

Pro Wrestling TORCH

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WEEKLY

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TORCH NEWSBREAKERS

KERRY VON ERICH JOINS WWF

OMAHA, NE: Kerry Von Erich surprised many by showing up for the Omaha, NE Titan TV tapings on Monday, July 16th. He is being referred to as "The Texas Tornado, Kerry Von Erich." Eventually, as was done with "The Widow Maker, Barry Windham," Kerry's real name will be phased out and "Texas Tornado" will be what he is called.

Kerry Von Erich will be replacing the injured Brutus Beefcake in tag matches at house shows teaming with The Ultimate Warrior versus Curt Hennig and Rick Rude. Those tag team matches will feature a former NWA World Champion, Kerry, a current WWF World Champion, Ultimate Warrior, a former World Class Champion, Rick Rude, and a former AWA World Champion, Curt Hennig.

Kerry told the USWA that he planned to stay until days before he left for Titan. Friday,

June 13th Kerry was scheduled to defend his USWA Texas Title against The Angel of Death. However, Kerry was attacked earlier by "The California Stud" Rod Price, thus Kerry could not defend the title. Angel of Death was awarded the Texas Title, thus Kerry did not have actually lose the in the ring on his USWA finale.

Last Friday, after defeating Rod Price via DQ when Devastation ran in, Kerry announced over the PA system that he was leaving for WWF and would be teaming with Warrior against Rude and Perfect on August 3rd at Reunion Arena. It was surprising that the USWA allowed him to say that, as the USWA is running an event across the street at the Sportatorium that same night. The NWA and USWA went head on July 13th and drew approximately 3000 and 1100 respectively.

GILBERT WRESTLING ALREADY

MEMPHIS, TN: Since last issue published, Eddie and Missy had signed a contract together. The check he received after the severing of the contract listed the severance taking place on June 19th, cutting his pay off earlier than he expected. His original request to be let out of his contract was made on June 28th. His request to stop being paid until he was healed was made on June 17th or 18th according to Gilbert. Since Gilbert felt cheated or deceived on his last check, he was less hesitant to wrestle so quickly, not worried about what the NWA thought.

When questioned, Gilbert explained, "Yeah, I wrestled, if you want to call it that. When I appeared on that initial Saturday show (7/7) I had no intension of wrestling. Then Jerry Lawler asked me if I would wrestle in a tag match against he and Dundee to help the attendance. For two reasons I agreed."

He elaborated. Reason number one: Two people he trusts will be against him, namely Lawler and Dundee, who will realize his shoulder is injured. The NWA, Gilbert explained, had him slated against people like Stan Hansen and Bam Bam Bigelow, who are not known for their gentleness.

Reason number two: He is angry with the NWA after receiving his latest paycheck. He signed his release form on July 3. Then it was, "FedExed" as Eddie Gilbert put it, or Federal

Expressed, to Missy who had to also sign it. Eddie and Missy had signed a contract together. The check he received after the severing of the contract listed the severance taking place on June 19th, cutting his pay off earlier than he expected. His original request to be let out of his contract was made on June 28th. His request to stop being paid until he was healed was made on June 17th or 18th according to Gilbert. Since Gilbert felt cheated or deceived on his last check, he was less hesitant to wrestle so quickly, not worried about what the NWA thought.

Nonetheless, Gilbert has reportedly been the subject of criticism within the NWA since he wrestled after getting out of a contract early "because he couldn't wrestle."

Gilbert plans to continue working on a limited basis, concentrating mostly in tag matches, such as last Saturday where his in-ring work consisting mostly of choking and bumps not threatening his shoulder.

Gilbert explained that, like Roddy Piper's frequent returns to Don Owens' Portland Promotion, he returns to Memphis because that is where his roots are. Jerry Lawler is his idol and will always be willing to help out that promotion.

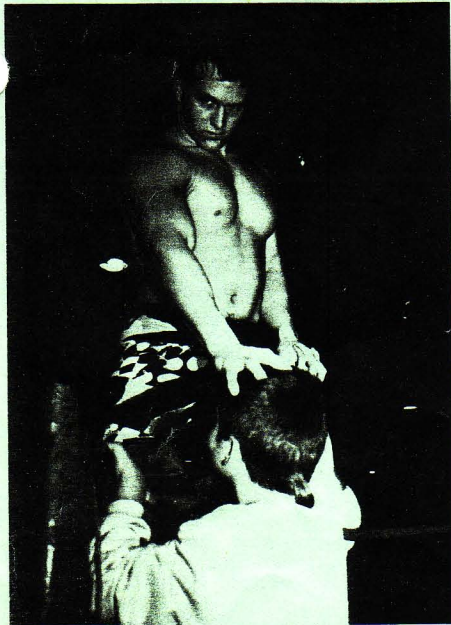
NEW NATIONAL PROMOTION BREWING

One of the fastest spreading rumors in linked with this new promotion and that FOX wrestling is that of a new wrestling promotion Network is actually negotiating for special live events, if not weekly shows, the earliest being December.

Many names have been linked to the new promotion including Eddie Gilbert, Terry Funk, and Cruise Cruise. There are rumors within existing promotions that this new group is going to be on ABC. Sources say ABC is not

Rumor of this promotion is spreading so fast that wrestlers in other organizations are already showing interest in joining. Some

(continued on page 3)



"THE PROPHET"
RICKY RICE

THE HOT NEWS

THE NEW WWF OUTLOOK

By Wade Keller: The Hot News this week comes from the World Wrestling Federation where Torch Weekly has learned a major panic has taken place behind the scenes since the injury of Brutus Beefcake. It was a well kept secret that Pat Patterson and Vince McMahon were at major odds over the direction of the WWF and the panic over replacing Beefcake set off a chain reaction of events.

Patterson believes that because of recent low house show attendance that major changes needed to be made. McMahon was less sure, as Summerslam's advance was over 13,000. The two top powers in the Fed worked out a deal: Pat Patterson would produce a week's worth of mock TV shows using his new promotional direction and McMahon, Patterson, Bruce Pritchard, Bobby Heenan, and Jack Lanza would review his new ideas. A week later, they gathered for the presentation.

Also present was TorchReader Ryan Jones who happened to be on the "Titan Studios" tour that has put Stamford, Connecticut on the map this year. Ryan happened to stray away from the tour guide and found a snug spot in the closet in the room where the meeting took place. Ryan filed the following report...

Apparently Pat Patterson wanted a more down-home style for the WWF. He opened the (continued on page 5)

TO BE OR NOT TO BE... A WRESTLER

What drives someone to become a wrestler? Fans have a pretty good idea what it physically takes to be able to be a pro wrestler. But what does it take mentally to become a pro wrestler?

"Commitment."

Becoming a "professional wrestler" by definition is relatively easy. Simply dish out money to a promoter that will train you. Then learn how to wrestle. Then work at least one match in front of at least two people and get paid. Then, by definition, you are a pro wrestler. But what does it take to really become committed to pro wrestling?

"You've got to be a salesman. You have to market yourself."

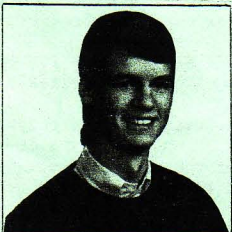
One wrestler contemplating the decision "to be or not to be... a wrestler" is Ricky Rice, whose quotes fill

this commentary. Rice began wrestling four years ago for the PWA. Since then, he has wrestled for the AWA, Calgary Stampede, the WWF, and other independents. Rice has not yet reached a high level of success. To be a successful wrestler, for Ricky Rice, there are three important qualities. Ring work, mic work, and the attitude to commit. He feels in the ring and behind the mic he is ready for the NWA or WWF. But he is not mentally ready to commit his life to pro wrestling.

"It might drive me insane."

Ricky Rice does not feel he has done all it takes to make it in this business. The missing ingredient is commitment.

"I've fought a battle within myself, and until I'm willing to commit one-hundred percent to wrestling, I (continued on next page)



WADE KELLER
BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE

BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE

(BBL continued from page 1)

won't make it."

To make professional wrestling your career is not easy. When a person applies for a job as a waiter at a restaurant, they either get the job or do not. There is a job description that they are either qualified for or not. However, in wrestling there is neither a typical job nor a typical manner to achieve career status. And once you get a job, there is no job description. It is tough to commit to something when you do not know what that something exactly is.

"It's a love-hate relationship. I love it to death, but I also hate it to death."

Rice learned a lot more about the business to which he is contemplating commitment last week. He participated in last week's WWF TV tapings. In doing so, he will be on television losing. The minuses would be that he had to do jobs. The positives were that he got to see how a first class organization is run and what a real corporation and unique, huge business the WWF really is. He got to see the bright side of the business where the wrestlers get treated like royalty. Some of the best and most successful workers in the world were there. He got to see what the business is like on a grand scale. There was good pay and happy individuals, but also some guys that will never be happy. The question is, will he be one who has made the commitment but will never be happy?

"I know I learned a lot more about life, people, and just things in wrestling than I did in college."

At the taping he also learned that once a wrestler makes the commitment, they still may not be in charge of their own destiny. "If I did get to the WWF, they would probably never let me use the 'Prophet' gimmick," said Rice. "They want control. They want the final say. They want to make you what they want to make you."

"I even tried to say Ricky Rice and they said, 'Rick Rice is your name.' They wouldn't let me use 'Ricky.' You know the lady who always announces (Mike McGurk). She goes sternly, 'Okay, Rick Rice from Minneapolis?' I go, 'Yeah, Ricky Rice from Minneapolis.' She raises her voice and goes, 'RICK Rice from Minneapolis. What's your weight.' I go, '220.' She goes, '225.' I go 'Yeah.' They are very controlling and intimidating."

"Genius and insanity are right on eachother's border."

The way the WWF treated him bothers Rice, but he accepts it. The WWF breaks a young wrestler's spirit and then, if he make the right moves and they like him, they will rebuild his spirit. Paul Diamond's spirit is being broken. Financially he is being taken care of, but his ego is being expensed. But by doing that, the wrestlers who finally achieve success thanks the promoter. If Paul Diamond ever makes it big, he will thank the promoter who made it possible. A promoter cannot survive if the wrestlers feel they make him successful. That is an attitude that seems to exist with Jim Herd and the NWA wrestlers.

"You are a slave to the promoter and have to conform to them. Yet if you can shine in the ring, have that something special, and be able to live it, you will be regonized."

Curt Hennig and Macho Man Savage are the epitome of this business, according to Rice. They are so into their gimmick, it's more important than anything to them. "That's the problem with my life. How far do I want to go into the 'Prophet.' Do I want to go all the way. It might not have to be the prophet gimmick, but it's the way of life I'm talking about."

"My gimmick is real, it's a shoot, it's the truth."

A "prophet" is "a religious leader or teacher claiming to be divinely inspired. A spokesman for some cause, group, or movement, etc." Rice became "The Prophet" after a tour with Calgary Stampede wrestling last year. He became tired of his babyface image, attitude, and lifestyle.

"Unpredictable, exciting, extreme, insane."

The "Prophet" brought Rice back to life. It made the business better for him. It made him happy about the business of wrestling again.

"It is kind of a realistic, insane look at an insane business."

A "prophet" is also "one who predicts future events in any way." Possibly that is what is holding back Ricky "The Prophet" Rice, the commitment to decide what his future is going to be.

"I'm trying to find myself through my career playing a gimmick I love."

Rice often wakes up and decides to quit wrestling. Then he eats breakfast and is ready to commit to the business. Before he went to the Titan tapings, he told everyone he was not going. His ride to the tapings was coming at 8:00. Until 7:30 he was not going to answer his door. Then he had second thoughts and thirty minutes before the ride came, he decided to pack and take the trip.

"The passion could take me over the edge."

Rice feels wrestling has been fair to him, or at least as fair as he has let it be. It has also been a learning experience.

"Everyone goes in naive, and then the learning begins."

There are guys that are not very experienced that have no idea what this business is about, according to Rice. These wrestlers do not know what they are about to go through. He has tried to explain what the business is all about to them, but one really has to live it to believe it or even come close to understanding it. When wrestlers first enter the sport, for the most part, they are in the naive, unrealistic, optimistic stage.

"You're always looking toward the edge."

For the most part Ricky Rice had a stable family life. Until he was 18, he never dreamed of being a wrestler. His love was hockey. He describes his role on the team as "the goon, policeman, and enforcer of

(BBL concluded on page 4)

READER RHETORIC

BEFFCAKE TREATMENT

Knowing ahead of time that Vince was going to voice-over and acknowledge Ed Leslie's ("Brutus Beefcake") accident, I was hopeful for some grown-up dignity. Instead, the dignity came from Gordon Solie's WNN on the 7/13/90 with the opposition NWA's acknowledgment and well wishes. What we got from Vince reminded me of perhaps the verbiage Eddie Gilbert got in terms of management minimizing the seriousness of his injury.

Vince's sarcastic tone for a worker most do not care about anyway was abominable. I may not like The Brutus character or workrate, but he is a human being deserving of our sympathy for an accident that could happen to any of us. "Some kind of parasailing-whatever that is" am "This may put Brutus' quest for the Intercontinental Title on hold for a while" were ridiculous statements. Vince knows full well BB may never work again and that the very severe head injury, ten plates, stitches, etc. necessitate a minimum of 12-16 months recoup insulted me enough to suggest this and not the Hogan "retirement" as most disgusting promotional tactic of 1990.

MIKE LANO
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

TORCH JAPAN COVERAGE

Congrats on your decision to go weekly! The Torch is improving every week and I especially like the idea of having Jeff Bowdren do the Japan column. If gives an international flavor to the Torch.

SAM NORD
WALNUT CREEK, CA

I wonder if there are many fans like myself who do not give a damn about Japanese wrestling and never see it at all. I wish Mr. Meltzer would lighten up on his coverage of it. And is there more NWA news because they are more accessible than the WWF? I know they have better athletes, but I love pro wrestling for everything it is, but the matches themselves are of little interest to me. Even though NWA matches are always better, does anyone think they look anything close to authentic? Of course not.

Also, the NWA reminds of an SCC event. It looks and sounds as regional as it is. Why do they keep doing their TV tapings in what looks like a gym? Why do they allow Flair as their World Champion to be pinned three or four times a week by the likes of Junkyard Dog? Imagine Hogan being regularly pinned by Lanny Poffo at his shows. Soon enough, Sting will be pinned by Harley Race at his shows.

FRED ROSE
N. MERRICK, NY

FREE TORCH CLASSIFIEDS

John Lanigan of PO Box 583; McKeesport, PA 15134 has an extensive tape list including videos and audios of WWF, AWA, NWA, newsletter editors and wrestler interviews on radio, and a lot of Japan stuff. Send SASE for his list. He also has the 4/13/90 Tokyo WWF/All-Japan/New-Japan tape available for \$5 if you supply the tape or \$10 without a tape with Hogan-Hansen and Tenryu-Savage and a bonus match of Juslin Riger-Shiro Koshinaka from 5/5/90... Carl D. Cook of Cheneyville, LA 71325 is looking to hear from Torch Weekly readers in LA and OKLA along with anyone who may also share his interest in songwriting and singing... Ron Pimpsner of 16 Governor Road, Staten Island, NY 10314 is looking for AWA Events on video tape including Superclash I (9/85), Superclash II, WrestleRock 86, St. Paul Civic Center from April 24, 1983, Superclash IV (4/90), and Twin Wars 90... Peggy Hunt of 45 Cedarwood Lane, Bakersfield, CA 93308 has a list of B&W 8x10s of wrestlers from the 40's and 50's and would like to sell the entire collection... Mike Tenay of 3321 Mariner Bay, Las Vegas, NV 89117 is looking for videos, programs, photos, magazines, and audio tapes of The Destroyer (Dick Beyer, Dr. X) to buy or trade... Michael Johnson of 209 Ole Fort St., Tullahoma, TN 37388 is beginning to sell photos of NWA and Memphis mainly. Write for more information on all of the above... ***

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think there is very little chance this promotion will actually come off the ground while others say it is near finalization.

There is no word on where the international backing is coming from. Most prospective promotions that are getting mysterious financial backing never come through, but this seems to have more of a chance of making it than most. There should be more definite word next week.

NEWS & ANALYSIS

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

(Stamford, CT): Sgt. Slaughter debuted on TV this weekend and is being brought in as a heel. He insults the fans for believing "that Commie, Nikolai Volkoff." He will initially feud with Volkoff, though the WWF has bigger plans for him, probably dependent on how he gets over. His first dates wrestling may not begin until September.

BRIEFLY: Kerry Von Erich has been looking better on scripted interviews than he did when he ad-libbed... Hogan's unretirement speech is one of the most highly acclaimed interviews he or anyone has ever done. His video a month ago was the best video probably ever done in wrestling on the effectiveness scale... Nord probably will not be in until October... Zeus was supposed to appear in Puerto Rican rings...

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

(Atlanta, GA): Ric Flair injured himself on July 13 in Dallas. The next night in St. Louis, Harley Race took Flair's place in a tag match with Windham against Sting & Luger. Race has filled in since then, as Flair's injury allows him at ringside, but not in the ring. Flair should be back in action within ten days. It shows class that Flair is showing up for these events even though he cannot wrestle, just to prove he is genuinely hurt and not just taking days off.

The 7/16 TV tapings from the Georgia Mountain Civic Center saw great matches including R&R over SST, Pillman over Panzer, Southern Boys over Kyle & Avery, Landell over Lee Scott, State Patrol over Southern Boys in a great match, Scott Steiner over Fatu, Freebirds kill their opponents in a must watch squash, and Horner & Candyman over Arn & Windham as Sid interfered for DQ.

The angles at the taping included The Southern Boys stealing the Southern Tag Trophy from The Freebirds, the Steiners set up a feud with the SST, and Orndorff signals a turn with "Four Horsemen" signs during his squash match.

BRIEFLY: It is 90% sure that Owen Hart is headed in for an August start date. Teaming he and Pillman has been mentioned... The B-Team has been headlining R&R versus Doom in non-title matches where R&R is pinning Doom every night... The NWA has agreed with Walmart stores to market their toys... Wrestling Wrap-up should be on newsstands soon... Jim Cornette and The Midnight Express were on MTV last week... The next Clash will be September 5 from Asheville, NC "Fall Brawl II"... October 27 in Chicago will be Halloween Havoc. It is finalized now... The Bash reportedly got a 2.0 buy-rate or slightly lower which is much better than most projections...

USWA TEXAS & TEXAS INDEPENDENTS

(Dallas, TX): Killer Brooks' group that was running in opposition of the USWA looks to be going under. They recently lost their TV which they recently acquired. He sent guys home before a recent card telling them he could not pay them. Instead of using Irwin, Iceman, Mantel, and Steven Casey, he is using his students, drawing about 60 at his latest shows.

Gary Hart's group is running at the Metroplex on Sundays, which is about fifteen miles from the Sportatorium. July 7 he drew about 100 for Al Perez versus Iceman Parsons as the headliner. Unfortunately, not only was this Al Perez's third match of the day, but Iceman no-showed. Terrance Garvin took his place. As Garvin and Perez were brawling into the stands, Iceman walked into the building late. He saw his opponent, Perez, already wrestling and realized he was too late. To save his job, he ran down to the ring, threw

Terrance out of the ring, and had a wild brawl with Perez until The Ninja (Lee Campbell, the promoter), Perez, and Gary Hart were battling the heels, Iceman, Garvin, Freddie Fargo, and Baboose. The fans got their money's worth.

July 15th Hart drew only 75. The July 29th show has Abdullah the Butcher versus Iceman Parsons slated as the main event. Terry Gordy, Terry Taylor, and Dragon Master are also tentatively on the schedule. This past Sunday, July 22nd, Chris Von Erich versus Terrance Garvin was scheduled.

Gary Hart is also promoting "Rolleraction" on Friday nights at the Metroplex and is a heel manager. That has been averaging about 800 fans, half being kids.

In the USWA, on the July 13th card, Kerry Von Erich & Chris Adams were doing an interview when Rob Price "The California Stud" attacked Kerry. Kerry was unable to defend the Texas Title as scheduled against Angel of Death, so AOD was awarded the belt. Angel is playing "Tapps" on the trumpet before his matches signifying what will happen to his opponents. Also on the card, Chris Adams & Kevin Von Erich pinned Percy Pringle & Terrance Garvin.

This last Friday, 7/20, four of the seven matches ended with run-ins, including Kerry Von Erich's USWA finale' against Rob Price ending when Devastation interfered. Also on the card, Iceman and Jeff Jarrett fought to a double DQ. Iceman recently returned to Texas using a similar angle as the Snowman racial gig done in Memphis.

BRIEFLY: Next Friday, Kevin-Angel for Texas Title and Iceman-Jarrett with Skip Young as referee is scheduled... The Snowman appeared on Dallas TV and was announced as the USWA Champion, surprising many that they acknowledged that Memphis-based title change... Chris Adams versus Steve Austin and Jeannie versus Toni continues to be the area's hottest feud now that Matt Borne and Kerry have left the area. The women are apparently really going at it... Dundee is booking with the help of the Jarretts...

USWA MEMPHIS

(Memphis, TN): Last Saturday's live show began with a clip from last Monday night in Memphis with Bill Dundee & Jerry Lawler beating Tony Anthony & Eddie Gilbert. Tessa was handcuffed to Dirty White Girl. Tessa was going to beat up DWG, so Anthony ripped Tessa's blouse off.

Then Lawler came out for his interview and said Bill Dundee was in Texas and would not be on the program. Then Gilbert and The Dirty White Boys entered the set with chairs and chains. Then Dundee made a surprise emergence from the back and with the help of a baseball bat, got rid of the heels.

In a match to determine the number one contender for Snowman's USWA Title, Eddie Gilbert battled Jerry Lawler. Gilbert's moves consisted mainly of choking Lawler with a rope. The Dirty White Boys hit the ring, Gilbert threw fire at Lawler, but instead it hit DWB Tom Burton.

Then the returning Brian Lee walked over to Snowman, whose gimmick is to sit in the crowd during the TV shows, where he originated when he created his debut scene (supposedly which began as a shoot and because of fan interest, turned into a promotional idea), and challenged him to a title match.

With the current USWA Champion being the babyface Snowman, the future feud over the USWA Title seems to be Gilbert and Lawler, which rumors say, could culminate with a "Retirement Match" between the two. So with Snowman and Lawler both being babyfaces, I would not be surprised to see Gilbert win the USWA Title in the most fluky of ways from Snowman leading to the Lawler-Gilbert title matches. Then Gilbert would lose the retirement match and book Memphis and/or Texas and any other new promotions.

Monday, July 23 was set to have Billy Joe Travis vs. Sweet Daddy Falcone, Jeff Gaylord vs. Kawabunga the Karate Turtle (Chris Champion in a hilarious costume), Jeff Jarrett vs. Iceman Parsons, Snowman defends against

the returning Brian Lee, and Eddie Gilbert & Anthony face Lawler & Dundee in a Texas Death Match.

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

(Minneapolis, MN): The AWA played games this weekend. First, Eric Bischoff announced that doctors have given the okay for Mike Enos to wrestle and that his shoulder was healed. So the AWA immediately contacted the St. Paul Civic Center and set up August 17th as the return date for the Destruction Crew-Lurtsema/Trooper match and Larry Zbyszko-Nikita Koloff match.

Then Destruction Crew came out with a smile on their faces. As Enos began explaining, Bloom interrupted him and said that Joe Blanchard booked them for Japan starting on August 14th for at least two weeks, so there is no way they could wrestle in St. Paul, because their Japan defenses take precedence over any US defenses.

PORTLAND WRESTLING

(Portland, OR): Last Saturday's TV show opened with the last seven minutes of the Scotty the Body-Grappler 45 minute draw. Barry Owen was the timekeeper, and since Grappler had Scotty in a submission hold when the bell rang, Grappler is blaming Barry for ringing the bell early. Next week will be a 60 minute time limit title match.

In a two out of three falls match, Beetlejuice & Steve Doll pinned Al Madril & Ricky Santana in the first fall. The second fall, of course, went to the babyfaces, BJ & Doll. The third fall appeared to end with Madril pinning Doll, but the referee was told Taylor Made Medina tripped Doll coming of the ropes, so referee Sandy Barr ordered the match to continue. Ginger came to ringside and tripped Madril allowing Doll to get the pin. A huge brawl ensued, ending with Al Madril getting painted like Beetlejuice and sprayed with "silly string."

BRIEFLY: The TV shows are shown on a 2 1/2 hour delay... Scott Peterson is returning to team with Steve Doll as "The Southern Rockers"... Taylor Made and Ginger have an off-TV match next week where each has promised to rip the other's clothes off...

PRO WRESTLING AMERICA

(Minneapolis, MN): The PWA had an outdoor show to help promote St. Anthony Village shopping mall on Saturday, July 21 in front of a rotating crowd of hundreds. The opener saw Jerry Lynn pin The Lightning Kid in the best match of the day.

The next event at George's will be August 13th with Ricky Rice locking up with Jerry Lynn once again. The last time they fought to a 45 minute draw. I would not put a 60 minute draw out of the question. Also on the card, Randy Gusto-Jeff Warner, Sheik-Charlie Norris, Tim Hunt/Ravishing Ronnie-Teijo Khan/Larry Cameron, Golden Idol/Matt Derringer-Lightning Kid/Tommy Ferrara.

Joel Goodhart has a Jerry Lawler-Terry Funk match booked for September 15th at the Philadelphia Civic Center... Dale Gagner's September 3rd's "Mission Creek" event in Hinkley, MN showed interest in Funk...

Join us for the next issue of Torch Weekly where we will have Jeff Steele's "Steele Ringpost," another "Torch Talk," Bill Kunkel's "ARS," "BBL," and all the regular weekly features.

The T-shirts will be finished and mailed within a few weeks. They are \$10 each and when ordering, please specifically M, L, or XL.

Anyone who ordered this summer's ANNUAL III (where I would have received your order by last Saturday) should have received it in the same envelope as this issue. Those of you who have not ordered the ANNUAL yet received the "Introduction" page of the ANNUAL III with the table of contents and comments on the book so you have a good idea of what the contents are. Books are available for \$10.00 and supplies are plentiful, yet limited!

If your label says your subscription expires with #78, 79 or 80, it's time to resubscribe. See ya' in sev. ***

Ringside Beat

The following are TorchReader accounts of live wrestling events they have attended recently. If you attend a live wrestling event, please promptly send or call in a semi-detailed report in the style you see below with grades or star ratings of each match and approximate attendance. Now this issue's edition of "Ringside Beat"...

WWF TAPINGS

On Torch Weekly's "Ringside Beat" was Bruce Grummert and Linda Adams who attended the World Wrestling Federation TV tapings for "Superstars" and "Saturday Night's Main Event" attended by 10,370, a sell-out, in Omaha, Nebraska. The following is a report...

SUPERSTARS OF WRESTLING

- 1) SHANE DOUGLAS pinned THE BROOKLYN BRAWLER in a fast paced opener. Fans popped for Douglas.
- 2) THE BARBARIAN pinned TOMMY WRIGHT in less than a minute.
- 3) THE ROCKERS beat BLACK BART & TOM PETTIT. The fans popped big for The Rockers.
- 4) RICK RUDE pinned SCOTT NOLTON.
- 5) RHYTHM & BLUES pinned JIM POWERS & RED TYLER.
- 6) JAKE ROBERTS pinned SPIKE JONES with a DDT.
- 7) POWER & GLORY pinned MCCOY WILLIAMS & GEORGE ANDERSON. The fans cheered for P&G, Slick's new team of Paul Roma and Hercules. Brother Love interviewed Ultimate Warrior where Warrior asked all fans to put on his masks. The cheers were deafening.
- 8) BAD NEWS BROWN defeated JIM POWERS with a ghetto blaster.
- 9) POWER & GLORY beat RED TYLER & WARREN BRANCHIE
- 10) RANDY SAVAGE beat JIM EVANS.

SATURDAY NIGHTS MAIN EVENT

Nikolai Volkoff was presented a medal by The Boy Scouts of Mid-America Council. Volkoff got very emotional and cried before leading the pledge of allegiance and waving the US Flag.

11) CURT HENNIG pinned TITO SANTANA in 12:00. Curt took great bumps. Three or four times it looked like Tito was going to win. After the match, two girls climbed a barrier to get at Curt Hennig, and Hennig shoved one of them down. Fantastic match and hard work by both men.

Vince McMahon came out to interview Hulk Hogan, and when Hogan came out, he was cheered louder than Warrior earlier and Sting in Baltimore. He brought out Tugboat during the interview after Earthquake, Bravo, and Hart came to ringside.

12) THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR defeated RICK RUDE by count out in 13:00. Fair match ending when Rude hid under the ring as Heenan was getting beaten up in the ring.

SUPERSTARS

- 13) THE LEGION OF DOOM pinned BRADY BOONE & PEZ WHATLEY after a flying shoulder off the top rope. There was no reaction for LOD.
- 14) "TEXAS TORNADO" KERRY VON ERICH debuted to defeat IRON MIKE SHARPE in about a minute. Not a big reaction for Kerry, either, though many knew who he was.
- 15) CURT HENNIG beat RANDY FOX. Kerry came out and challenged Curt to an I-C title match. Curt left with Heenan immediately.
- 16) TED DIBIASE beat JIM BRUNZELL.
- 17) DINO BRAVO pinned RICKY RICE. Not taped. A dud.
- 18) BIG BOSSMAN defeated PAUL DIAMOND with the Bubbaslam and followed by handcuffing Diamond to the ropes.
- 19) THE ORIENT EXPRESS pinned RICKY RICE & KOKO B. WARE.

SATURDAY NIGHTS MAIN EVENT

20) KERRY VON ERICH pinned BUDDY ROSE after rose challenged him to an impromptu match. Von Erich used the discus punch to end it.

21) DEMOLITION defeated THE ROCKERS in 11:00 of lots of great wrestling. It ended with Michaels getting pinned by Axe who was not even participating in the match. The Hart Foundation and The LOD ran to the ring to protest, but to no avail. The Harts and LOD did raise The Rockers' hands.

SUPERSTARS

- 22) RHYTHM & BLUES defeated GEORGE ANDERSON & TRACY WILLIAMS.
- 23) THE HART FOUNDATION defeated two other wrestlers.
- 24) TUGBOAT beat BOB BRADLEY in 20 seconds. Bravo, Hart, and Earthquake interfered. Chants of "Hogan" brought out Big Bossman who made the save. Tugboat was stretched out.
- 25) BIG BOSSMAN beat TED DIBIASE in a dark match where both men gave 100%.
- 26) DUSTY RHODES & SAPPHIRE beat RANDY SAVAGE & SHERRI in the final match of the evening, also dark. Mostly comedy. Dusty pulled down Sherri's nylon panties as Brother Love was trying to pull them up. Sapphire pinned Sherri after Elizabeth hit Sherri with her purse.

DUKE WINS A MATCH

On Torch Weekly's "Ringside Beat" was Tim Pramas who attended a World Wrestling Federation event at the Boston Garden on July 14. The following is his report...

1) PAUL ROMA pinned PAUL DIAMOND with a powerslam. This was a decent opening match. Both wrestlers had good moves and Paul Diamond egged on many ringsiders in his role as a heel. [***]

2) "THE DUKE OF DORCHESTER" PETE DOHERTY pinned HAKU in a monumental upset. Doherty is a Boston wrestling legend because he is entertaining and never seems to win. However, after getting pounded by Haku for the entire match, he somehow pulled out a victory. Haku did not bridge properly, leaving his shoulders on the ground, while Doherty raised one of his shoulders. [*1/2]

3) NIKOLAI VOLKOFF pinned BORIS ZHUKOV after a clothesline. Nikolai is billed from Lithuania, carried a US Flag to the ring, is a Boris Yeltzin man. Boris is billed from Russia, carried Soviet flag to the ring, and sings his county's national anthem, and has political views closer to Stalin. Neither wrestler was very impressive. [*1/2]

4) THE BUSHWACKERS defeated RHYTHM & BLUES via DQ. Fans were "treated" to a "concert" by R&B, who sang their "hit" single, "A Honka, Honka, Honka Love." As they were performing their encore, Butch and Luke came to ringside and ambushed them. The match can be summarized as follows: Greg Valentine hammers the Bushwackers, The Bushwackers hammer The Honkeytonk Man. The match was very entertaining and ended when Honkey threw Luke into the referee for the DQ. [***]

5) HERCULES pinned AKEEM. Hercules is the wrestler I least like seeing at any event I attend. His matches go on far too long and lack excitement. In this match, after about fifteen minutes of sporadic activity, Akeem placed Hercules' chain on the turnbuckle and prepared to throw Herc into it. Instead, Herc reversed it and whipped Akeem into the chair, followed up with a clothesline and pinned Akeem. [*1/4]

6) EARTHQUAKE annihilated HACKSAW JIM DUGGAN. Lacking finesse and quickness, Duggan tried to use his power and size against a much larger and more powerful opponent. The Earthquake was impressive in his tune-up for Summerslam. Duggan's only moment of glory was being able to hit Earthquake with his two-by-four after the match had ended. [****]

7) TITO SANTANA defeated MR. PERFECT via DQ in the main event. The match was too short, under ten minutes, but the action was fast and furious while it lasted. Perfect dominated early, but Santana put many awesome moves together. He was ready to put Perfect away with his flying forearm when Perfect threw the referee in the way. The ref was out cold, but Santana continued his assault and applied the figure-four leglock in the middle of the ring. Another referee ran into the ring and heard Perfect submit. The bell rang and a title change had seemingly occurred. It was not to be. The first ref, when he regained consciousness, disqualified Perfect and ruled that the disqualifying act came before the submission. I would give it higher if it went longer and had a better ending. [****]

[Editor's Note: With readership at an all-time high, match reports are at an all-time low. Four "Ringside Beats" over the last issues is below the pace when the readership was 1/10 what it is now. Help if you can.] ***

(BBL continued from page 2)

the team." But when no offers came after playing in the USHL for two years, wrestling became his next option. What got him interested and excited was when he saw The Road Warriors. He did not see a live card until he was 18.

"There's a little bit of Brody in me. I'm more out there to impress myself and the fans more than the promoter."

Many wrestlers grow up wanting and knowing they will be wrestlers. Derrick Dukes wanted to be a wrestler since he was seven or eight. Eddie Gilbert lived to be old enough to step into the ring. In that way, Rice is different than most wrestlers.

"There are a thousand guys waiting in line for the same job. You have to have the talent, the connections, and..."

Never once did the word "luck" come out of Ricky Rice's mouth. In wrestling, those who wait to be lucky rarely are. Those who think the business is all luck may never be inspired to take the necessary aggressive steps to become a wrestler.

"They don't go on talent, and that's what makes this such an insane business."

Ricky Rice, 26, is not a typical wrestler climbing the ladder to a successful wrestling career. There is no typical example. Ricky Rice, though, has done a lot in this business. Rice loves more than anything the high he gets in the ring.

"It's the greatest high in my life."

It takes a while to come down after the matches, sometimes three or four hours before he becomes Ricky "The Person" Rice again. The biggest hold up for Rice is fear of failure. The fear that if he commits to wrestling, that still may not be enough. That is one of the things holding him back.

"To be a success you have to live what you are doing."

If he committed he could be giving up a lifestyle that has made him happy, but not content. He could give up a girlfriend. He could give up his chances of being a stock broker or an actor, his other two desired options. He would give up freedom. He would give up home life as he would be home only six days a month. All sacrificed for a business with no promises.

"It stand for living on the edge. The Prophet is a dangerous man. He lives crazy in the ring. It's kind of the whole craziness of wrestling wrapped up into one person's life and body."

Ricky Rice is just one of many wrestlers across the country going through the emotional struggle of deciding what to sacrifice for the sake of wrestling.

"To be or not to be... a wrestler." For many, that is the question of a lifetime. ***

The Hot News

PATTERSON INNOVATES

(“HOT NEWS” continued from page 1)

meeting by introducing his prospective new assistant, Verne Gagne. After introducing Verne, he went on to show his changes on a monitor in the room.

The first change is that Wrestling Challenge will be taken over by “Sticky” Micky Karch and Sean Mooney who will bring a new personality to the program.

Patterson went on to explain that the loss of Jesse Ventura finally lets them put a team together people can relate to for “Superstars,” that being former UWF Commissioner John Ayres and Magnum T.A. The name of the program, a suggestion of Verne Gagne, will be “All-Superstar Wrestling.”

Verne Gagne also gave Patterson the idea to institute a 900 Number featuring: John Ayres’ WWF Top Ten Lists, Ted DiBiase’s Bribe of the Week (the first week DiBiase offered Ayres a substantial sum for John Ayres to move him from #2 to #1), Torch Talk with Wade Keller, and to soothe Vince McMahon’s ego, a segment where Vince talks about himself.

From there, Patterson played a series of trial interviews that could further show the move toward the AWA-style of promoting.

“After being on top for six glorious weeks, the spud heads began to wonder where I got all my wrestling talent. I tell them I got in “Perfectland.” Wherever Perfect goes, the WWF goes.”

“Well, you know...” “Wait a second, I’ll handle this one Smash. Smash’s shoulder still isn’t ready for him to wrestle. The Demolition Crew is ready to wrestle Bob Euker and The Bossman Trooper in the baseball challenge match whenever Smash’s shoulder get’s better.”

“As a promoter of the major league of professional wrestling there will be no gimmick matches except for the “Team Surviving Challenge Mania Main Event Series” which will have a “Football Chicken Eating Get Turkey Off Top Turnbuckle No-Disqualification, No-DQ’s or Interferences” match every week. Our three teams will be Sarge’s Snipers, Ultimate Warrior’s Warriors, and Hoqan’s Heros.”

After those interview segments played, Pat Patterson suggested that if this direction was taken, he would like to replace the Survivor Series and Royal Rumble with WrestleShock and SuperBash.

Then I sneezed, and before the brass in the room could express their opinions on Patterson and Gagne’s new ideas, they all looked toward the closet. When Patterson opened the door, I ran out the office door...

I would like to thank Ryan Jones for that report. Torch Weekly hopes to have more information on this major WWF shake-up next week.

[Editor’s Note: I received word just before going to press that Ryan Jones drank too much Dr. Pepper and had a gastro-imagination attack. In other words, the entire previous “Hot News” item is false. I apologize for misleading you, but it was too late to change my lead story.] ***

Quotebook

ERIC BISHOFF to Larry Zbyszko: “You’re like a cat with nine lives.”

LARRY ZBYSZKO: “It’s not easy being a legend.”

MICHAEL HAYES on The Southern Boys: “They’ve got a lot of good moves, but so does X-Lax. They both disgust me.”

MICHAEL HAYES: “You know they say flattery is the sincerest form of imitation... blah.”

ARN ANDERSON: “We’re not above jumping you at TCB Yogurt. It may sound funny to you, but we’re dead serious.”

SID VICIOUS: “Sting, I’m going to get the World Title back in the family if it means breaking every bone in your body.”

ARN ANDERSON on The Horsemen sign: “Still the symbol of excellence, bottom line.”

DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE to Mick Karch: “Go pump your sunshine somewhere else, sunny boy.”

RON SIMMONS: “I don’t make threats, I make promises.”

TOMMY RICH: “Tim Horner and I are southern boys and southern bred. When we die we’ll be southern dead.”

STEVE DOLL to Al Madril: “I’ll bet the rest of the hair off your head.”

CARLA on “Cheers” to Norm: “I think my greed is overcoming your epulsiveness.”

MISSY HYATT on Stan Hansen’s suspension: “Tommy Rich should be suspended for lack of common sense.”

DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE to Mick Karch: “If you knew what you were talking about, I might argue with you.”

JIM CORNETTE: “Horner and Rich, we’re going to prove you have a drug problem when we drag you from one end of the ring to the other.”

JIM ROSS: “Cornette is on strict doctors orders to drink caffeine free soda. It should have been diet caffeine free soda.” ***

Ray Whalbe's

RING RUMBLINGS

BASH PPV DISAPPOINTING

Call me conceited; call me a snob; call me whatever, but this columnist did not really enjoy the Great American Bash '90 as much as my fellow TorchStaffers. Some called it a “6” and others a “7” on the METAnalysis scale. Personally a “3” was more than fair in my book.

Rating an overall card, a “3” is not always bad. Rating anything a “3” does not spell disaster. For example, your morning coffee might have been a “3.” Your favorite columnist might write an occasional “3.” Eating at McDonalds on a trip might be a “3.” A night with your regular partner might at times be a “3.” Yet all the “3’s” as above mentioned are certainly worth doing. In fact, much of life offers “3’s.” Shopping, a seminar, a day at work, or a workout might be “3’s.”

In my view, a “3” is worth doing. It leaves room for improvement and hope. “5” means it’s about as good as my expectations. “7” should spell excellence, positive memories, and border on classic testimony. Nothing I observed neared classic proportions.

The Sting-Flair match-up offered all the hyperbole of a Superbowl. Unfortunately, it had about the same excitement of such. Considering that the match was a year in the making in a rehearsed sport, was it really very good? I doubt so. No time in recent history was a major feud settled by a cradle pin. Never during the match did the excitement level reach the anticipated intensity a year long feud should theoretically have.

Moving on to the El Gigante debacle. The former basketball player appeared clumsy and tentative at best. Seeing the monster-like Sid Vicious tremble along with expert technicians like Arn Anderson and Barry Windham tremble in fear from a rookie, an over-eater, and middle of the roader was embarrassing, to say the least.



If Vegas can woo crowds with Wayne Newton, Elvis impersonators, and Don Rickles year after year there’s no reason wrestling should not try the same. The Rock & Roll Express versus Midnight as it is offers all the innovativeness of the impersonators. Good action, but as the recording group Ace once asked, “How Long.”

I tried to enjoy the card. I really did as I have with all PPV’s. I have watched each and every pay-per-view special since the AWA’s 1985 Christmas Card and Wrestlemania I. I love the concept and love taping them. I do not, though, love all of the packages. They all promise the moon and few deliver.

Several questions cannot leave my brain. Was the show as good as promised? Was it what was promised? Was it better than what is for free on TV? Was it better than what you can see in your area? Was it better or worse than the previous PPV’s? If I cannot answer yes to most of those questions, I feel a bit cheated. A \$15 compact disc should be more enjoyable than what the radio offers for free. A \$15 steak should be better than a \$4 bargain meal. A \$15 tie should have a better feel than a \$2 K-Mart tie. A \$15 PPV wrestling match should also be worth \$15 or even more. When you can get much for less, \$15 is getting to be a lot to ask.

Maybe my whole complaint about PPV’s is the way they are marketed. I subscribe to both Sports Illustrated and The Sporting News. Both do baseball, football, and basketball specials. Although these issues may in fact be very special, they do not sacrifice the credibility of the weeklies. In fact, they soft sell the specials. When I receive the specials, I am always mildly surprised and always pleased. Because of the soft sell, I am grateful for what I receive. Maybe the NWA and WWF should try the same.

Nowadays, it seems the weekly shows on TV are simply used to set up PPV draws. Killing live gates and weekly fans just does not seem to be good business just in hopes to make it back on a PPV. Nor does torturing a weekly fan with lies, gossip, and slowness when that fan is already ready to buy. While the NWA and WWF prefer to string folks along, they are doing so in my opinion at the risk of alienating existing and potential fans who inadvertently would translate into dollars. ***

POSSHOS

By Bill Kunkel

THEY CALL ME "TRAVIS 'T'"... THE BOOKER ALWAYS LAUGHS WHEN HE SAYS IT, BUT WHAT'S THE JOKE?

YOU'LL BE SEEING A LOT OF ME. I CAN BENCH 500, FLEX LIKE SCHWARZENEGGER, AND MY INTERVIEWS ARE BETTER THAN THE WARRIOR'S! I'M BASKALLY THE TOTAL PA... TYPE..



CONSULTATION

Fax to: Jim Herd
Company: TBS/WCW
From: Bill Kunkel
Company: Katz Kunkel Worley Inc.
Subject: Media Analysis, WCW TV

FREE NWA
CONSULTATION
IF YOU
ASKED US...

Comments:

Frankly, Jim, we here at KKW were surprised to hear from you in this matter. Certainly, we are well known and highly regarded in our own field of entertainment - electronic entertainment - but the world of professional wrestling has traditionally been somewhat clandestine and reluctant to seek opinions outside its own ranks.

Nonetheless, we are fairly well versed in the traditions, conventions, and protocols of your pseudo-sport. Arnie Katz and myself, in particular, have each followed pro wrestling for thirtysomething years and should be able to bear the kind of analysis and observations for which we are famous within our own specialty.

In cases like these, I have often found it helpful for the client to compare themselves to a competitor, in order to determine where one stands on an objective scale. To that end I watched an entire week's worth of the WCW and WWF television, as well as recent PPV and TV specials, taking extensive notes and, at length, subjecting that data to computer analysis. The results are instructional, I think, and pinpoint some of WCW's weaknesses in this market.

NWA TV

-Mostly shot in buildings looking like high school gyms in towns so small, the only people who have ever heard of them are the people who live there. Small time ambiance.

-Grubby production values. Everything has an unhealthy, orange glow to it that suggests the Fat City world of smelly gyms and exposed pipes.

-Despite the addition of a vaunted, supposed state-of-art video editing system, the post-match footage invariably exposes the business in an attempt to be like "real" sports with slow-mo replays. In wrestling, however, slow-mo only shows that the guys never really made contact. The hottest moves in the match, however, are rarely replayed.

-Video skits rarely attempted and, when they are, tend to be on the level of someone getting beaten up in a parking lot.

-Screwjob finished have become a WCW tradition. The most recent PPV was a step in the right direction, but after several dozen steps back, one step forward still does not get you anywhere close to where you would like to be.

-Long squash matches make the star look weak and are also boring.

-Live interviews almost never used.

-Booking is, at best, erratic.

-Actual wrestling is old-fashioned and appeals mostly to hardcores. The hot moves, like the DDT, are used indiscriminately by numerous wrestlers and the faces frequently refuse to sell even the most "punishing" moves, such as a vertical suplex, piledriver, and DDT. Characters are often confusing and/or incompatible. Buddy Landel's gimmick, for example, if it worked, would destroy Flair's heel heat and would never be permitted in an organization that thought about its characterizations.

-Play-by-play attempts to be "authentic" by emphasizing background of stars and analyzing wrestling technique. The problem with the former is that it exposes the business. For example, telling us that Mean Mark (who was billed as being from "Metropolis" up until a week ago) went to college in Houston and has a degree in "Sports Management" seriously compromises his theoretical image as a baby-devouring monster. The problem with the latter is that the wrestlers are not working an even remotely "realistic" style. Whereas this approach was successful in Georgia/Florida in the mid-70's when Gordon Solie did it, that was because the wrestlers were working very straight type of match. But when Jim Ross goes on at great length about Mean Mark, for example, "working on a body part," in this case, a jobber's left arm, when Mark will, in fact, eventually win the match with a heartpunch and an elbowedrop off the top rope, well, who's kidding whom?

-There is no consistency from week to week. The team of Samu and Fatu, later Sammy Fatu and his brother, were known over a several month period as: The SST, The Samoans, The Wild Samoans, The New Sons of Samoa, and, finally, The SST again. This week they may be called something else; I have not checked. Then there are the Superheros who the next week become the Dudes with Attitudes and a week later had transmogrified into Superdudes. At last check, they were being called "The Family."

-The matches are better live than they are on TV. The NWA has not yet been able to electronically capture the element(s) that make its best live shows so exciting.

Well, this is all off the top of my head, Jim, but I'll have our agent, Barry Friedman of International Computer Group give you a ring next week. Our normal consulting levels would be \$2,000 a month with special assignments billed separately. I look forward to working with the NWA, err, the WCW, and hope our relationship will be mutually beneficial.

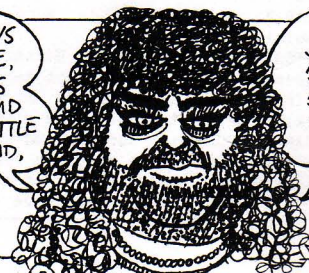
Yours,

Bill Kunkel
Partner, KKW Inc.

HOW JIMMY 'JAM' GARVIN GOT HIS NEW NICKNAME...

"YOU--ATE THE WHOLE JAR?!"

Y'SEE, I WAS ON THIS TUNA DIET FOR, LIKE, A WEEK AND I WAS GOING A LITTLE NUTS AND I FOUND THIS WHOLE BOTTLE OF STRAWBERRY JAM, AND, WELL...

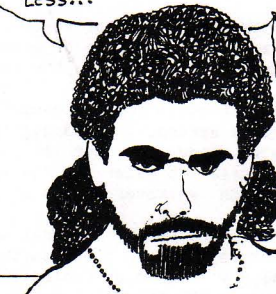


YEAH, YEAH...

LATINI HEART-THROB AL PEREZ HERE AND I'M SICK AND TIRED OF LETTING GARY HART DO ALL MY TALKING FOR ME! I'VE GOT A BRAIN! I'VE GOT A MOUTH! I SPEAK ENGLISH, MORE OR LESS...

AND I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY! ...*

...
ERR, TELL THEM, GARY...



WWF TV

-TV taped in major arena's in large, well-known cities. Each TV show seems to be a "big event."

-Slick production values.

-Excellent editing with normal speed replays of the best moves from each match. And if the move got messed up a little at the end, they freeze-frame the shot just before it gets to that point.

-Beautifully produced video skits, such as the recent "Ted DiBiase Visits Cobb County" material, which is priceless.

-Tradition of clean finishes at PPV's.

-Short TV matches that show off the star's hot moves, entrance music, and highlight his characterization.

-Live interviews on every TV show..

-Solid, long-term booking.

-The actual wrestling is a synthesis of tried-and-true styles mixed with infrequent, but dramatically presented modern-style moves. Each star works in a distinctive style and major moves are the exclusive property of the wrestler who specializes them (Jake Roberts is the only wrestler who uses the DDT; Bravo has the sidecar slam; Hogan the Legbomb, etc.)

-Angles are often quite original and the slick presentation can even save the hoarier hits (like "Arrogance")

-Play-by-play oriented, not around the actual wrestling, so much as the drama, pushing the characters and the current feuds.

-When a character or angle clearly fails, it is changed, such as Honkeytonk Man, but most angles and characters are given time to work and are handled consistently.

-WWF shows are better on TV than they are live.