

Wrestling Observer Newsletter

February 24, 1992

A few weeks ago I started hearing speculation about the possible demise of Hulk Hogan and even the potential demise of Titan Sports. While in a worst-case scenario of what could happen, one couldn't completely rule that out as a possibility. But it was maybe a 200-to-one longshot, at best. Most of this talk was incredibly premature and so unlikely at the time that it didn't seem to be worth serious discussion.

It's still premature. It's still unlikely. But it's also worth serious discussion. Make no mistake about it. Friday night, if it were not for some incredible luck, the Titan empire may have been in a race to avoid crumbling before Wrestlemania. Even with the incredible luck, it may be too late for Titan to inevitably avoid the some form of shambles.

Some people are trying to pass off Friday's night attempted raid of the World Wrestling Federation dressing room at the Arena in St. Louis as a non-issue. After all, nobody was arrested. But coming on the heels of one of the most incredible out of the ring news weekends in recent memory, and leading into a six week period that will, not might, but will, wind up with a series of devastating national media stories on Titan Sports, this is not only serious for what could have happened, but because of what did happen.

The attempted raid has been the subject of many different complete and contradictory stories ranging from Drug Enforcement Agency involvement as part of an ongoing investigation of the World Wrestling Federation to something being ordered by the St. Louis police having nothing to do with wrestling. About a half-dozen uniformed and two plainclothes St. Louis police officers along with one St. Louis police dog and a Federal drug agent were sent to the Arena and searched all WWF personnel for illegal drugs as they arrived. According to one performer, the wrestlers had all been alerted around 6 p.m. that evening, or about an hour before coming to the building, about the impending bust attempt. This resulted in no drugs being found on any of the wrestlers. On Tuesday, the DEA publicly denied its involvement while a St. Louis Police Department source on Tuesday said he couldn't confirm or deny anything but that "It was either an ongoing DEA investigation or one hell of a strong tip." The WWF, through Steve Planamenta, claimed the police were simply investigating a security guard who worked at The Arena. However, Kathleen Hines of the St. Louis Arena management was furious at the WWF's claim saying that a federal drug agent was there as part of an ongoing investigation and supervising local police and they were there to search the WWF wrestlers. The St. Louis police officially at first even denied that there even was a search until informed of several eyewitness reports and direct conversations with people being searched and extensive details as to what happened. Then they claimed it had nothing to do with drugs until informed that a police dog was sniffing all the wrestlers bags. The performer who contacted us the night of the raid told us that without the leaking beforehand of the bust attempt, it would be his best estimate given who was on the show that eight to ten of the wrestlers would have been carrying something, mainly marijuana and steroids and possibly downers. "I can't tell you that number for sure," he said. "It could have been one or two and it could have been more than a dozen." If drugs, particularly steroids, had been found on more than one, let alone drugs found on anywhere near a half-dozen wrestlers, with all the major newspaper stories that are already in the works, which include expected front page coverage of steroids in wrestling stories in both the Los Angeles Times (which will be syndicated nationally) and San Diego Union and the impending 20/20 story, the ripple affect through the media probably would have been devastating. How strong the effect would have been on the sponsors and licensees that support the WWF and television stations that air the programs is almost impossible to fathom. Past history shows that it's unusual for stations to pull programming because of public scandals, but when they do such as with Pee Wee Hermann and Morton Downey, when the fall starts, everything falls in rapidly like dominos. While no scandal of this nature would have had a major direct effect on selling wrestling tickets to arena shows to the general public, if something were to happen to cause a problem with sponsors and television stations there would be

significant lost revenue from those avenues. A potential sprint race by sponsors in the wrong direction and domino effect of television stations which would cause a lessening of exposure would indirectly lead to a major effect on live attendance and all other revenue sources. At the same time, a promoter like Don King, who in comparison makes Vince McMahon seem like a saint, has survived and prospered even though most Americans have an idea of what kind of a person he really is. People will pay money to see an entertainment/sport even if the owner has a shady rep forever because they are paying to see the performers. But boxing isn't marketed as a kids show and aired in syndication primarily on Saturday mornings, so parts of that analogy doesn't hold up. Even without any arrests, the WWF is hardly out of the water what it comes to facing at least a potential crisis.

Newsweek editor Frank Deford did a commentary this past week on the subject of Hulk Hogan and steroids for ESPN radio which went as follows: "It's hard to believe, but as recently as the last Olympics, the big issue was steroids. Today, though, with more effective laboratory detection methods, the cops have caught up with the robbers, except...except perhaps in professional wrestling. Don't snicker now. Just because wrestling is an arranged sport doesn't mean it isn't important, it isn't athletic and it doesn't mean that it fails to have an affect on a lot of young boys and children. The continued accusations by wrestlers and a convicted steroid pusher, Dr. George Zahorian, that Hulk Hogan has been a promiscuous user of steroids and cocaine as well, must be answered satisfactorily by The Hulkster. Like wrestling or not, Hogan is a major cultural character of our times. He does mainstream commercials, he sells huge amounts of children's toys, and -- get this-- vitamins, and he appears regularly on respectable television shows. If those great Hulkster muscles are still steroid induced, then this is a serious scandal. The sponsors, toy stores and television stations must demand Hulk be tested by an independent agency."

During this same period, the WWF had suspended several wrestlers including Hawk of the Legion of Doom, Kerry Von Erich and Jimmy Snuka. Officially the company confirmed the suspension of Snuka, an indefinite suspension (read that fired) for unprofessional conduct. They claim Von Erich was pulled from all his bookings after a call came from Fritz Von Erich that Kerry needed to go to drug rehabilitation at the Betty Ford Center (although it was during the period after Von Erich had been pulled from the road that he was arrested). There have been rumors swirling everywhere regarding LOD's future with Titan Sports, but nothing has been confirmed. WWF simply claims LOD is in limbo. The LOD has been replaced by The Bushwhackers for all upcoming scheduled house shows. While this has not been officially confirmed, most wrestling sources feel that they are done with the WWF and the happenings at the television taping seems to pretty well confirm that. Where they will wind up is another question, but judging from the response in various circles, the demand for them either in WCW or Japan may not be what you would think it would be. Snuka also won't be returning. Hercules is also history while Greg Valentine, who had already jumped to WCW, has been released from his contract.

Von Erich was taken off the road more than one week ago as he's missed all his bookings for the past two weeks. While on suspension, the 32-year-old Von Erich was arrested at around midnight on 2/9 at an Eckerd's Drug Store in Richardson, TX (a Dallas suburb) on two felony counts of obtaining drugs through fraud (passing forged drug prescriptions). Each charge is a felony III, which carries a two-to-ten year prison sentence and maximum \$5,000 fine per offense. In reality one shouldn't expect Von Erich to serve any time for the offense if he agrees to enter a drug rehabilitation clinic, which he apparently has entered. Von Erich will be facing more problems because according to KDFW-TV in Dallas, Richardson police found out several days later that he also gave them a falsified address and phone number on his arrest report. Kevin Von Erich told KDFW that Kerry had entered a drug rehabilitation center on Monday because of problems resulting from the breaking up of

his marriage. There is no word on his future with the company, but it looks bleak from here.

If that wasn't enough problems for one week for the WWF, this past Saturday night on the Las Vegas-based Wrestling Insiders radio show, guest Barry Orton spoke openly about alleged homosexual harassment within the WWF front office including naming three names and a specific example of one attempting to hit on him. While talk like this has been the subject of gossip around the wrestling business for years, Orton is only the second wrestler I know of to go public that he was hit on by gay execs (former Atlanta wrestler Jim Wilson claimed it happened to him in the 1970s) with it being tied to career enhancement. Orton did say that many major stars like Hulk Hogan never had to go through this to reach their main event status, but did insinuate that others did and he felt he would have had to and it hurt him professionally because he didn't. Orton, who worked strictly as a jobber for the WWF using the ring name Barry O, blasted the policy saying that he has nothing against anyone's sexual preference or what they do in their private lives, but that when it affects people's livelihoods than it's another issue. While nobody from Titan was available before press time to comment officially about this, one suspects the response will be to categorize Orton as a bitter wrestler who never made it big (which is true, although he had very good in-ring talent and exceptional interview ability, more than enough to get a serious push) and bring up that he spent two years in prison in Arizona for vehicular homicide (he was driving drunk and got in a car accident and the girl travelling with him died a few years back). Orton, who is talking about writing a book of his own called "Doing the job," also talked about his own use of steroids and said that Titan wasn't interested in using him until he got on steroids and then he got his job. We will have a transcript of allegations regarding homosexual harassment and steroids hopefully by next week. Thus far, however, Titan, which adopted a similar policy to what I expect they'll have with Orton in regard to both Graham and David Shults (avoid talking about the issue at hand and instead attack the credibility of the messenger) has been almost completely unsuccessful thus far in dealing with the media and convincing them of their credibility. It really says something for just how low Titan's credibility has fallen when they now have less believability because of their responses to the steroid issue than even wrestlers with what they claim have shady backgrounds. What's worse, I don't think those at Titan even fully realize yet just how much of a pounding their credibility has taken over the past eight months.

WCW hasn't been without its negative media publicity this past week either. This past Wednesday, Atlanta television channel WSB-TV (Ch. 2) did a six minute documentary alleging racial discrimination in World Championship Wrestling. WBS put its top investigative reporter on the piece and talked about a complaint filed with the EEOC from a former WCW wrestler charging racial discrimination. The piece claimed that the average black wrestler under contract to WCW earned \$104,000 per year while the average white wrestler earned \$205,000. I can almost certainly dispute those numbers because the only black wrestlers I know of currently under contract are Ron Simmons and his contract is right about the \$200,000 range and Mr. Hughes, who I'd guess is between \$78,000 and \$104,000. They showed tape of Johnny B. Badd and pointed out that he and P.N. News are white men who are pretending to be black men. Hughes was interviewed and said he didn't feel he was discriminated against and said he was happy. Because of EEOC and NAACP pressure being put on by a few ex-black wrestlers that have worked for WCW, although nobody will admit it, that pressure is probably why WCW is bringing back Junkyard Dog and putting Teddy Long (who has been under contract all along but hasn't been used) in a new position as color commentator of the syndicated Main Event show with Eric Bischoff (which runs in very few markets but will be the only WCW syndicated show that airs in Atlanta, where all the heat is). Long will play a total babyface role. My opinion is that I'm all for equal employment opportunities and this business has perpetuated stereotypes and has often been guilty of prejudice based on race (both positive and negative to minorities), sometimes based on perceived effect on the box office and sometimes just for the sake of being prejudice. However, I don't see how it benefits blacks, whites, wrestling fans or the EEOC to pressure a wrestling company if the end result is that the response is to give a job to a wrestler who is not anywhere even close to the calibre of performer as many others wanting to get in that can't get past the front door.

Frey's new steroid policy talked of last weekend should be finalized sometime this coming week. Frey talked about the policy on the Pro Wrestling Spotlight radio show Sunday night in vague terms, but seemed to indicate the policy wouldn't include steroid testing. Frey said that he doesn't want to "create a police state" with steroid testing apparently in reference to Titan Sports (the term "police state" hardly appears to be an accurate term to describe the WWF steroid program). At press time it was thought by those inside the company that the policy would consist of a six month to one year period in which all wrestlers would get to wean themselves off steroids with the company providing a drug rehabilitation and counseling program. From talking with Frey and other WCW employees, I believe he's sincere about this subject but some wrestlers are skeptical of any affect of a policy which doesn't include enforced punishment for non-conformity.

Anyway, I've come up with my own ideas of a steroid policy for WCW. The policy involves almost no additional costs. It involves no suspensions. It involves no tests. It doesn't even force anyone to get off steroids if they don't want to, but the result would be that either they'll all want to get off steroids, they'll leave the promotion which solves the problem or, over the long run, they'll be forced out of the spotlight. To do so you have to go right to the core of the problem--eliminating the competitive advantage one would gain at least for taking serious doses. That should be one of the main goals of a real steroid policy anyway. A policy that would protect those who don't want to use steroids from suffering from a lessened push or lessened chance of getting employment because of that decision. At the same time, you want to encourage wrestlers to either slack off or to completely get off the juice to protect their long-term health. Let me preface this by saying Vince McMahon would actually be far more effective than Kip Frey in implementing this policy because he has far greater knowledge of steroids and bodybuilding and the psychology that goes with steroid use. But I wouldn't recommend this program to the WWF because for it to work it would take a chief executive who is 100 percent honest and sincere about ridding his company of the competitive advantages steroids bring and would enforce the policy fairly to all. McMahon's actions makes me believe he would be, despite his knowledge of the subject, perhaps the most ineffective person to administer such a program. In Frey's case, we have no way of knowing one way or the other. Thus far nobody has any reason to believe he isn't sincere on this subject and because of that have to give him the benefit of the doubt.

The policy is simple. Every wrestler is told that in 90 days, if they still appear to be on steroids, they will do one clean job with no controversy at every television taping until their body no longer has a steroid look. Ninety days is more than enough grace period because you should be able to cycle down (going off cold turkey leads to problems) in three or four weeks and most bodybuilders when they are completely off steroids will have noticeable physique differences in two weeks. At every taping there will be an expert on the subject to look at the guys and yes, there will be some guys with less than gifted genetics who can use some roids and look like they don't and slide through, but those guys weren't getting much of a competitive advantage from using the roids anyway. After all, Dustin Rhodes could use steroids and still never look as good as Lex Luger or Rick Rude would if they didn't use steroids or probably even if they didn't lift because genetics play a big role in how one looks. Any long-time bodybuilding expert or drug guru with a trained eye can study the guys and pretty well would know a certain look that means someone is on. Admittedly, one can be on, particularly low doses or be on and not train hard (but if that's the case, what's the point in being on in the first place) and slide by since there are no suspensions involved, but they aren't benefitting competitively from the use so it doesn't matter except to themselves and their own health and you can't save someone from themselves completely but you can help others. Now I can just hear people saying that there would be some major legal problems about asking someone to do a clean job without any proof in the form of test results that the person was using steroids and if mishandled, that's a valid point. The deal is, nobody will ever be asked to do a job on television to someone who isn't a better worker than they are in the first place. In extreme cases like Rick Steamboat, where nobody is better, if necessary, someone who is on their level. For example, Lex Luger, if they believe he were to be on, would have to lose to someone like Steamboat or Brian Pillman who is

a better worker anyway with a crossbody off the top with no controversy. Steamboat to Arn Anderson or Bobby Eaton. You don't have Sting losing to, say, Mr. Hughes, only to someone like Terry Taylor or Anderson. So you're rewarding the good workers which is what Frey is preaching about doing anyway. Even if you err and the guy isn't on (which really should almost never happen), you're still getting a competitive match, and a clean win by the better wrestler to begin with so you really aren't being unfair to any wrestlers or the fans if you are wrong. In some cases, in the fans' eyes, because of how they've been educated to this point, you'll wind up with a major upset on television especially at the beginning, but that will only serve to make the television more interesting when people realize it's unpredictable. I mean, if Scott Steiner were to get pinned clean by Bobby Eaton's Alabama Jam or examples like that would occur every week with big names for a month, nobody would ever know who would win on television and it would probably improve ratings because of unpredictability and clean finishes. That's pretty much the booking strategy that may have made Riki Choshu the wrestling world's best booker in 1991. As long as the wrestler looks like he's on steroids, he does one clean job per taping every week until he looks like he's off. Let the guys still go over on house shows if they're supposed to because you need to have certain types of finishes to send fans home happy or satisfied, but every wrestler knows that if they job eight straight weeks on television, it'll force them from the top of the arena cards inevitably anyway. What's the message the fan at home gets? A great worker beats a muscled-up steroid guy every time. What better message to send to kids teaching them steroids isn't the way? In fact, the subliminal message it gives, if you want to analyze it closely is that using steroids makes one a loser. Yeah, for real sports it's a fake message. But in other ways it's creating a positive message. Wrestling can't change the world, but this policy will encourage those who want to become wrestlers and who idolize wrestlers to learn to be either be great workers or to subliminally appreciate something other than bicep size and striations in the chest. Wrestling would no longer encourage anyone, and in fact, would discourage everyone influenced by it, from shooting roids. In the long run it'll make it a cleaner product and a better wrestling product because the guys will know their bread is buttered based on what they do once the bell rings, and not how they look standing there or flexing. The best thing about this policy is it allows guys to stay on steroids if they want to, but they won't want to and not only because they won't be rewarded for it. Guys who are on roids will either quit the promotion rather than do the jobs which means the promotion will clean up, or, they'll get off roids. If there's one thing that a wrestler who has achieved stardom hates to do even more than see the changes that occurs when one goes off steroids, it's doing clean jobs on television every week.

Buried among all of this news is a change in the 2/29 PPV show from Milwaukee. The former 11-match show has been changed to eight matches, with the P.N. News vs. Mr. Hughes, Tom Zenk vs. Richard Morton and Diamond Studd vs. Van Hammer matches eliminated from the show. In my opinion, this is a major positive step because doing eight matches in two hours and 47 minutes means nobody should have to rush through their matches (particularly since it's the main events that usually suffer on the long shows because they don't have time to tell their story). That also allows for more interview and feature breaks to build-up interest and intensity in the important matches. The show will open with an eight man with El Gigante & Big Josh & Mike Graham & Johnny B. Badd vs. Diamond Dallas Page & Young Pistols & Vinnie Vegas which will probably be kept short and should be okay if Pistols dominate the time spent in the ring for the heels. From that point on, every match should be solid-to-excellent, with Terrence Taylor vs. Marcus Alexander Bagwell, Cactus Jack vs. Ron Simmons, Jushin Liger vs. Brian Pillman, Barry Windham & Dustin Rhodes vs. Steve Austin & Larry Zbyszko, Steiners vs. Arn Anderson & Bobby Eaton, Ricky Steamboat vs. Rick Rude and Sting vs. Lex Luger. With the impending explosion within the wrestling business, it's almost been hard to get excited about an upcoming PPV show, but I'm looking forward to this show more than any major show since the Wrestle War card last year in Phoenix and the Tokyo Dome last March. Despite rumors to the contrary, Liger is appearing on this show. Liger does have a fairly serious rib injury but didn't even miss one match with New Japan and has nearly three weeks off before the card. Pillman missed television tapings on Monday night with a back injury but it is said to not be anywhere serious enough to threaten him being at the PPV.

There is another PPV show set for this coming weekend, or is there? The on-again, off-again LPWA show was on-again, at least as of Monday afternoon. The card is set for this coming Sunday (2/23) afternoon from Rochester, MN at 1:30 p.m. Eastern time (10:30 a.m. Pacific). Although there is no doubt this show will break the all-time pro wrestling record for lowest buy rate on a PPV show set by Herb Abrams last year at Beach Brawl, it may not be that bad of a card. First off, Jim Cornette's color commentary still ranks among the best in the business so at least it'll be entertaining to listen to. And even though there will probably be no recognition and maybe no reaction to the Japanese women of the recently-folded JWP group appearing, the girls can work. The very tentative line-up has Lady X (Peggy Lee Leather) defending the LPWA title against Terri Power, The Glamour Girls (Judy Martin & Lailani Kai) defending the LPWA tag team titles against probably Bambi & Malia Hosaka (or possibly Rockin Robin & Wendi Richter if they can find Richter and convince her to appear), a few other singles matches including one with Shinobu Kandori, depending upon who else shows up at the card, a tag match with Mami Kitamura & Miki Handa (two of the girls who worked the WCW Wrestle War card last year in Phoenix) and a singles tournament. First round matches in the tournament tentatively are Susan Green vs. Denise Storm, Reggie Bennett vs. Devil Masami, Harley Saito vs. Endo Mizaki and Rumi Kazama vs. Dynamite Kansai (Miss A). Of course card subject to change has never been more appropriate than in this instance. While I have a policy about giving away finishes ahead of time in this case it probably doesn't matter, and it's just as likely not going to happen anyway, but provided things go as scheduled and the card actually takes place, one of the second round tournament matches will be Kansai vs. Saito and I've seen them work with each other (and as a tag team) many times and if they are given enough time, they should have a match equal to Ric Flair vs. Randy Savage at Wrestlemania. But nobody will see it and there won't be any crowd reaction because, among other things, there won't be any crowd. And the \$19.95 price tag will drive even those considering it at this point away, although the last word is that everyone who orders will get a four-hour tape mailed to them (of course probably dependent upon the LPWA being in business the day after).

So buried on page three comes confirmation that Hulk Hogan has indeed negotiated with New Japan Pro Wrestling. No deal has been signed. Japanese sources confirmed stateside sources in that Hogan has agreed to a two-year deal for three appearances per year at \$100,000 per shot after he retires from the WWF. New Japan sources expected Hogan's retirement as imminent, a time frame that can't be predicted because of all of what is yet to happen. At this point I'm still betting on Hogan taking the summer off and coming back and winning the title and sticking around until the following Wrestlemania. But the process may speed up.

This is the second issue of the current four-issue set. If your subscription has a (1) on its address label it means you Observer subscription will be expiring in two more weeks. Renewal rates are \$6 for four issues, \$12 for eight, \$24 for 16, \$36 for 24, \$48 for 32 up through \$60 for 40 issues for readers in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Rates for subscribers anywhere else in the world for weekly airmail delivery if \$9 for each set of four issues through \$90 for 40 issues. All subscription renewals, letters to the editor, news items, reports from live shows and any other correspondence relating to this newsletter should be sent to the Wrestling Observer Newsletter, P.O. Box 1228, Campbell, CA 95009-1228.

EMLL

2/7 at Arena Mexico in Mexico City saw Zuleyma & Mari Chan & Mima Chan beat Martha Villalobos & Pantera Surena & Wendy in 18:09 **, Bestia Salvaje & La Fiera & Sangre Chicana beat Apollo Dantes & Love Machine (Art Barr) & Huracan Sevilla in two straight falls at 12:09 when Salvaje made Sevilla submit in the first fall and pinned him with a power bomb in the second fall. This makes three of the past four weeks where heel Salvaje has scored two straight fall wins over Sevilla to set up this past Friday's hair vs. hair match (in which Sevilla almost finally prevailed). **1/2, Pierroth Jr. & Nitron & Fuerza Guerrera beat Mascara Sagrada & Octagon & Canadian Vampire Casanova in 14:42 when Guerrera pinned Octagon in the third fall. They're building to Octagon vs. Guerrera mask vs. mask match. ***1/2, Main Event saw Aaron Grundy (Mike

Shaw) & Salomon Grundy & Conan over Cien Caras & Mascara Ano 2000 & Universo 2000 in 16:08 *1/2.

2/16 at Arena Mexico saw Aaron & Salomon Grundy & Conan win two of three from Sangre Chicana & Universo 2000 & Mascara Ano 2000, Black Magic (Norman Smiley from Florida) & Mascara Sagrada & Blue Demon Jr. beat La Fiera & Blue Panther & Emilio Charles Jr and they opened up the CMLL World Mini Superstars (midgets) tournament with Mascarita Sagrada, Octagoncito, Espectrito Jr. and Aguilita Solitaria. .. Aaron Grundy will probably change his ring name to Norman (WCW name) and no longer work as Salomon's brother.

Fabuloso Blondy (Ken Timbs) is expected to return next month.

Box y Lucha magazine fan balloting for 1991 had Octagon as Most Popular, Mascara Ano 2000 as Best Heel, Oro & Plata as Best Tag Team, Caras & Mascara Ano 2000 & Universo 2000 as best trio, Volador as best newcomer, El Hijo De Lizmark as Rookie of the Year and Casanova as best foreigner. Conan was named Wrestler of the year.

Since the shows now air in the United States on a nine-day delay, for those of you with satellite dishes that want to see the cards a week ahead of when they air on television, check Satellite Morelos 2 on Ch. 14 at 1 p.m. Eastern time.

Expect several of the top faces to turn heel over the next few months.

EMLL officials expect the imminent jumping from UWA of Negro Casas, Negro Navarro, El Indomito, Jose Luis Feliciano, Shu El Guerrero and Black Terry.

Galavision show this coming Sunday has Cynthia Moreno & Mariko Chan & Mima Chan vs. Martha Villalobos & Wendy & Pantera Surena, CMLL trios champs The New Infernales (Pirata Morgan & MS 1 & El Satanico) vs. The Untouchables (Jacque Mate & Masakre & Pierroth Jr.) in a non-title match, Los Brazos vs. Salomon Grundy & Casanova & Rayo de Jalisco Jr. and Sevilla vs. Salvaje in a hair vs. hair match. The only thing I know about the card is that there were some in-ring problems with Grundy not wanting to do the job at the end and not wanting to sell for Brazo de Plata and he was pretty well told if it happened again than he's through.

Expect Octagon vs. Guerrero big mask vs. mask match which has been building up for more than one year to take place on 3/21 which also happens to be the birthday of the late Salvador Lutteroth, the father of promoting Lucha Libre and the EMLL.

2/9 at Arena Mexico saw Casanova & Sagrada & Jalisco beat Los Brazos in the main event.

2/1 in Mexico City saw Sevilla win a hair vs. hair match beating Guerrero Negro in a bloodbath and Neftali beat Lola Gonzales to keep the Mexican womens title via submission and Aaron Grundy & Ultimate Dragon & Jalisco beat Kung Fu & Ulysses & Sultan Gargola.

The most famous Lucha Libre fan in the world (and probably the most publicized real wrestling fan anywhere), 92-year-old Vicky Aguilera returned to her ringside seat after two months away because of an illness having to do with her age. She celebrated her birthday this past week which also was her 46th consecutive year of being a front-row regular at EMLL weekly shows.

UWA

2/9 at El Toreo in Naucalpan saw The Killer win the UWA junior heavyweight title winning 2/3 falls from Enrique Vera after hitting Vera with a foreign object given to him by manager Andy Barrow. Also Dos Caras & Tinieblas Jr. & Sr. won 2/3 falls from Canek & Kokina & Gigante Warrior (Butch Masters) when Canek was pinned in the third fall when Kokina splashed him. So Canek and Kokina broke-up with Canek as the face for the millionth time when The Samoan Swat Team (Fatu & Samoan Savage) helped Kokina and Warrior jump Canek. Also Fishman & Samoan Swat Team beat Silver King & El Texano & Fantasma, Los Villanos beat Negro Navarro & Black Power & El Signo via DQ, Baby Face & Scorpio Sr. & Scorpio Jr. drew with El Engendro & Canadian Tiger & Dr. Wagner Jr. and the opener saw Celestial & Samurai & Ninja Sasuke beat Momotaro & Jose Luis Feliciano & Black Terry.

2/16 at El Toreo saw Bam Bam Bigelow & The Samoan Swat Team (Samoan Savage & Fatu) win 2/3 falls from Canek & Dos Caras & Fishman (fair), Texano & Silver King & Gran Hamada beat Canadian Tiger & Negro Casas & Dr. Wagner Jr. (best match on show), Killer & La Muerte & El Espanto Jr. beat Fantasma & Vera & Solar I in two straight, Baby Face & El Engendro & El Indomito drew El Sicodelico & Super Raton & Super Pinocchio, Hijo del Diablo & Lobo Rubio & Shu El Guerrero beat Black Terry & Jose Luis Feliciano & Momotaro and Ninja Sasuke & Celestial beat Los Mohicanos.

The Canek vs. Caras title change which went 27:00 was said to be a ****1/4 match while the Pegasus Kid vs. Villano III title match which went 44:00 (which was actually too long) the previous week was said to be **** from people who saw the TV via the satellite. Most of the other matches in recent weeks at El Toreo weren't that hot.

Mil Mascaras & Dos Caras beat Kokina & Gigante Warrior via DQ when Kokina gave Mascaras a low blow in 1/31 in Netzahualcoyotl.

Kendo beat El Mohicano II on 2/9 in San Lorenzo in a mask vs. hair match.

Bigelow also worked 2/17 in Puebla teaming with the SST against Canek & Fishman & Villano III.

An American team called Steel Warriors are headed to El Toreo as is Kendo and Kahos I.

Fray Tormenta's son Fray Tormenta Jr. will debut in the next month. Tormenta Sr. returns to El Toreo at the end of this month.

Tony Anthony & Danny Davis will be headed back on 3/1, but this time they'll be a masked tag team called The American Eagles and no doubt feud with Silver King & El Texano over the UWA tag team titles.

Negro Casas beat Valente Fernandez on 1/27 in Puebla in a hair vs. hair match.

El Hijo Del Santo kept the UWA welterweight title on 1/31 in Mexico City beating Casandro.

JAPAN

Just a few notes this week. Everything in New Japan regarding Tatsumi Fujinami, Super Strong Machine and the Blond Outlaws and Masanobu Kurisu are all simply a part of "shoot-angles." Machine, Hiro Saito, Norio Honaga and Tatsutoshi Goto each signed new one year contracts just a few weeks ago and at the signing booker Riki Choshu came up with an angle for them to "quit" the promotion and miss the next tour. I believe Fujinami will miss the March tour over an angle to change his character and because of well-known legit heat with Antonio Inoki.

Can you believe it's nostalgia now department: A company has bought the rights to videotapes of Tiger Mask's (Satoru Sayama) greatest matches with the likes of Black Tiger, Dynamite Kid, Kuniaki Kobayashi, Les Thornton, Solar, etc. and is coming out with a commercially heavily pushed tape of ten year old nostalgia. It's funny because a great percentage of today's younger Japanese wrestling audience has never even seen Sayama wrestle and even though he's promoting his own new sport, he's basically become completely forgotten in today's scene.

Although All Japan continues to do huge business and Budokan Hall for 3/4 sold out weeks before a line-up was announced (they still haven't announced the card), some fans are starting to complain about it always being the same guys against the same guys on television every week. Some talk that Giant Baba recognizes this and will start booking some dream matches on television like Misawa, Kawada and Kobashi in singles matches against one another.

The newest big name in Japan is Mitsuhiro Matsunaga of the WING group, who got his photo in every sports newspaper that covers wrestling this past week. On the 2/9 WING show at Korakuen Hall, in a street fight match with Gypsy Joe & Matsunaga beating Mr. Pogo & Miguelito Perez, after the match The Head Hunters attacked Matsunaga and were chasing him around the building. Matsunaga wound up escaping by running

away, but then climbed up to the balcony of Korakuen Hall and dove with a cross body block off the balcony onto The Head Hunters. All the photographers were told before the show he was going to do the stunt so everyone was ready to take the photo. Since very few readers have obviously ever been to Korakuen Hall, the balcony is approximately 20 feet from the ground floor (as compared with eight feet for Jimmy Snuka's famous cage dives at Madison Square Garden against Bob Backlund and Don Muraco in the early 1980s), so standing up you're talking about a 26 foot drop or roughly triple the distance of the bump that ruined Jim Cornette's knees at Starrcade '86. Results of the show saw Joe & Matsunaga win the main event, Dick Murdoch pinned Mitsuteru Tokuda, Kyoko Inoue & Toshiyo Yamada beat Manami Toyota & Sake Hasegawa and Head Hunters beat Hiroshi Shimada & Yukihiko Kanemura before 1,853 fans.

Television ratings last weekend saw New Japan on 2/8 with a six-man tag team main event do a 6.5 Video Research and 5.3 Neilsen (fair for the time slot) while All Japan on 2/9 with Jumbo Tsuruta losing the triple crown to Stan Hansen did a 6.3 and 3.7 (excellent). This past weekend New Japan had the Jushin Liger vs. Honaga title change, Keiji Muto & Hiroshi Hase vs. Fujinami & Shiro Koshinaka and Rambo & Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Choshu & Masa Chono.

The New Japan wrestlers had a vote amongst themselves as a shoot as to who was the best worker in the group and Chono got the most votes.

New Japan drew a sellout 10,300 fans to Nagoya on 2/10. Don't have all details but Koshinaka & Kobayashi beat Akitoshi Saito & Shigeichi Taguchi (karate men from Nagoya) in a mixed tag when Koshinaka made Taguchi submit, Liger retained both the IWGP junior heavyweight and WCW light heavyweight titles beating Chris Benoit via pinfall in 16:22 and Muto & Hase kept the IWGP tag team titles beating Scott Norton & Brad Armstrong in 22:37 when Muto pinned Armstrong with the moonsault.

There is a huge mixed card on 3/26 with Masayoshi Satake, who has worked with Rings going against current World Karate Association world heavyweight champion Maurice Smith, Willie Williams (who will work with Rings) vs. Nobuaki Tsunoda in a full contact karate match, Akira Maeda vs. Koichiro Kimura (champion of a shoot fighting form called Submission Arts Wrestling although most likely this match will be a work) and others.

SWS tour from 3/14 to 3/22 will include Undertaker, Berzerker, Hercules and Dandy.

Gong Magazine Weekly celebrated its 400th issue this past week. The magazine released the results of its popularity poll (Gong reaches largely a more markish audience than Weekly Pro. Top 20 Japanese for popularity were: 1. Misawa; 2. Muto; 3. Tsuruta; 4. Tenryu; 5. Choshu; 6. Onita; 7. Chono; 8. Kawada; 9. Hase; 10. Kobashi; 11. Maeda; 12. Fujinami; 13. Liger; 14. Inoki; 15. Funaki; 16. Ultimate Dragon; 17. Taue; 18. Takada; 19. Hashimoto; 20. Kikuchi. Top foreigners were: 1. Hansen; 2. Dynamite Kid; 3. Hogan; 4. Norton; 5. Sting; 6. Vader; 7. Gordy; 8. Ultimate Warrior; 9. Scott Steiner; 10. Rick Steiner; 11. Williams; 12. Ace; 13. Mascaras; 14. Terry Funk; 15. Road Warriors; 16. Spivey; 17. Shamrock; 18. The Sheik; 19. King Haku; 20. Furnas and Davey Boy Smith (tied).

JAPANESE TELEVISION RUNDOWN

1/19 ALL JAPAN: 1. Toshiaki Kawada & Tsuyoshi Kikuchi beat Yoshinari Ogawa & Masa Fuchi. It started slow with lots of submission holds and wasn't as good as it sounds because Ogawa was bothered by a shoulder injury. Finally they got heat on Kikuchi. After the hot tag, the last few minutes were really hot. Kawada ended up making Ogawa submit to a crossface. ***1/4; 2. Kenta Kobashi made Billy Black submit to the old Bruno Sammartino over the shoulder backbreaker. Only the finish aired but it was fantastic. Black did an Orihara moonsault from the top rope to the floor and a Northern Lights suplex on the floor; 3. Mitsuharu Misawa pinned Johnny Ace with the Tiger-driver (double-arm suplex dropped into a power bomb) in 16:00. Only the last few minutes aired and they were average; 4. Jumbo Tsuruta & Akira Taue beat Stan Hansen & Joel Deaton when Tsuruta pinned Deaton with a back suplex. Solid work but nothing outstanding. ***

1/26 ALL JAPAN: 1. Misawa made Fuchi submit to the facelock. Fuchi kept working on Misawa's knee and dropping them on the announcers table. Fuchi was great here as far as psychology to make this a super match before doing the job. Announcer Fukuzawa is the best in the business and I don't even understand what he's saying but he's been described to me as if you take everything Tony Schiavone does and then do just the opposite, you have Fukuzawa (which isn't meant necessarily as a knock on Schiavone as much as a description of Fukuzawa's style--well, actually I guess it is something of a knock). ***3/4; 2. Kobashi pinned Ogawa with the moonsault. Only the finish aired but what did air looked great. Then again, doesn't it always with Kobashi?; 3. Taue pinned Kikuchi with a Sammartino backbreaker dropped into a power bomb called the Thunder Fire Power bomb by Atsushi Onita. Again they only aired the finish but what aired looked great; 4. Tsuruta pinned Kawada with two back suplexes just after the 20:00 mark. Solid for the first half but few high spots. Kawada came back with a sleeper, a dive over the top and a Cactus Jack elbow drop off the apron to the floor. It turned into a super match as they work so stiff and convincing with one another. They have a knack of combining a realistic looking but still entertaining style. ****

2/1 NEW JAPAN: 1. Tony Halme pinned Scott Norton with a clothesline off the top rope in 8:41. Halme, who is actually one of the strongest men in the world but in the ring looks almost fat and sloppy next to Norton, wears jeans into the ring. Norton is super over while Halme isn't because people can see through him that he isn't what he's pushed as being. 3/4*; 2. Riki Choshu beat Tatsumi Fujinami in 12:11 to unify the IWGP world heavyweight title and Greatest 18 Club title into one belt. This was the main event from the 1/4 Tokyo Dome and while it was watchable, for a Dome main event, it was nothing. The heat wasn't there at all. **1/2

2/2 ALL JAPAN: 1. Hansen beat Kikuchi via submission with the boston crab in 5:00. Hansen just unmercifully beat the much smaller Kikuchi up brutally. I don't understand how Kikuchi can take this kind of punishment on a nightly basis. It was very much watchable but totally one-sided. **1/4; 2. Tsuruta & Taue & Fuchi beat Misawa & Kawada & Kobashi in the 45:00 match. The last 30 minutes or so aired on television. The match wasn't as good as their 52:00 classic last year and in some spots actually dragged because it was so long. Actually, I'd rate the six-man tag match they had on television three weeks earlier as every bit as good. But you can't knock the kind of matches these guys put together, even though you seem to see it every week and it's the same guys every time, it's also the best men's wrestling in the world. It turned into a fantastic match with tons of hot moves. Finish saw Kobashi miss a moonsault, then kick out of Tsuruta's back suplex, Taue's golden arm bomber and power bomb, before finally getting pinned by a second golden arm bomber. ****1/2

OREGON

Steve Doll beat Ron Harris on 2/7 in Eugene to win the Pacific Northwest title.

The crowd on 2/15 at the Portland Sports Arena fell to just 150 as the lack of television is really staring to take its toll. The opener saw Brickhouse Brown beat John Rambo via DQ, then Jesse Barr pinned Buddy Rose which was followed by a candidate for the most tasteless comment of 1992. After a ref bump, Rose beat up on Barr and had him pinned and screamed to get a ref in to count the fall. Out from the dressing room ran Bart Sawyer (looking 30 pounds heavier than when he left) and when Rose saw him, Barr schoolboyed him from behind and Sawyer counted the pin. After the match Rose grabbed the house mic and said that everyone had better beware because there's a man who used to wrestle here a few years ago named Buzz Sawyer. And last week we had a match. And after the match, he died. Well, onto more tasteful things, Mike Winner pinned Al Madril in a match where both guys wore a mask by using a loaded head-butt after foiling Madril's attempt to do the same thing. This set up a mask vs. mask match between the two of them for next week. Sawyer then went to a double disqualification with Mike Miller when Rose and Brown interfered to set up a tag team match for next week. The main event was a no disqualification match for the held up Northwest tag team titles. Doll & The Grappler beat Ron & Don Harris to win the straps. During and after the match the Harris brothers worked on Doll's knee and he ended up doing a stretcher job. They had already announced Doll vs. Ron Harris for the

Northwest title as next week's main event so no doubt Doll will go into the match with the bad knee and sell it the entire time.

The Grappler got juice at the last Uncle Milt's show in Vancouver, WA so apparently the Washington commission is no longer worrying about the blade.

Still no word on getting television but judging from the crowd, over the long haul it may be a necessity for survival of the territory.

GLOBAL

The 2/14 card at the Dallas Sportatorium drew approximately 800 fans (no idea of paid vs. paper). The first television show taped saw Bill Irwin beat Black Bart in a bullrope match, Terry Garvin drew Bull Pain, Steven Dane pinned Rick Garren and The California Connection (John Tatum & Rod Price) beat Chaz & Tug Taylor when Chaz was piledriven on a chair. Chaz was legit KO'd as I guess this wasn't the scheduled finish. Second hour of taping saw Eddie Gilbert over Jeff Grettler, Dark Patriot pinned Gary Young (scheduled to be Chaz but he was still shaken up), Dane pinned Rattlesnake (Jeff Raitz) and Sam Houston beat Pain in a Texas death match with a strange ending. Black Bart interfered and hung Houston over the top rope and he fell to the floor and passed out. Two referees were confused as what to do because Houston couldn't be given a ten count when he wasn't in the ring. So they called Commissioner Max Andrews to the ring to make a decision and he casually decided that Houston was the winner. The third hour saw Garvin no contest Scott Putski when all of Scandar Akbar's men attacked Garvin and Putski, Bart & Sweet Daddy Falcone beat Irwin & Rattlesnake, Rockin Robin beat Samantha Pain in a lumberjack match and the main event saw Dark Patriot keep the North American title going to a double disqualification against brother Eddie Gilbert when both Bruce Prichard and Terry Garvin interfered. Two referees were both knocked out. Both wrestlers pulled out foreign objects and hit each other simultaneously for a double knockout. Prichard jumped in and put Patriot on Gilbert and Garvin entered and reversed the positions. When the verdict was announced, Gilbert started getting mad at Garvin saying that he didn't need his help. When Garvin explained the situation, Gilbert apologized and also apologized for everything he'd done in the past. Garvin then went to shake Gilbert's hand, but then Gilbert walked away without shaking Garvin's hand.

The promotion is planning on a media blitz in March in an attempt to up the paid attendance and bolster the talent roster.

Billy Joe Travis no-showed so the idea of he and Steven Dane becoming a heel tag team called Fantasy has been scrapped.

2/21 at the Sportatorium has Bruce Forcz vs. Tug & Chaz Taylor, Eddie Gilbert vs. Big Bad John (a very green wrestler who was totally unimpressive here a few months back as Bodysnatcher) in a match where if Eddie wins, Prichard must crawl across the ring and kiss Eddie's feet but if John wins, Eddie must crawl across the ring and kiss Prichard's feet, The Patriot (Del Wilkes) vs. Dark Patriot in a non-title match and if Patriot wins, he gets five minutes in the ring with Bruce Prichard, Barry Horowitz vs. Ben Jordan for the GWF lighthweight title and Horowitz will forfeit the title to Jordan if he can't beat him twice within ten minutes, Bart & Falcone & Tatum & Price vs. Garvin & Gary Young & Putski & Irwin in an elimination tag team match (this match is scheduled to be a one-match television show so it'll probably go 30-45 minutes).

2/28 will be a taped fist Battle Royal to create a GWF Brass Knux champion with Bart, Young, Pain, Irwin, Horowitz, Tatum, Price and Kendo Nagasaki.

WWF

There wasn't much good news this week in Titan, but perhaps the best was that the FOX network special on 2/8 drew an 8.2 rating and a 13 share. While that only ranked 74th out of 92 shows for the week, for FOX on a Saturday night, it was an unqualified success. While it dropped a full point from its lead-in show (COPS), it's still two points better than FOX averages in the time slot and beat out "Perfect Strangers" and "Growing Pains" enroute to finishing third in its time slot among the four networks, with the vast majority of the Saturday night viewing audience going to the Olympic games on CBS.

Highlights from television tapings on 2/17 in Tampa before 10,000 fans (about 1,500 shy of capacity). Many major changes as you'll note as outside forces are causing "booking as you go along" strategy to overtake the normal well planned out in advance angles Titan is usually famous for. Jim Neidhart is gone with no explanation and Owen Hart worked as singles wrestler Owen "The Rocket" Hart winning a few television squashes.

Jake Roberts also wasn't there. Of the five matches advertised, just two of them took place, naturally without any announcement of a change in the card and just after promising no more false advertising to the Florida legislature. The main bouts were supposed to be Hulk Hogan vs. Ric Flair, which did take place but may have been their worst match so far, Shawn Michaels vs. British Bulldog, which also took place and was the best match on the show, LOD vs. Natural Disasters which obviously didn't take place since LOD is gone, Undertaker vs. Big Bossman which didn't take place even though both were there because Undertaker turned face so Bossman instead worked with Warlord, and Randy Savage vs. Roberts with Sid Justice as ref which also didn't take place since Roberts wasn't there. Before the cameras rolled there were four matches, a try-out with J.W. Storm, who looked bad as far as work but he had that look that nobody is supposed to have, Jim Powers pinned Kato *1/4, Chris Walker pinned Pat Tanaka **1/2 (Tanaka was the best wrestler on the card) and a guy named Lee Armstrong was given a try-out but looked terrible and ended up doing several jobs later in the show in taping matches. For Prime Time, Owen Hart pinned Hercules *1/2. They announced that DiBiase & IRS won the tag team titles in Denver, although they never announced who they beat to win the belts. DiBiase & IRS are now with Jimmy Hart as their manager as Sherri is strictly with Shawn Michaels. They said the finish was when Jimmy Hart used the megaphone, which isn't what happened. The Natural Disasters turned babyfaces with the storyline claiming that Hart cheated them out of their title shot against the champions who never existed. After Ted & IRS won a squash match, the Disasters did a run-in to a big pop and chased them out of the ring. So I guess the Wrestlemania match will be Ted & IRS vs. Disasters, which pretty much to me confirms LOD is history since LOD was to work with Disasters at WM. Doug Somers worked as a jobber for Tatonka. Shawn Michaels has better entrance music. Randy Savage squashed Mountie in 3:18 for Prime Time. In a non-taped segment designed to get the proper fan reaction for later taped segments, Mountie then challenged any man in the house (he does a great job in these segments) and Undertaker and Paul Bearer came out and Bearer KO'd Hart with the urn and Undertaker survived Mountie trying to shock him four times and left Mountie laying with the tombstone. Sid Justice still had a majority of the fans cheering him no matter what he did, and his squashees did stretcher jobs and he puts a license plate on them after squashing them which says to call 911. Virgil beat Tanaka *1/4. Ric Flair did one of the great interviews of his career for six minutes showing a photo of himself with Elizabeth from years back and claiming that he dumped Liz a long time ago. Repo Man pinned Jim Brunzell, Mountie & Disasters beat Roddy Piper & Bushwhackers *, Papa Shongo had a squash which was screwed up since his skull caught on fire and the fire was blazing in the corner and the camera crew had to try and put it out as the match was going on. Justice won another squash and Virgil tried to make the save but Sid left him laying as well. Bossman double count out Warlord 1/2*, Bulldog beat Michaels via DQ when Sherri interfered **3/4. Hogan did an interview and compared Sid with Jeffrey Dahmer and Charles Manson and talked about his match in the "Pontiac Hoosier Dome" and he's such a star they didn't even make him re-tape it. Finale saw Hogan beat Flair via count out *1/2.

Judging from how everyone looked at the taping, the steroid policy appeared to be a total fraud as many of the wrestlers looked bigger and more muscular than they had at the previous taping. Steve Planamenta on Tuesday told Alex Marvez of Three Count Newsletter and The Miami Herald that the WWF had done two steroid tests—one in New Haven in November and a second test in Lubbock, TX for the SNME taping three weeks ago. This would mean it was ten weeks between tests. Like the first test in New Haven, apparently there was no penalties associated with the second test since nobody was suspended once again even though the WWF had previously said that anyone with steroids in their system for the second test would be suspended for six weeks. More importantly, it appeared that many (but not all) wrestlers in Lubbock were way

down as even was mentioned here after the SNME aired, but from the reports (I obviously wasn't in Tampa myself), that wasn't the case this time. This certainly must make one suspicious that guys were tipped off ahead (which it appeared was the case with the first test as well). I don't even know why we even spend time worrying about Titan's steroid policy anyway.

Quick correction from last week. When reporting on the 1/31 MSG show, we listed Hercules pinned Warlord when the correct result was Warlord winning.

As far as the special ref for the Hogan vs. Justice match at Mania, sources at Top Rank boxing (Bob Arum's promotion) have confirmed that Arum received an offer last week for George Foreman to be a guest referee at Wrestlemania. Arum thought it was okay if it would make Foreman money but Foreman turned it down. The rumors going around, which make a lot of sense, are that Lou Ferrigno will be the guest ref.

I was very disappointed with how they handled the switch from Hogan-Flair to Hogan-Justice with simply an announcement by Jack Tunney which really made no sense.

With the Undertaker turn airing on television this weekend, all the scheduled Hogan & Piper vs. Undertaker & Flair matches will instead be Justice & Flair as a team.

I don't have an updated figure on Wrestlemania ticket sales other than the figure we reported last week of more than 20,000 was later confirmed to us as a worked figure (the real figure was lower) and that sales are well behind what they were expecting them to be and where they needed to be to actually fill the building.

Baseball America magazine in the 2/10 to 2/24 issue has a story on Randy Savage's minor league baseball career.

2/14 in St. Louis drew 5,500 as Tatonka pinned Rick Martel, Undertaker pinned Storm (horrible match, Undertaker totally cheered), Bushwhackers beat Kato & Brian Nobbs, IRS pinned Virgil using the briefcase, Warlord pinned Jim Brunzell, Bret Hart beat Mountie (best match on the card due to Hart) and Savage beat Roberts in a cage match. Only three of the seven matches took place as advertised with an announcement at the beginning of the card that "due to travel problems this is the card" and they announced the revised card without saying who wouldn't be there. Seemed fans were most upset about Von Erich missing the show as he's still over pretty big in the city from his NWA days.

2/15 in Orlando drew 4,600 with most of the same no-shows as St. Louis. They announced the revised card there at the beginning with no offers of refunds and no announcement of who advertised wasn't there. Lots of fans were really upset about LOD not being there. Results saw Tatonka pin Warlord 1/4*, Bushwhacker Luke beat Typhoon via count out -*, Martel pinned Storm -**, Hart beat Mountie **, Kato pinned Brunzell 3/4*, IRS pinned Virgil * and Hogan & Piper beat Flair & Undertaker when Flair accidentally hit Undertaker, who walked out and Flair left by himself was pinned by Hogan (which is Flair's first clean job since coming to the WWF) ***3/4. Hogan & Piper were cheered heavily although Piper more than Hogan. Undertaker and Flair were about 50 percent and 40 percent cheered respectively.

2/16 in Auburn Hills, MI drew 6,000 as Tito Santana pinned Barbarian in 9:10 1/2*, Repo Man pinned Virgil in 9:08 *1/4, Michaels pinned Powers in 13:13 (Shawn did a one-man show) **1/2, Hogan & Piper beat Flair & Undertaker with the same finish and Hogan pinning Flair in 9:57 ***1/4, Big Bossman pinned IRS in 6:37 *, Skinner pinned Walker DUD and Sgt. Slaughter & Jim Duggan beat Nasty Boys when Duggan hit Nobbs with the 2x4. Before this card, they were more specific in announcing that Ted DiBiase (who missed a week with a legit injured back) and Jimmy Snuka wouldn't be there due to injuries.

Hogan was close to universally cheered at his live appearances this weekend in the tag matches with Piper against Undertaker & Flair. I was told on a New York radio show that when they announced his name in Nassau Coliseum on Friday night that the entire place booed but that's second hand but did hear that

in St. Louis when they announced his name it was 70 percent silence and 30 percent boos.

2/8 in Los Angeles drew 5,600 as Warlord pinned Walker DUD, Michaels pinned Snuka 1/2*, Flair beat Piper via DQ ***1/4, Bossman & Santana beat DiBiase & IRS **, Mountie pinned Brunzell 1/2*, Repo Man pinned Virgil * and Legion of Doom beat Natural Disasters *.

The magazine Toy and Hobby World in the February issue had a brief mention about wrestling toys. It said while the WWF had added seven new licenses at the start of 1992, its toys declined in sales in 1991 which was attributed to its decline in television ratings nationally and an increase in popularity of World Championship Wrestling during 1991 (which shows how much they know about wrestling I guess).

Prime Time Wrestling was pre-empted on 2/10 because of the Westminster Dog Show (which actually did a better rating than P-T normally gets. All-American Wrestling, the morning after the Saturday Night Main Event, drew a 2.3 rating.

2/15 at the Spectrum in Philadelphia saw Skinner beat Walker, Michaels pinned Powers, New Foundation beat Beverly Brothers, Santana pinned The Barbarian (sub for DiBiase), Slaughter & Duggan beat Nasty Boys, Bossman beat Repo Man via count out and Savage pinned Roberts in a cage match.

2/14 at the Nassau Coliseum drew 5,000 as Santana pinned Barbarian (sub for DiBiase), Skinner pinned Walker, Bossman beat Repo Man via count out, Owen Hart pinned Blake Beverly, Duggan pinned Typhoon (scheduled as tag match but Earthquake wasn't there), Beau Beverly pinned Jim Neidhart, Michaels pinned Powers (sub for Snuka) and Flair beat Piper via DQ for using a chair.

USWA

2/10 in Memphis saw the crowd stay up to 2,100 as Robert Fuller beat Tony Falk, Brian Christopher beat Tom Prichard to win the Texas title (which is never defended in Texas), Eric Embry & C.J. beat Tony Anthony & Dirty White Girl in a match in which the winners gave the losers 10 lashes with a belt, Kimala regained the held up USWA title beating Koko Ware via count out when Friday (Buddy Wayne) held Ware's leg as he was trying to get back in the ring, Anthony won a Battle Royal with all the girls and their guys in which the only way to be eliminated was to be stripped down to your underwear and The Moondogs & The Big Black Dog beat Jerry Lawler & Austin Idol & Jeff Jarrett when the Black Dog pinned Lawler after he was hit with a chair.

2/11 in Louisville saw Prichard beat Falk, Miss Texas & Dirty White Girl beat C.J. & Miss Jennifer when Embry and Falk interfered for the DQ, Fuller pinned Doug Masters, Embry DDQ Anthony when the women interfered, Jarrett beat Richard Lee in a cage match and Moondogs DDQ Lawler & Jarrett.

Saw some recent tapes from here. Brian Christopher (Brian Lawler) resembles his father early in his career so much as far as cocky mannerisms it is unbelievable. He's really small (read that probably has never used roids) but his personality is better than most.

The Moondogs vs. Lawler & Jarrett matches have been the wildest and best brawls on major circuits in the country since the Eddie Gilbert vs. Cactus Jack matches (better than Sting vs. Cactus matches). Since it's so different from what is being done in the other promotions, it's quite refreshing to watch it, although the quadruple juice just seems to be something that should be obsolete for health reasons.

When Moondogs worked their squash on television Saturday, both the jobbers juiced heavily.

Robert Fuller appears to be on his way out.

Black Dog is really green. Lawler threatened to throw fire at Black Dog on the 2/16 card.

Tony Anthony is leaving for Mexico.

2/16 in Memphis saw Miss Texas beat Jennifer, Falk beat Ricky Hayes, Fuller beat Masters, Christopher beat Prichard via DQ to keep the Texas title, White Girl beat C.J., Embry beat Anthony in a scaffold match with Anthony doing a stretcher job

after working a leg injury, Kimala beat Ware via DQ to keep the USWA titles, Lawler beat Black Dog via DQ and Lawler (subbing for Idol who no-showed) & Jarrett beat Moondogs via DQ.

HERE AND THERE

The lawsuit filed by Larry Sharpe over breach of contract against Bam Bam Bigelow comes to trial in New Jersey on 3/23.

Former WWF wrestler Paul Roma, who has been training with Kevin Rooney since he quit the federation, has his boxing debut on ESPN on 3/6 for Bob Arum's Top Rank Promotions. Top Rank wants to give Roma a push as a heavyweight.

Talked with Stu Hart a few nights back. Stuart E. said that he has no intention of re-starting Stampede Wrestling but there have been talks from time-to-time about trying to syndicate the 30+ years of tapes (1956-1990) he has of the old Stampede territory. Hart said he asked the new company promoting in Calgary not to use the Stampede Wrestling name since he's not involved with it. Hart said the best worker he ever saw was Dory Funk, who he said he never saw have a bad match and had three of the best matches Hart ever remembered seeing (against Dave Ruhl, Billy Robinson and George Gordienko). He said the best drawing card ever in the territory was Abdullah the Butcher in the late 1960s.

Buddy Landel said that the article written in the Jacksonville newspaper about him misquoted some of the things he said. He recently walked out in Puerto Rico over money problems along with one or two other Americans and his goal is to get back with WCW.

The 20/20 story on steroids is tentatively scheduled for a 3/13 air date. It'll concentrate on bodybuilding and Steve Michalik but there will be many references to wrestling.

An indie promoter who sells shows in the Northeast just called to say that high schools and board of educations are leery of running indie shows with the response, "We don't want these steroid freaks in our gyms." This business has to clean up this problem or it will destroy it from within because public perception will only continually get worse unless the problem is eradicated. The opinion to just ride with the storm because it'll go away looks to be very shortsighted.

Rich Mancuso and Steve Mueller are doing a cable TV pro wrestling show in New York on Saturday afternoons at 2 p.m. on Ch. 38 and 44 in New York.

Baron Von Raschke, Ray "The Crippler" Stevens and Buck Zumhofe will all be working a show this coming weekend at Fridley High School in Minnesota.

Bob Roop ran a show on 2/15 in Ft. Lauderdale before 300 fans with both main events (Buddy Landel and Kendall Windham) no-showing. Those who worked included The Black Hearts (Tom Nash & Dave Johnson), Rick Ryder, Malia Hosaka, Penelope Paradise and Bob Cook.

The University of Central Florida dedicated an annual scholarship over this past weekend to the memory of Ed Gantner. Among those at the dedication were Scott Hall (WCW's Diamond Studd), Kevin Sullivan (yes, he's alive no matter what rumors you've heard), Woman and Sir Oliver Humperdink.

Gordon Scozzari's American Wrestling Federation has plans for shows in April. Paul Orndorff has vacated the AWF title so the new champ by virtue of divine intervention is Stan Lane.

Curtis Towe, a San Antonio-based prelim wrestler was shot and killed in a bar altercation over the weekend. According to police reports, Towe pulled out a gun in a bar but before he could use it was shot by the brother of the main he was aiming at. The police ruled it justifiable homicide.

Add Terry Funk, Jim Cornette and Butch Reed to the list of those who have agreed to work for Buck Robley's promotion out of Louisiana. Funk will do both television announcing and even wrestle in between filming his television show "Tequila and Bonetti." The group is set for a 3/16 start date in New Orleans.

Motor City Wrestling has a special on Continental Cable in Madison Heights, MI headlined by Mickey Doyle defending the North American title against Mad Max Anthony.

Chris Love announced shows on 3/6 in Belton, TX and 3/7 in Paris, TX with Bull Pain and Sam Houston among the headliners.

Boxer and sometimes wrestler Leon Spinks was injured in an auto accident at 8:45 a.m. on 2/16 in Addison, IL. Spinks' car weaved and hit a stationary and unoccupied pick-up truck. Police were questioning him for a DUI.

Tom Brandi pinned King Kaluha to headline the Valentine's Day Spectacular on 2/8 for the Virginia Wrestling Alliance.

WWC on 2/15 in Caguas, PR saw Carlitos Colon beat Ron Garvin via DQ, Heartbreakers (Wendell Cooley & Frankie Lancaster) over Bobby & Jackie Fulton, Atkeem Malumba pinned Rex King, Robert Gibson pinned Road Block, The Law beat Fidel Sierra via DQ and El Exotico beat El Corsario.

WCW

Lots of news regarding personnel. Dustin Rhodes, Steve Austin and Brian Pillman all signed two-year contracts. These new contracts have a base salary plus incentives. I believe both Rhodes and Austin signed for bases of \$165,000 and \$190,000 with incentives that will push that total up from there. Pillman had been heavily pursued by the WWF which is apparently looking at raiding back in the opposite direction.

Jesse Ventura hadn't signed his contract at press time but apparently agreed to terms mid-week for a two-year deal to co-host World Wide Wrestling and is scheduled to start around the first of March. He'll also no doubt continue to co-host all PPV and Clash programs.

Terry Gordy & Steve Williams also haven't signed the contract but are either close to or have verbally agreed to a part-time deal in between Japan tours.

Johnny B. Badd signed a one-year contract rumored at \$156,000.

KOFY, Ch. 20 in San Francisco will begin airing WCW Pro Wrestling on 3/7. Check for time slot.

2/16 at the Scope in Norfolk drew a \$26,000 house (2,400) as Richard Morton pinned Johnny B. Badd, Abdullah the Butcher pinned P.N. News, Mr. Hughes pinned Van Hammer, Steiners beat Young Pistols, Barry Windham beat Larry Zbyszko in a Texas death match and Sting & Ricky Steamboat & Dustin Rhodes & Ron Simmons beat Rick Rude & Bobby Eaton & Steve Austin & Arn Anderson in a cage match when Steamboat pinned Eaton.

Terry Taylor & Greg Valentine won the U.S. tag team titles from Ron Simmons & Big Josh on 2/17 in Rock Hill, SC.

Dick Slater won't be coming in since he was originally going to be brought in to team with Valentine.

Tom Zenk & Marcus Bagwell have formed an underneath tag team.

PR chief Barry Norman was fired.

Expect major changes in format and content of the WCW Saturday night show.

Michael Hayes won't be doing any color commentary because they don't want to use anyone involved in angles on commentary and The Freebirds will be getting an angle around April. Expect Magnum T.A. to do color along with Teddy Long as there will be color commentators on every show.

The 3/1 TBS Main Event show will have the wrap-arounds done live in the studio so they can comment about the PPV show from the previous night.

Kip Frey said on John Arezzi's Pro Wrestling Spotlight radio show that he is looking into cutting ticket prices at the house shows. An announcement was made Saturday night in Baltimore that for the remainder of 1992 tickets would be \$12, \$10 and \$5.40.

Sting missed a few shows this weekend due to the birth of a seven pound, eight ounce Steven James Borden Jr. Congratulations to Sting and also to Cactus Jack who should have had an addition to his family before you read this as well.

2/15 in Baltimore drew 3,400 and \$40,000 as Zbyszko pinned Bagwell, Steve Armstrong pinned News when Tracy Smothers tripped News who was delivering a suplex, Van Hammer beat Abdullah the Butcher via DQ for an over-the-top rope in an awful match (Hammer was put on the road to replace El Gigante who returned home to Argentina for his mother's funeral--Gigante will be back for the PPV), Morton pinned Badd, Simmons pinned Eaton (good), Steiners beat Cactus Jack & Hughes when Rick pinned Hughes and Windham & Rhodes & Steamboat beat Rude & Austin & Anderson with Dusty Rhodes bullroped to Paul E. Dangerously. The finish saw Zbyszko attack Rhodes, who made his own comeback and beat up both Zbyszko and Dangerously and then used the cowbell on Arn's head to set up the face's pin.

The new policy of posting signs in front of arenas regarding no-shows and making announcements is supposed to begin this week. At the shows Sting wasn't at, they did make the announcement when the show began and offered refunds.

Because of the Hawaiian Open, WCW was canceled last weekend and Main Event aired an hour earlier and drew a 1.9 rating while Power Hour did a 1.7. The golf did a 1.8 which is well below the 2.7 that WCW has averaged every Saturday.

After Sting goes around the horn with Rick Rude in March and early April, the next headline heel will be Big Van Vader as they did an angle 2/17 in Rock Hill, SC where Vader powerslammed Sting a few times and he had to be helped out of the ring. TV taping drew 2,500 and included Anderson & Eaton & Austin beating Chip the Firebreaker & Zenk & Bagwell, Sting & Simmons & Steamboat & Rhodes over Eaton & Anderson & Zbyszko & Austin when Steamboat pinned Zbyszko but they beat up on Steamboat afterwards, Steiners over Eaton & Zbyszko in 15 seconds and more.

Gordon Solie was taken off the WNN segment and replaced with Eric "Mannequin" Bischoff. Solie's only role left is doing the localized promos for Florida cities.

2/14 in Charleston, WV drew 3,000 as Hughes beat Hammer, Morton beat Badd, News over Taylor, Steiners beat Pistols (real good), Windham beat Zbyszko and Steamboat & Simmons & Rhodes beat Eaton & Anderson & Rude in a cage match. A scary moment in the match when Rude fell off the cage backward on his head. He actually wasn't hurt bad but solid it like crazy.

The only poor gate of the week was 2/13 in Cincinnati which drew a \$12,000 house.

A get-together has been organized for fans coming in for the Milwaukee show at Major Goosby's at 340 West Kilbourn which is across the street from the Mecca Auditorium at 1 p.m. on 2/29. Observer readers Paul Steinberg and Jon Babler have reserved a section of the bar for a get-together and video party.

2/12 before an overflow crowd at Center Stage saw Taylor & Valentine double-team Bagwell, Hughes pinned Big Josh, they announced Dangerously would be barred from ringside during the Rude-Steamboat PPV match, Steiners beat Pistols ***1/2 and Windham & Steamboat beat Anderson & Zbyszko via DQ for using the phone. This all aired this past weekend. On this coming Saturday's show, Pillman beat Rip Rogers in a good match, Taylor & Valentine issue a challenge to Simmons & Josh for the U.S. belts, Sting & Steamboat & Windham & Rhodes beat Rude & Eaton & Anderson & Zbyszko when Rhodes pinned Eaton. Because the top rope broke during this match, even though it was ***1/2, they re-taped the match on 2/17 in Rock Hill and it'll be the Rock Hill version that airs on Saturday.

THE READERS PAGES

Rich Kunkel of 555 College St., Wadsworth, OH 44281 is looking for a tape of the 1/3 Inside Edition piece with Billy Graham and David Shults and the 1/17 concession stand brawl with Moondogs vs. Jeff Jarrett & Jerry Lawler and pre-1988 Wrestling Observer Yearbooks.

The Virginia Wrestling Association has a yearbook available for \$2 at P.O. Box 34142, Richmond, VA 23234.

Naoki Ishibashi of 335 Yusaki, Kawanishi-cho, Shiki-gun Nara 636-03 Japan is looking for someone who can supply him weekly with tapes of UWA and EMLL wrestling and in exchange he can provide Japanese tapes.

Koji Suwa of 81-2 Kurado Kisogawa-cho, Haguri-gun Aichi 493 JAPAN is looking for tapes of matches with Japanese wrestlers in the U.S. and can trade tapes of New Japan, SWS and Rings in exchange.

Bob Barnett of 301 5th St. #2, Santa Monica, CA 90405 has two tickets to the Cauliflower Alley dinner on 3/21 in Studio City, CA. Price is \$45 each. He also has Japanese tapes for trade.

Teresa DeMarie of 60 Fisher Ave., Tuckahoe, NY 10707 is looking for a tape of the December Portland Wrestling show in which Roddy Piper made the speech about Don Owen.

Dave Scherer of P.O. Box 612, Marmora, NJ 08223 is looking to get copies of the weekly Memphis television show. In exchange he can trade tapes from either Mexican promotion weekly or any Japanese tapes.

Tony Moore of 6187 Oriole Dr., Flint, MI 48506 is looking for a tape of the 2/9 edition of WCW World Wide Wrestling.

Georgiann Makropoulos of 23-44 30th Dr., Astoria, NY 11102 puts out the monthly newsletter Wrestling Chatterbox for \$2.50 per issue and is also selling Wrestling Fan On Bard signs for \$1 plus a 29 cent stamp and copies of Herb Abrams "Beach Brawl" PPV show for \$12.95.

Robert Sears of 721 Chuckwagon Rd., Rio Rancho, NM 87124 is looking for a tape of the 20/20 segment on pro wrestling from 1985.

Fred Cooper of 4312 Nevin Ave., Richmond, CA 94805 is looking for a copy of the 1/10/92 issue of the Wrestling Observer Newsletter.

Kelly Kroh of 6947 Coal Creek Pkwy SE #164, Renton, WA 98059 has wrestling videos for trade and is looking for Game three of the Smythe Division semifinal series between Los Angeles and Edmonton and for the British comedy show "Dave Allen at Large!" .

Bob Nichandowicz of 2217 Balmoral Ave., Union, NJ 07083 is looking to get New Japan and All Japan tapes on a regular basis.

A.R. of 1 Cherry Ln. #3, Lynbrook, NY 11563 is looking for 1984-85 tapes of Lo Mejor en Lucha Libre, the spanish version of the Jim Crockett tapes hosted by Hugo Savinovich that aired in New York.

Gary Langevin of 124 Maple St., Newport, VT 05855 is looking for good to excellent condition VHS tapes of WWF Championship Wrestling complete shows (1984-86), all episodes of the old TNT show, Prime Time and All-American Wrestling (1985-87), Tri State Wrestling shows, International Wrestling from Montreal (1985), Pro Wrestling this Week (all episodes), Bob Luce Hall of Fame Classics and has more than 600 tapes to trade with. He also publishes bi-monthly newsletter called "On the Mat" for \$2 per issue.

Joe Hamilton Jr. of 3040 Hudson St., Baltimore, MD 21224 is looking to get tapes of any Joel Goodhart shows.

Wesley Terrell of 4959 Massachusetts Dr., San Jose, CA 95136 is looking for a tape of the first Royal Rumble on USA network, 1989 and 1990 Wrestling Observer Yearbooks, tapes of Ric Flair matches and Clash of Champion #3 to #7.

West Coast Wrestling Alliance is looking for wrestlers with experience that live in California and Nevada and all prospective wrestlers should send a video and resume to Tim Barrett, P.O. Box 3113, Pinedale, CA 93650.

Western Ohio Wrestling at P.O. Box 750803, Dayton, OH 45475 is selling all sorts of merchandise and for info send \$1 and a SASE.

Bob Cook of 8670 Gaillard Ave., North Port, FL 34287 is looking for 70s and 80s tapes of Superstar Billy Graham.

Anthony Scala of P.O. Box 549, Brooklyn, NY 11222 is looking for tapes of WWF television shows, Madison Square Garden house shows and Florida TV shows from 1976-82.

Hiroumi Sagawa of 1-58 Chiogaoka 2 Chome, Tarumi-ku, Kobe-shi Hyogo 655 JAPAN is looking for a tape of the Tatsumi Fujinami vs. Big Van Vader match from 12/21 in Bremen, Germany and is also looking for a weekly supplier of WCW television shows and can trade All Japan, New Japan and SWS tapes in exchange.

Lance LeVine of 507 W. 43rd Pl., Chicago, IL 60609, who puts out the newsletter Chokehold, has a triple issue yearbook available now for \$3 plus has put out a non-wrestling book called Trials & Tribs 91: From Pee to Long Dong. The 30-page book goes for \$5.

Vic Stanley put together a newsletter called Screwjob Finish at P.O. Box 176, Lafayette, IN 47902 for \$2.50 per issue. It's a satire rather than a news publication.

Terry Dart of 21 Upper Ave. #A, London, ONT N6H 2L5 Canada is looking for videotapes of any matches with Bruno Sammartino vs. Don Leo Jonathan and old Stampede Wrestling programs.

Jeff Mullins of P.O. Box 36189, San Jose, CA has an 18-page double issue of the satirical and serious Pro Wrestling Sushi for \$1.50 and will to new or former subscribers that order four issues for \$6, get the double issue free.

Gary Waugh of 310 N. Oakdale, Salina, KS 64501 has videotapes available of Sunflower State Wrestling for \$13 as a special to Observer readers. He also has a discount for Observer readers on SSW t-shirts.

Sam Batts of 1135 Patterson St., Petersburg, VA 23803 is looking for issues of the Wrestling Observer Newsletter that cover the deaths of Bruiser Brody and Gino Hernandez and Ric Flair's WCW departure.

John Golden of 8 Pond St., North Easton, MA 02356 wants Memphis tapes from 1982-83 and Calgary tapes from 1987-88.

Cliff Brenner of P.O. Box 167, Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522 has a rare copy of the book "The Fall Guys" by Marcus Griffin (about pro wrestling in the 1920s), which is probably the greatest published book ever on pro wrestling, for sale in good condition for \$75.

Colin Fritz of 8 Bradley Dr., Lancaster, NY 14086 is looking to correspond with readers in the Buffalo area.

George Vlahos of 945 4th St., Charleston, IL 61920 is looking for recent back issues of the Observer.

GATORWOLF

This letter is in response to Brick Armstrong's letter of a few weeks ago regarding Steve Gatorwolf's American Wrestling Federation. I have wrestled and booked talent for Gatorwolf for nearly seven years. In that time, Steve has given wrestlers from my wrestling school a place to break in and gain experience. Men and women such as "Cutie Pie" Louie Spicolli, The Beast, Riki Ataki, The Mercenaries, John and David Hannah (Gibson), Jason Anderson, Krusher Krugnoff, Jan Flame, Stephan & Thor DeLeon, George Rojas, Michelle Starr, Don Monks, Joe Vidal and of course myself have wrestled for Steve on countless occasions. I've also brought in Sue Sexton, Tim Patterson, Peter Maivia Jr. and Tim Tall Tree. I won't tell you that we've obtained fame and wealth in the AWF, but I can tell you that Steve has never profited on a show while cheating his talent. As everyone knows, promoting is risky. But Steve has carved a niche for himself in Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado and Nevada. His attendances range from 250 to 800. For a group without television, this is impressive. On shows where Steve drew more than 500 fans, he has always given my wrestlers and myself a substantial monetary bonus. Steve also pays for the wrestlers to fly or drive to the shows as well as paying for hotels. Not many promoters do this for even the big names. I realize Brick Armstrong and Steve have personal problems with each other that is none of my business. I also don't know how the Arizona

talent is paid. I do know that there is little good talent around that area so Steve must import reliable people from California and even Alabama where he has brought in Lou Fabbiano and Downtown Bruno. When Steve has tried to use several local wrestlers, they were either late for the show, didn't show up at all or were so lazy they were an embarrassment to the promotion, thereby having a negative net value. As far as Brick's comments about Steve not being the most over wrestler on his shows, I disagree. Many of Steve's shows are on Indian reservations. Steve is a real Indian, therefore he has become a hero and role model for the kids who attend his shows. He doesn't smoke, drink, do drugs, steroids and is married with children. He doesn't always have the best match on the card, but at the end of every show, the fans are satisfied and left with good advice in the ring from Steve and that is him telling the kids to stay in school and get a good education, don't do drugs and show respect for your parents. To me, this is much more important than how many high spots one does during a match.

*Bill Anderson
Colton, California*

I'm writing a letter in response to the letter in the 1/10 Observer regarding myself. Jim Kolhelp aka Brick Armstrong has forgotten that his first match was in front of a sellout crowd in Winslow, AZ and that he's worked in front of sellouts in other towns such as Greasewood, Page and Springerville, AZ. He seems to have forgotten I've had sellouts before and after he was let into the business, which was my fault. I haven't booked him in over a year or know of any other promotion that has. However, he was correct in saying that Tim Tall Tree has stolen the show at times. He sure has. So has Billy Anderson, Tim Patterson, Lou Fabbiano and others who have worked for me. Yes, I have called the WWF several times in the past when they were doing television tapings here in Arizona to get him and other workers from here on the shows with Bill Anderson's help. As far as money and payoffs go, the people who work for me get their guarantee plus their expenses paid (hotel and gas). The above mentioned names can all corroborate that. I know that a newsletter is not the place to air out personal differences but my personal, business and professional reputation is being assassinated. And remember, I don't try out for no one.

*Steve Gatorwolf
Mesa, Arizona*

STEROIDS

If Billy Graham was using steroids long before he entered the WWF, how can he try to blame them for his steroid use? Graham says he only went public talking about Hulk Hogan because of his appearance on the Arsenio Hall show. Yet he also talked about his training with Arnold Schwarzenegger, who has denied taking steroids in every interview he has ever given. If he wants to send the country a message about steroid use and hypocrisy, he should start with the head of the President's Council on Physical Fitness. Has Vince McMahon considered improving the quality of his arena matches with better workers to get fans back to the buildings? The missed moves of bad wrestlers can be covered up on television with post-production but there's no way to cover up the missed moves in the arena.

*Dennis Cleary
Clinton, Iowa*

DM: I agree that Graham can't blame the WWF for all his health problems since he used steroids before he ever went to the WWF. "I'm not saying they're responsible for the entire problem and obviously not for anything before 1975," Graham said. "I think there is some responsibility from 1975 (when he joined the WWWF) or at the least 1977 (when Zahorian was regularly stationed in the WWF dressing room every three weeks dispensing drugs at television tapings and became the group's, and Graham's, main steroid and downers supplier). I felt (using steroids) was part of my job and I feel they worked in conspiracy with Zahorian to have the drugs available to everyone. I can't say for sure about the 70s, but I couldn't have worked for them in the 80s unless I had a certain look. I was directly told this was in 1986 when I met Vince McMahon in Connecticut and he said to me, "You look great, but I don't think you're quite big enough." I was about 250, tanned from Florida and fairly cut up at the time." I believe the company certainly rewarded and encouraged steroid use during that time period and it appears they still do to this

day, but Graham was a more than willing user and admittedly addicted. Schwarzenegger has always admitted using steroids (although I'd suspect he wouldn't want people to know just how much and for how long) as a competitive bodybuilder. Schwarzenegger was also so genetically gifted that, at least when he was younger, he actually got larger (but less cut-up obviously) while off the juice. In fact, he was the one who came up with the line that there comes a point in time for every top athlete where they have to make a choice between their health and attempting to be the best. There are many people who agree that it was very hypocritical and a bad message to send when President Bush appointed Schwarzenegger to be the head of the President's Council. It should be noted that Graham asked Schwarzenegger for advice and support when he wanted to speak out. Schwarzenegger told him he'd help him in any way he could but that he should go light on the subject and shouldn't name names because it would rub his peers the wrong way. "I felt he took a shallow stance," Graham said.

When you write about steroids you mention Billy Graham and Ed Gantner and I know what happened to them. But I don't know anything about Savannah Jack. Is this the same Savannah Jack that I remember was TV champion for the old Bill Watts UWF? If that is him, I'm very surprised because he wasn't a musclehead like Hulk Hogan. Are we talking about the same Savannah Jack?

Jason Jones
Milan, Illinois

DM: We are talking about the same Savannah Jack. It should be noted, and I think a lot of people haven't understood this, that it isn't just the real obvious wrestlers who look like bodybuilders that are the only ones that use steroids. Think of what the 90 percent figure means and realize that it isn't just David Shults, Bruno Sammartino and Billy Graham that have given that figure for the WWF. David Sammartino publicly said 98 percent. Bill Eadie and John Studd have both said 90 percent was a low estimate, although Studd won't say that publicly now. One former WCW road agent said in the Miami Herald 90 percent for that group. Eddie Gilbert said 75 percent of all wrestlers today because he felt the percentage has dropped of late because more wrestlers have seen the bad side effects. Many current and former WWF wrestlers have estimated to me personally, as recent as six weeks ago, between a 90 and 98 percent figure (which I still suspect is a little high but I'm not in the dressing rooms). Five or six years ago the Miami Herald did a huge feature on anabolic steroids in various sports and in high schools and interviewed myself and many pro wrestlers on the subject. When the reporter (this wasn't Alex Marvez, he would have been in junior high back then) asked me what percentage of wrestlers used steroids and I said I felt it was around 75 percent, he said he talked with a dozen pro wrestlers and none gave him a figure less than 90 percent. Lightning Kid has used steroids. Chris Von Erich was once arrested for bringing steroids across the border from Mexico. With the exception of Jerry Lawler (and I believed he was telling the truth), I can't recall one wrestler in recent years who has told me point blank that he had never used steroids (I believe there are many who haven't ever in the smaller groups, a few in WCW and maybe a few in WWF). Hulk Hogan may have lied on the subject but don't get the mistaken idea that everyone who takes steroids looks like Hogan, Sid Justice, Lex Luger or The Ultimate Warrior. More look like Tully Blanchard or Kendall Windham (which is not to say that either of those two use steroids, just that using steroids alone doesn't make one look like Ken Patera or Billy Graham in their prime). Not all steroid users weigh 300 pounds and have 20 inch arms. Only a very small percentage of steroid users have the genetics, no matter how many steroids they want to take and how hard they train, to get 20 inch arms. Many more weigh less than 200 than weigh 300. Savannah Jack (Ted Russell) was forced to retire from wrestling because of heart problems that he told me was due to his long-time steroid use. When he left wrestling, his heart was so bad that his doctors told him he would need a transplant (similar to Steve Courson). When he discontinued his steroid use, his heart improved to the point he no longer needed a transplant and could lead a normal life, but not be active in athletics. I'm not certain of

this, but I believe his younger brother, who wasn't a wrestler but also used steroids, died in 1991 of a heart attack although there I've received no word that steroids had anything to do with it or not.

The Superstar Billy Graham interview was outstanding. Whatever happened to the book Ray Diding was going to write on pro wrestling in 1985? Did it die of the symptoms you discussed in the 2/3 letters page? One thought on Lyle Alzado following our interview in December. He's got brain cancer caused, he thinks, from mixing steroids and Human Growth Hormone. Scott Irwin died of brain cancer. Could there be a connection? And is Bill Irwin's drop in size due to getting off the juice after Scott's death? Doesn't the controversy over Nintendo trying to buy the Seattle Mariners remind you of the time Hacksaw Duggan told Nikolai Volkoff (or was it Boris Zhukov) that he's couldn't sing the Russian national anthem "because this is the land of the free?"

Joe Lancello
Sports Director, KKWQ Radio
Warroad, Minnesota

DM: No idea what happened to Diding's proposed book but I'd guess it met the fate you presumed. Most doctors, including those well versed on steroids, don't seem to believe there's any connection between what Alzado has and either steroids or Human Growth Hormone so I seriously doubt there's any connection with Scott Irwin. There have been several reported deaths from a brain cancer like disease called Creutzfeldt-Jakob attributed to natural Human Growth Hormone which is an AIDS like disease because of its long incubation period. The natural HGH, which caused the disease, is the drug derived from the pituitary glands of actual cadavers. The chemically engineered HGH produced by Eli Lilly and Genentech in the United States has not been linked to the disease. Nothing remotely similar to brain cancer has been attributed thus far to steroids. However, most athletes believe the genetically engineered HGH isn't as effective for performance enhancement and building muscle tissue as the much harder to obtain HGH from cadavers so if they can find a supplier of the HGH from cadavers, many are willing to take the risk because it can result in greater muscle gains. The leading underground pro-steroid newsletter surprisingly took the stand that Alzado's health problems could be due to HGH because he abused the drug so badly, citing he was using eight units per day of HGH (hardcore bodybuilders would generally use three to five units per week) almost year-around which is how he amounted his \$30,000+ annual drug bill. There is an awful lot of suspicion and speculation, which has been brought up and denied by Alzado in various interviews, that all of his claims about dying from steroids is an AIDS cover-up. I've always been told Bill Irwin's great weight loss a few years back was due to his giving up beer.

Keep up the excellent work. The Billy Graham interview was the best thing that I've ever read on pro wrestling.

Vicki Contavespi
Forbes Magazine

Your recent interview with Billy Graham was one of the most interesting pieces done on anabolic steroids that I've seen anywhere to date. I look forward to any other articles on this subject that might be coming up. I think you've become the "policeman" of the pro wrestling business. Gone are the days when wrestlers and the promoters can try and pass along anything that they want to and have it accepted carte blanche. Your newsletter has become a must read for anyone in the industry. You should be commended for your work.

Ron Martinez
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

DM: Ron Martinez is part of a family that promoted pro wrestling for many years, most notably in the Buffalo and Cleveland areas.

