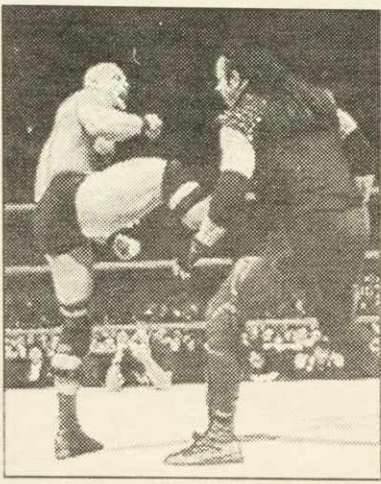


ARTS & CULTURE

WRESTLEMANIA

3:16



BY PHIL LEWIS

Can you smell what The Rock is cookin'?

This Sunday live on pay-per-view, the WWF will deliver the most anticipated wrestling event of the year — *Wrestlemania*.

But this isn't the wrasslin' many of you will remember from your childhood. Last year the wrestling organization debuted their new "WWF attitude" campaign.

Vince MacMahon, the WWF owner, said in a public statement last year that he felt wrestling fans no longer wanted their intelligence insulted with encouragement to take their vitamins and say their prayers.

Their mission: to bring wrestling fans like yours truly more realistic storylines.

For those of you at home, that means more sex and violence!

This past week on *Monday Night Raw*, Stone Cold Steve Austin

told MacMahon he was "number one" while spraying him with a hose from a beer truck.

And that's just another day at the office for the beleaguered owner. MacMahon has built a year-long storyline about his attempt to keep Stone Cold away from the World Championship.

But all that work may fall apart at *Wrestlemania*, as Stone Cold faces The Rock.

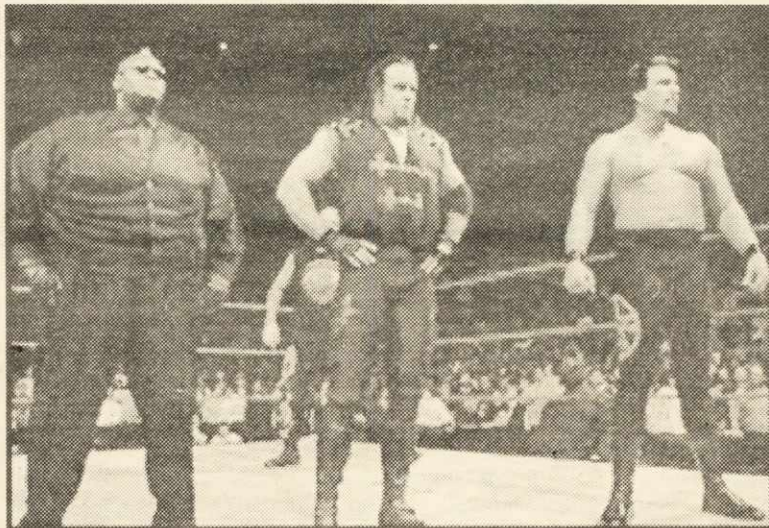
The two have already met in the squared circle but that was before the Rock achieved his main event status.

The Rock's charisma and good looks (not to mention wrestling ability) have brought this third-generation superstar to amazing heights at his young age.

Will that be enough to kick Stone Cold's rudy poo candy ass? Probably not. As most people like to remind the ever lovin' wrasslin' fan: the matches are not "real". Popularity always wins the race and Stone Cold is possibly the most popular wrestler of all time.

What most people forget is that professional wrestling has given up on that age old debate. They know it's planned. We know it's planned. What's the secret?

The wrestling fan of today is trying to release their 'animal instincts' in a non-violent way. It guarantees 3 hours of entertainment on every pay-per-view. Can boxing do that?



Best of all, professional wrestling offers conflicts between people we 'get to know' in carefully written storylines. Each week, fans wait with baited breath to see what will happen next to their "heroes". And this week is no different.

Will the Big Boss Man have any chance against the Undertaker in a 'Hell in a Cell' match? Will *Playboy* cover girl Sable successfully defend her women's title against newcomer Torrie? What about the three-man Hardcore Championship match, or the four-man Intercontinental Championship match? It's almost enough to make you salivate at the mouth!

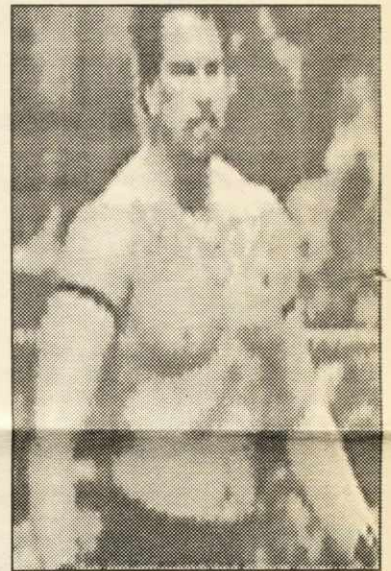
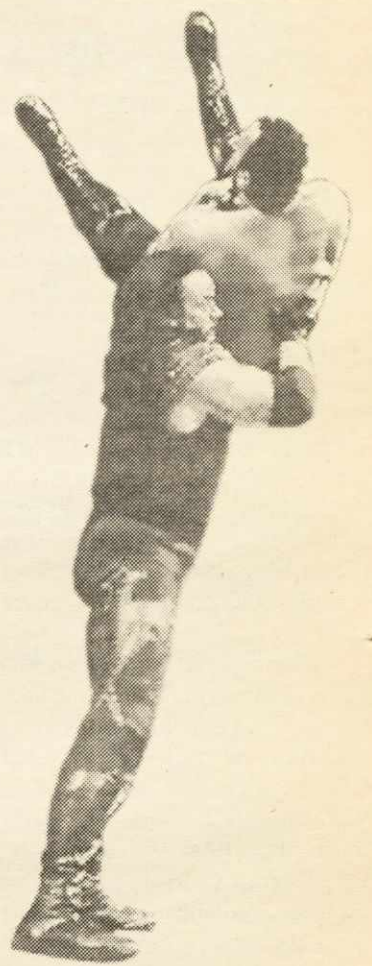
Last year the WWF tried to make the event a big payday by

bringing in "Iron" Mike Tyson to referee the main event. This year the federation has been able to build up the event on the talent roster alone.

The ref for the main event will be the winner of the match between Mankind and "The Big Show" Paul Wight. Sure to be the sleeper on the card — because when Mankind is involved none of the participants ever have a nice day.

Okay I admit it, I'm drooling. But when it comes to pro wrestling it's hard not to get excited. The build up to *Wrestlemania* could make any man want to explode!

The bottom line is this — if you're looking for something to do this weekend, go see *Wrestlemania* at your local tavern. I'll be the one with the Mankind shirt cheering on my "heroes".



Darker than the real world

BY AVI LAMBERT

Something dark and evil comes to life every Saturday night at around eight in the LSC. It isn't Frankenberry or Count Chocula. It's the White Wolf Gaming Company.

Upon entering the eighth floor senior Geology lounge late Saturday night, I was surprised to see a group of people, clad in tuxedos, wizards robes and made up costumes.

White Wolf is a role playing game — like *Dungeons and Dragons* or *Magic* — come to life.

Called Live Action Role Playing (LARP), the White Wolf game is a bit confusing.

The Camarilla — White Wolf's parent organization — describes the game as improvisational theatre — with no stage or audience.

For those who've never played a role playing game before — or people who've never immersed themselves in a fantasy world barely detectable from normal reality — it's quite a trip.

But it takes you where you let it.

The game is organized by the story teller, who creates the story and dictates the rules.

Players join specific clans and sects within the story — Toreador, Brewha, Giovanni and Gangrel, for

example. The clans and sects have their own personalities, and must abide by rules on how to relate to other players. Brewha, for instance, are leather jacket wearing rebels, and Gangrels are nice, tree huggin' Brewha. Reporters, on the other hand, are a bane to all, and are feared and loathed.

Body language is an integral part of the White Wolf game. I thought they would at least bite each other. But, alas, there's no biting, spell casting or stabbing.

They merely pretend. Players, dare I say it, do paper-rock-scissors instead. Gasp!

Rule number one is no touching. There is no alcohol or drugs allowed. The White Wolf participants I talked to feared alcohol and drugs would make them likely candidates for the *Ricki Lake* show.

The game gets more intricate as players gain status with the amount of experience they get. Power and influence of your character is proportional to the amount of status you have.

Getting into the part you're playing is the most important aspect of having a good time playing a LARP game. Letting go, and being comfortable in your darkened, gothic surroundings is a necessity. A good robe or some gothic make-up usually does the trick.

It is possible to get involved

off the cuff, but it helps to know the rules. Serious players read White Wolf source books for information about the stories they are playing within.

I say it is possible to get involved off the cuff because I did it. Briefly.

I was a little tweaked from a late night of studying and I don't think I really got 'immersed'.

I think this game would be great for theatre students, or for anyone with an intense passion for supernatural creatures, a love for the ambiance of Gothic sub-cultures and a desire to share stories and one's imaginative self with others (taken from the Camarilla web page). Also, if your favourite movie happens to be *The Crow*, it probably helps.

The game usually gets going Saturday nights at around eight, on the eighth floor of the LSC. You have to be 18 to play and join. The people I met were at first expecting me to run scared, but turned out to be kind. It's sometimes good to try on something other than the normal confines of your personality.

Peace be with ye'.

Membership for the White Wolf Society is \$12 a year, which enrolls you as a player, and connects you with an international network of like-minded gothic thespians.

