



January 24 - January 31



PICTURE OF THE WEEK



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WEEKLY NEWS 1: Fire Fighters Applaud Senate

On Wednesday, January 22, 2003, fire fighters across the nation applauded the U.S. Senate. Why? Because the Senate confirmed Tom Ridge as the first secretary of the newly-created Homeland Security Department. The president of the nation's fire fighters union publicly announced his approval.

But International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) President Harold Schaitberger said Ridge has a big job ahead of him. Schaitberger is concerned that fire fighters may not be ready to handle a terrorist attack. The IAFF plans to work with fire fighters to help them prepare for anything that might happen.

According to Schaitberger, two-thirds of America's fire departments under-staffed. Many of them do not have the appropriate training and equipment to deal with an incident involving weapons of mass destruction. He thinks the government and unions should work together to get fire fighters the resources they need.

One of the things Ridge will need to do is try and get the money President Bush promised to fire fighters after Sept. 11. At that time, Bush said \$3.5 billion would go to help provide them with equipment, training and support.

The IAFF represents fire fighters in more than 5,000 cities, towns, counties, and fire districts across the U.S. and Canada. They have 260,000 members who are professional full-time fire fighters and paramedics. These brave people help protect 85% of the nation's population.

--Written by [Carla Shives](#)

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[Read WEEKLY NEWS 2: Michigan Humane Society "Moves" Adoptions](#)



WEEKLY NEWS 2: Michigan Humane Society "Moves" Adoptions

On Tuesday, January 21, 2003, it was announced that the Michigan Humane Society has found a new way to move animal adoptions in their shelter. They're using a mobile adoption unit! Because of this unit, the society is getting lots of attention for animals that need adopted.

The unit, a large bus, has a mural of cats and dogs painted on the sides. It is a 36-foot custom coach built by La Boit, Inc. La Boit has built many of these units for veterinarians and animal clinics. Each one is specially designed to suit the needs of the clinic or humane society.

La Boit designs units that are fully equipped medical facilities for helping dogs (and other animals) in need of medical care. Some of their units were on site in New York on Sept. 11. The animals can rest and recuperate in the units. In some cases, a vet can even perform surgery! Many different cities and towns use these "buses" to help control animal population and take care of sick pets.

When the Michigan Human Society took out the unit for its first drive, they managed to complete 34 animal adoptions in just a few hours. And they did it all without any publicity or advertising before the event! It happened on the same day the society was celebrating its 125th anniversary. Many people saw the unit and were so interested that they took a tour inside of it. Then they decided to adopt an animal, too!

--Written by **Carla Shives**

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 **Read WEEKLY NEWS 1: Fire Fighters Applaud Senate**

AROUND THE WORLD 1: Afghanistan Bans Cable TV

The Supreme Court of Afghanistan issued a ruling that ended all cable television broadcasts in the country. The chief justice made the decision to ban cable TV because he said many of the programs went against Islamic laws and values.

Before the U.S.-led attack against Afghanistan at the end of 2001, the country was ruled by a Taliban government that banned all television, all music, and many other forms of entertainment. Since then, many of the rules have been relaxed, but there is still a lot of debate about what kinds of entertainment are acceptable in the Muslim country. Many religious leaders think foreign entertainment is against Islam and against Afghan culture.

Before the ruling, there were four cable television providers in Afghanistan, which carried mostly American and Indian music and movies. The cable services were popular, but the Supreme Court of Afghanistan responded to complaints from viewers that the men and women on the cable channels didn't cover up enough of their bodies. Satellite television is still available in Afghanistan, but most Afghans can't afford it.

Afghanistan's Supreme Court also made a ruling prohibiting boys and girls from going to school together and prohibited girls from having male teachers. The new government has allowed women to do many things they couldn't do under the Taliban, such as hold jobs and go to school, but human rights groups say there is still a long way to go.

--Written by [Andrew Barker](#)

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Read **AROUND THE WORLD 2: Strong Earthquake Strikes Mexico**



MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT 2: Simon Says

"If you lived 2,000 years ago and sang like that, I think they would have stoned you," judge Simon Cowell told one contestant Tuesday on the return of Fox's "American Idol."

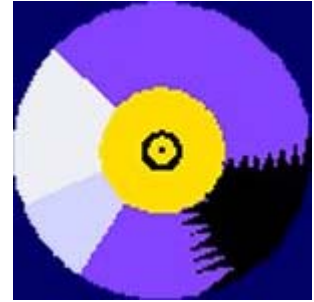
The talent show became a TV hit last summer leaving all other reality shows behind. Fox has brought back a meaner Simon in the second edition this winter. Last Tuesday's premiere stretched 90 minutes. It was followed by a half-hour update on the original American Idol contestants.

Simon hasn't got better. In fact, he has surpassed himself. "This says you went to the Fame high school, did you get thrown out?" said Simon to a contestant. Other comments by Simon were: "I've heard better people sing outside of subway stations," "Go back to your vocal coach and demand a refund," and "If you were to win and sing a song, you would kill the American record industry. That's how bad you were."

Simon and the judges have done some marketing for the series. Simon appeared on The Daily Show with Jon Stewart. On the show, Simon expressed his opinion about how New Yorkers were the "least talented" when it came to singing. The three judges, Simon, Randy and Paula Abdul also appeared on the Howard Stern show. Howard Stern brought his own American Idol contestant, Josie Scott from Saliva, to sing "Hero" from the Spiderman soundtrack for the judges. Simon, Randy and Paula gave him not so good reviews- unaware that Josie's single (co-starring Chad Kroeger from Nickelback) had been #1 for several weeks on American music charts. Josie's single with Saliva titled "Always" is currently in the top singles of rock charts. Good thing he didn't choose the American Idol path to fame. With those judges, he would have never made it past the first round.

--Written by [Hemant Tavathia](#)

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Read MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT 1: Superhero Phenomenon

AROUND THE WORLD 2: Strong Earthquake Strikes Mexico

A powerful earthquake struck the Mexican State of Colima on January 21, killing 28, injuring hundreds, and leaving thousands homeless.

The earthquake was strong enough to damage buildings 100 miles away, and people felt it even further away than that. It destroyed at least 500 houses and damaged many more, leaving 10,000 people homeless. The Mexican Army set up shelters to house some of the people whose houses were destroyed in the quake.

Vicente Fox, the president of Mexico, declared the area an official disaster area. He toured the area and promised that the government would help with rebuilding houses and other buildings. He also said he was glad that the damage wasn't as bad as it could have been for such a large earthquake. In previous disasters, people criticized the Mexican government for being slow to respond, so they are eager to do a good job this time.

The earthquake revived memories of an earthquake in 1985 near Mexico City that killed 20,000 people. This earthquake last week did very little damage in Mexico City, but it scared many people and many ran out into the streets, frightened of a repeat of the 1985 disaster.

The United Nations, the United States, and Greece have offered aid to Mexico in dealing with the earthquake, but so far the Mexican government has not requested help.

--Written by [Andrew Barker](#)

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Read AROUND THE WORLD 1: Afghanistan Bans Cable TV

SPORTS ZONE 1: NFL AFC and NFC Championship Games

(A note from the editor: Thank you to Grayson, age 9, for submitting this sports article. We love to hear from our readers!)

AFC Championship Game

On January 19, 2003, the Oakland Raiders played the Tennessee Titans in the AFC Championship Game at Network Associates Stadium in Oakland. Quarterback Rich Gannon threw the first touchdown of the game on a 10-yard pass to a receiver to take the lead 0-7. Later on, Tennessee Quarterback Steve "Air" McNair fired a 40-yard pass to Drew Bennett in the end zone to tie the game at 7. With 3 minutes left in the 1st Quarter, Charlie Gardner, Oakland's running back, scored a touchdown on a 12-yard run and took the lead once again 7-14. The score stayed that way as the 1st Quarter ended. Five minutes into the 2nd Quarter, Tennessee's place kicker Joe Nedney scored the first field goal on a 28-yard field goal attempt to make the score 10-14. The next score was made by Steve McNair on a 10-yard touchdown run to give the Titans the lead 17-14.



With 5 minutes left in the half, the Titans had the ball again but the Raider's intercepted a pass thrown by Steve McNair and scored 35 seconds later on a 1-yard pass from Rich Gannon to Jolley to take the lead 17-21. Then on the kick return with a minute left in the 1st half, the Titans' kick returner fumbled the ball and the Raiders recovered it. The Titans had 2 turnovers in 39 seconds with the fumble and the interception. With 30 seconds left in the 1st half, the Raiders scored the last points of the half as their place kicker, Sebastian Janokowski, kicked a 43-yard field goal and increased their lead to 7 making the score 17-24. After Halftime, Sebastian Janokowski for the Raiders made the first score of the half on a 32-yard field goal attempt, which was good making the score 17-27. Not long after, Steve Mc.Nair ran in another touchdown on an 18-yard run to make the score 24-27 and decrease the lead held by the Raiders to 3. The 3rd Quarter ended with the score 24-27.

Seven minutes into the 4th Quarter, Rich Gannon ran in a 3-yard touchdown run trying to prove he was just as tough and as fast as McNair and made the score 24-34. With 3 minutes left in the game the Raiders scored again on a 6-yard touchdown run by Crockett to make the score 24-41. The Raiders managed to hold the Titans and won 24-41 in the AFC Championship Game.

NFC Championship Game

On Sunday, January 19, 2003, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers played the Philadelphia Eagles in Veteran Stadium in Philadelphia for the NFC Championship Game. The Bucs kicked off to start the game and Brian Mitchell returned it and ran it all the way back to the Bucs 30-yard line. Two plays later on the, Duce Staley ran a 12-yard touchdown run to take the lead 0-7. Later on, the Bucs' place kicker Martin Gramatica kicked a 48-yard field goal to make the score 3-7 in favor of the Eagles. With 3 minutes left in the 1st Quarter, Mike Alstott, a fullback for Tampa Bay, ran a 4-yard touchdown run to take the lead 10-7. The score stood there as the 1st Quarter ended.

Five minutes into the 2nd Quarter, David Akers, place kicker for Philadelphia kicked a 30-yard field goal to tie the game at 10. With 3 minutes left in the 1st half, quarterback Brad Johnson for Tampa Bay rifled a 9-yard pass to Keyshawn Johnson for the touchdown to break the tie and take the lead, 17-10. With 30 seconds left in the 1st half QB for the Eagles Donovan McNabb dropped back to pass and the ball was knocked free of his hands and Tampa Bay recovered it and ended the half winning 17-10. In the 3rd Quarter the only score was made by Tampa Bay as Martin Gramatica kicked a 27-yard field goal to increase their lead to 10, 20-10. Then just as soon as Philadelphia began moving the football with 5 minutes left in the game, Ronde Barber, cornerback for Tampa Bay, returned an interception thrown by Donovan McNabb 92 yards for the touchdown and Tampa Bay Buccaneers took the win over the Philadelphia Eagles, 27-10.

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SPORTS ZONE 2: Kwan Wins National Title

This past week the U.S. National Skating Championships were held in Dallas, Texas. The winner earned her seventh national title and her name is Michelle Kwan.

Kwan finished first in both the short program and free skate at the competition to earn the title. She skated flawlessly.

Both Michelle Kwan and Sarah Hughes remained in Olympic-style skating this year. You may remember that Sarah Hughes won Olympic gold in Salt Lake City last year. Their performances made for a rare post-Olympic national competition to remember.

Kwan had skated in only one major competition this year and that was in late October. Sarah Hughes had not skated in any competitions at all. However, this level of competition did not suffer as they both skated clean long programs to go for the gold. Kwan had the advantage due to the ease and grace with which she skated. In addition, she Kwan did two combination jumps, as compared to one for Hughes, and Kwan also landed six triple jumps to Hughes' five.

Hughes was happy with the way she skated. She stated, "I had an added pressure on me this year so I'm very happy with the way I skated."

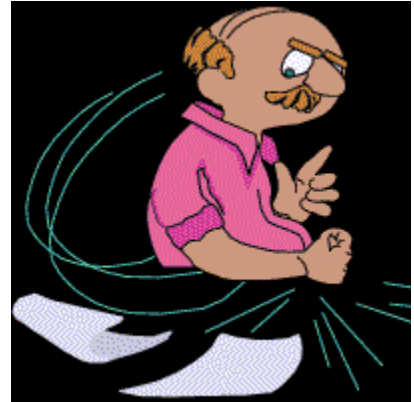
Sasha Cohen was the favorite coming into the competition. However, she made mistakes in her long program, which caused her the title. After the competition she stated, "I should have done it. I wish I could go out and do it again."

Kwan became the first woman since Gretchen Merrill (1943-1948) to win six straight national skating titles. She is the only skater besides Maribel Vinson to even win seven titles. Vinson earned nine titles between 1928 and 1937.

Kwan had this to say about her seventh win. "Seven times, Lucky No. 7. I was born on July 7th. Seven's my good number. Eight would be nice too."

Just how many titles will she win before she is through?

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THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

On January 29, 1986, the space shuttle Challenger lifted off from Cape Canaveral, Florida. Christa McAuliffe was aboard and planned to be the first ordinary person in space. Seventy-three seconds after liftoff the shuttle exploded. There were no survivors. Scientists later believed that the shuttle exploded because of an improperly operating "O" ring.



On January 29, 1861, Kansas was admitted into the Union as the 34th state. Kansas had been divided over the slavery issue. Half of the state wanted slavery to continue and the other half was against it. Kansas was admitted into the Union because the Union wanted to show support for those in Kansas who were against slavery. Three and a half months later the Civil War started, and Kansas suffered the most casualties.

On January 30, 1948, Ghandi was assassinated. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was a spiritual and political leader in India. He fought against racism and tried to help the poor. Gandhi believed in peaceful protests and spoke out against violence. He was assassinated by a Hindu man who didn't approve of Gandhi's beliefs.



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MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT 1: Superhero Phenomenon

Technology has caught up with Hollywood dreams and desires. The outcome is a series of breathtaking action in upcoming superhero films following the success of "Spiderman" as the #1 Box office hit in 2002.

The movie, soon to deliver itself as a second installment in the Superhero phenomenon, is "Daredevil." This is the story of Matt Murdock, played by Ben Affleck, son of a boxer who gets killed by petty criminals for refusing to take a dive. The death of his father drives young Matt to fight crime. The twist in the tale is that Matt is blind. A childhood accident deprived him of sight. That same accident, however, granted him advanced senses of touch, sound, taste and smell... the sixth sense of seeing dead people missing. The accident also blessed him with a strange sort of mental radar that helps to compensate for his blindness. After training hard in the martial arts and excelling in law school, Matt is a lawyer by day and crime fighter Daredevil by night. Set for a Valentine Day's release this year, "Daredevil" is set to bring a whole lot of fun to comic lovers.



Following the footsteps of "Spiderman" and "Daredevil" is- "The Hulk." To be released on June 20, 2003, "The Hulk" is the story of research scientist Dr. Bruce Banner's (Eric Bana) failed experiments that cause him to mutate into a monstrously powerful and savage green-skinned "dude" whenever he loses control of his emotions. The director of "Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon," Ang Lee, has been hired to direct this Superhero tale.

The other superhero biggies expected are "Superman Lives," to be released in 2004, and "Batman: Year One" and "Batman and Superman", expected on yet unreleased dates.

--Written by **Hemant Tavathia**

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