

Eye of the Beholder tops slow weekend

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The thriller *Eye of the Beholder*, starring Ashley Judd, survived a dull Super Bowl weekend for movie theaters to be No. 1 with \$6 million in its debut.

The previous weekend's leader in North American movie houses, *Next Friday*, dropped to second with \$5.75 million. The film has made almost \$40 million in three weeks.

The Hurricane was third at \$5.7 million, according to final weekend figures released Monday.

The top 12 films took in just \$43.9 million Friday to Sunday, compared to \$58.6 million the previous weekend and \$56 million during the last weekend of January 1999, Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc., which tracks movie earnings said.

The top 10 movies at North American theaters Friday through Sunday, followed by distributing studio, gross, number of theater locations, average receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in release, as compiled by Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc.

Box office Top weekend movies

Weekend of Jan. 28-30, 2000
All dollar figures in millions

Rank	Title	Gross to date, weeks in release, number of screens	Weekend gross
1	<i>Eye of the Beholder</i>	\$6.0, one week, 1,751 screens	\$6.0
2	<i>Next Friday</i>	\$39.5, three weeks, 1,335 screens	\$5.8
3	<i>The Hurricane</i>	\$30.9, five weeks, 2,135 screens	\$5.7
4	<i>Stuart Little</i>	\$123.0, seven weeks, 3,041 screens	\$4.8
5	<i>The Green Mile</i>	\$115.2, eight weeks, 2,371 screens	\$4.02
6	<i>Down to You</i>	\$13.0, two weeks, 1,977 screens	\$4.01
7	<i>Galaxy Quest</i>	\$58.8, six weeks, 2,209 screens	\$3.4
8	<i>Girl, Interrupted</i>	\$21.2, six weeks, 1,935 screens	\$3.3
9	<i>The Talented Mr. Ripley</i>	\$72.2, six weeks, 2,142 screens	\$2.8
10	<i>Toy Story 2</i>	\$234.3, eleven weeks, 1,796 screens	\$2.3

Source: Exhibitor Relations Co.

Singer Garth Brooks visits dental charity

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Hundreds of dentists showed their pearly whites when Garth Brooks made a surprise appearance to announce his support of a children's charity.

Brooks told a meeting of about 750 members of the Crown Council, an alliance of North American dentists, that his Touch 'em All Foundation would join in their Smiles for Life Charity Campaign.

"We have 14 charities to start," the country music singer told the group Saturday. "The money is for children, and the areas we will use it for is medical, education and inner-city projects since those needs are so great."

For the next three months, dentists participating in the fund raising will provide discounted teeth whitening procedures to their patients.

No progress made in race relations says Cochran

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Johnnie Cochran doubts whether civil rights icons like the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. or W.E.B. DuBois would say that race relations in America have made significant progress.



BROOKS

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

"I'm afraid if they dropped in here right now, they would be greatly disappointed," the former O.J. Simpson attorney said Saturday. Cochran told a group of law students at the University of New Mexico that racial profiling had created such terms as "jogging while black" or "living while black" and needs to end.

Television sitcom influenced career choice of Pauley

NEW YORK (AP) — Jane Pauley said she might owe her career in television journalism to the "Mary Tyler Moore" show — but not because Moore's character inspired her to work in TV news.

"Mary and the rest of the CBS Saturday-night lineup delivered huge audiences to the 11 o'clock broadcast when I was a weekend anchor in Indianapolis," Pauley told the Feb. 5 issue of TV Guide.

But the Moore character of Mary Richards, a television news producer, influenced Pauley as well.

"Remember the big M on the wall of her studio apartment? I put a big numeral 5 on mine when I got my job on Channel 5 in Chicago," Pauley said. "It was not a coincidence."

Figure skater Cousins retires after final show

BRIGHTON, England (AP) — Figure skater Robin Cousins has glided into the sunset. Cousins gave his final public performance Sunday

in his hometown, saying the time had come to retire from the ice.

The 1980 Olympic gold winner performed for the last time with Holiday on Ice, the company he made his professional debut with 20 years ago.

Cousins said he would leave to work behind the scenes as a producer.

"At some point, you have to say enough. Something has to give," Cousins said.

Cousins, 42, said his back and knees have ached over the years. "I am happy to be leaving," he said. "There will be no comebacks."

Fame will not ruin me Fox sitcom child star

NEW YORK (AP) — The star of the offbeat comedy "Malcolm in the Middle" said he is determined not to end up in trouble with the law like other child TV stars.

"I know some kids who are on TV and end up in trouble, but I'm not gonna be like that," Frasier Muniz, 14, tells the Feb. 5 issue of TV Guide.

Much like the character he plays, Frankie, he got harassed by bullies until he started homeschooling in the sixth grade.

"Frankie used to get picked on because of his size," said his mother, Denise, though her son is 5 inches last summer.

"But he would always stand up for himself. He could always come up with something clever for them up."

Exclusive video deals help independent filmmakers gain audience

PARK CITY, Utah (AP) — Director S. Lee Taylor admits that "Social Intercourse," his independent film about a cybergeek looking for love, has limited appeal.

But there it is, on video shelves alongside Hollywood's top hits. Taylor could not be more thrilled.

The film is one of the first 10 movies in Hollywood Video's First Rites program, an effort launched this month to showcase independent films that generally have only been seen on the festival circuit.

Hollywood Video picks up the movies as exclusive rentals available only at its stores. Block-

buster, the nation's largest video chain, has been doing the same for the past year.

In an indie world where only a fraction of films ever get seen outside festivals — and even those that make it to theaters rarely pack in big crowds — such direct-to-video deals offer filmmakers a new shot at reaching a wide audience.

"I'm assuming I won't garner a following from this. I don't think anyone's going to be looking for the next Steve Taylor film," Taylor said. "But when you have someone really championing your film like this, it makes a difference."

Blockbuster, which bills itself as the biggest independent film distributor, picked up seven

films that played at last year's Sundance Film Festival and expects to cut deals for 10 to 12 from this year's festival, which ends Sunday.

Hollywood Video also expects to go home with new films from Sundance and is sponsoring a contest during the festival, asking filmmakers to drop off copies of their movies. At least one of those films will be added to the retailer's independent movie catalog.

Both video chains have been trolling other film festivals looking for movies, and they receive a steady stream of movie submissions by mail. The companies say adding exclusive independent titles gives consumers a wider selection and ex-

posure to quality films that otherwise might never have been seen.

"We want to make sure our customers are satisfied and keep coming back," said Dean Wilson, Blockbuster executive vice president for merchandising.

Blockbuster offered 70 exclusive titles last year and plans on 120 more this year. The deals range from outright purchase of movies to short-term contracts where filmmakers receive a percentage of rental fees in lieu of money upfront.

Hollywood Video cuts six-month exclusive deals for its movies, offering filmmakers a share of rental fees. After the initial 10 titles, the com-

pany plans to add six new movies each year.

"More customers are looking for independent films," said Jonae Kurtenbach-Woodruff, Hollywood Video rental marketing director. "They just want to see big studio films. People interested in movies they can't see anywhere else."

While independent filmmakers dream of theatrical releases, landing their movies in stores can bring them exposure and help get their next films going.

"This sounds really magnanimous. I wouldn't see a penny, it wouldn't be a penny," Taylor said. "My movie's gotten exposure that's worth it all right there."

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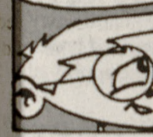
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Fame will not ruin me Fox sitcom child star

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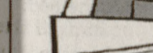
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