the slave experience, that it is more clearly the discrimination of the post-slavery period right on up to our own day that best accounts for black-white disparities.

On that last point most can agree, but by portraying blacks entrapped in slavery as relatively content, their masters as benign, and the entire wretched system as relatively humane, the authors just set up a new mythology as wrong as the openly pro-slavery historians of the early 1900s were.

If the system was all that good, why did so many blacks

run away? If they were fed as well as the authors claim, why re plantation records so full of stories about slaves stealing food? Why are accounts of brutality and neglect? Most important today, why has such a book written and why has it found such wide acceptance?

Other historians have ripped apart many of the authors' assumptions. They've pointed out how they've fed statistics from one or a few plantations in one part of the country at one particular time, and come up with fancy mathematical projections that led them to generalized -- and wrong -- statements about slavery.

I'm willing to leave the technical discussions to their peers, who have held numerous conferences and written many learned articles largely disproving this new revision of history. My primary concern is the rush with which the media and the public adopted a revision of

See JORDON Page 10