

Bits 'n' Pieces

By Taylor Media Services

Janet Jackson falls ill; postpones concerts; are ticket sales poor?

Shortly before the start of her new North American Tour in Montreal, Canada Monday, singing and dancing star Janet Jackson fell ill and cancelled the show. But even though she was discharged from Montreal's Royal Victoria Hospital a few hours after treatment of an unspecified illness, Jackson also cancelled shows in Detroit and Boston. Industry speculation (i.e. rumors) immediately began that the 42-year-old Jackson was pulling out of shows because of poor ticket sales. The North American Tour is designed to promote her new album *Discipline* which after debuting at number one has been plagued by poor sales.



Janet Jackson

Tina Turner launches energy-filled concert tour at 68 years of age



Tina Turner

Projecting youthful energy veteran performer Tina Turner launched her 30-plus city North American Tour in Kansas City, Missouri this past Wednesday night at the Sprint Center. Tina Turner is 68-years-old. Turner retired from touring in 2000. But she said fan demand for her return to the concert stage "never stopped" during the 8-year hiatus. She told local media, "It has to be now. I can still do it. I'm still in shape physically, mentally and I think this was about the best time to do it. The show basically follows the songs on her compilation album *Tina* and includes such hits as *What's Love Got to Do with It*, *Private Dancer* and *Typical Male*."

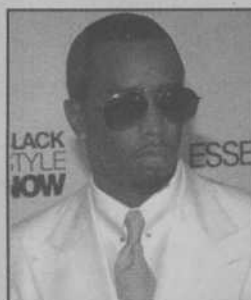
NBA star Alonzo Mourning releases "Resilience" – book about his struggles

NBA star Alonzo Mourning last week released "Resilience" – a compelling book about how he overcame difficulties and struggles in his life including kidney disease and other ailments. Mourning said he was inspired to write the 231-page book by cycling sensation Lance Armstrong who overcame testicular cancer. "Resilience" also details Mourning's years playing college at Georgetown and in the NBA for teams such as the Charlotte Bobcats, New Jersey Nets and the Miami Heat.



Alonzo Mourning

Sean "Diddy" Combs set to add another reality show to his media ventures



Sean "Diddy" Combs

Hip Hop music mogul and Donald Trump imitator Sean "Diddy" Combs appears ready to add another television reality show to his media ventures. MTV announced last week that "StarMaker" will premier on its network in January. The show combines the talents of Combs and "Survivor" producer Mark Burnett. The competition-type series will follow a group of "want to be stars" solo singers in a series of tasks designed to test their so-called "star power." The competitions will include photo shoots, paparazzi drills and on-stage performances. Combs' current stable of reality shows include "Making the Band," "Run's House" and "I Want to Work for Diddy."

Book reveals unheralded fighter

Boxing's Greatest Uncrowned Champion

By Clay Moyle; Bennett & Hastings Publishing; Hardcover; \$29.95; 436 pages; illustrated. ISBN: 978-1-934733-02-8

By Kam Kam Williams *Sentinel-Voice*

"In January of 1944, the *New York Herald Tribune* published 'The Forgotten Man'...a story about Sam Langford, aka 'The Boston Tar Baby,' one of boxing's greatest fighters... It related how only 18 years after his remarkable career Sam had completely disappeared from mainstream society and ended up blind and penniless.

Over 60 years later, Langford is once again relatively unknown among the general population... Why is that the case? How could a man, who was arguably one of the greatest pound-for-pound fighters of all time and feared by men such as Jack Johnson and Jack Dempsey, be overlooked?

To answer that question



one must consider how difficult it was for a black-skinned man to make his way in American society during the early 20th century." — Excerpted from the Introduction (page 3)

Sam Langford (1886-1956) was born in Weymouth Falls, Nova Scotia, a descendant of escaped slaves who had won their freedom in the 18th century by taking up arms against their former masters during the American Revolution. One of six children in a family from a humble background, Sam ran away home in 1898, not long after the death of his mother.

Eventually, he ended up in Cambridge, Massachusetts where he developed an interest in boxing.

Though only 5' 7" tall, Langford proved to be an agile, clever and powerful puncher who pulverized his opponents, often taking on foes weighing more than his 170-180 pounds. He turned pro at 16, and soon found himself saddled with an array of colorful nicknames, including 'The Boston Tar Baby,' 'The Boston Bone Crusher,' 'the Weymouth Wizard,' 'Old Ho Ho' and 'The Boston Terror.'

He went on to win 200 fights, 130 by knockout, over the course of an illustrious, 20 year career marred only by the fact that he was never able to land a title fight. This was due to a combination of racism and the reluctance of champions and top contenders to take him on.

Remember, this was the first quarter of the 20th century, a time when many states still had laws on the books against staging bouts be-

tween Blacks and Whites. This was because American society had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo and notions of White supremacy which would be threatened by the rise of the Black athlete.

Consequently, Caucasian colleagues avoided him out of a fear of humiliation, while Jack Johnson did so because he could make more money fighting the latest "Great White Hope." Sadly, despite being invariably respected by his contemporaries, Sam was denied a shot at a belt, and ultimately ended up blind and broke in Harlem, and a mere footnote in the annals of pugilism.

Now, thanks to Clay Moyle, the entire life of "The Forgotten Man" is entertainingly recounted in "Sam Langford: Boxing's Greatest Uncrowned Champion," a riveting, bittersweet biography which endeavors to afford this forgotten ring great his rightful place in history.

A must read for any devoted fight fan.

Pro-war spoof languid in lampoons

By Kam Williams *Sentinel-Voice*

Michael Moore has staked his career on controversial documentaries exposing the dangers associated with everything from the outsourcing of jobs (Roger & Me) to the easy availability of guns (Bowling for Columbine) to the Bush Doctrine of unilateralism (Fahrenheit 9/11) to the profit-oriented healthcare system (Sicko). While many hail the intrepid iconoclast as a populist providing a valuable service as a cinematic whistleblower, there are also certainly those who deem his anti-establishment, anti-corporate antics as a combination of self-aggrandizing and unpatriotic.

Only folks who fall into the latter category are apt to appreciate "An American Carol," a shameful spoof which takes cheap potshots at Moore ostensibly for the amusement of right-wing zealots. The picture was written and directed by David Zucker (Airplane!), the original inventor of the lampoon genre along with his brother, Jerry.

This film features Kevin Farley in the starring role as Hollywood moviemaker Michael Malone, a thinly-veiled caricature of Moore. The plot is very loosely based on Charles Dickens' "A

Christmas Carol," except that here Scrooge (aka Michael) hates the Fourth of July holiday instead of Christmas. The simplistic premise has him not merely being un-American but the unwitting dupe of a cell of radical Islamists planning to blow up Madison Square Garden.

Narrated by Leslie Nielsen in a series of flashbacks shared with a group of

attentive youngsters gathered around a picnic table, the story unfolds in post 9/11 Afghanistan. There, we find Michael naively accepting \$10 million in financing for his next project,

"Fascist America," from a trio of Taliban terrorists he proceeds to bring back to the States. Fortunately, he is visited by three ghosts, that of General George Patton

(Kelsey Grammer), President John F. Kennedy (Chriss Anglin) and country singer Trace Adkins (himself), who take turns trying to show the prodigal citizen the light in time to avert the impending disaster.

While a few of the film's first jokes revolving around suicide bombers might be deceptively palatable, it (See Carol, Page 11)

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