**MARCH 2, 2006** 

THURSDAY EVENING

# Spring has sprung for baseball fans

ola, it's spring! I don't care what the groundhog saw or didn't see in Pennsylvania last month. I've got my own spring detector, and it's got noth-

ing to do with robins on the wing. For yours truly, spring officially begins the first time I turn on a television or radio and hear the sound of a baseball game.

I don't listen for the crack of the bat or the "thwap" of the ball against leather. And often I can do without the play-by-play and color commentary. I enjoy the ambient sounds of a lazy, distracted baseball crowd. It's quite different than the hungry roar of a football stadium.

A baseball crowd emits a languorous and indifferent murmur, redolent of boredom, distraction and anticipation. Sometimes you can actually hear individual voices, hotdog vendors and conversations.

In contrast, a football crowd bleats like a near-unanimous mass, screaming, "We want action, and we want it now! (Because we're freezing!)" Baseball fans exude the quiet confidence of people who know they've got all spring and summer to see this through.

Baseball begins in earnest with coverage of spring-training games as well the games of the World Baseball Classic. America's pastime takes on a truly international dimension tonight when Korea meets Taipei (9:30 p.m., ESPN Deportes).

**ESPN** Deportes is ESPN's Spanish-language station. Yes, sports fans, that's a game between Korean- and Chinese-speaking players, broadcast in Spanish! Now that's a world series.

ESPN networks will cover the entire Baseball Classic, pitting national teams from Asia, Latin America and the United States. ESPN and ESPN2 will cover 16 games between Tuesday and March 20. ESPN Deportes will carry all 39 games of the classic.

In addition to The World Baseball Classic, ESPN will cover Major League spring-training games beginning Friday, with a game (1 p.m., ESPN) between the Los Angeles Dodgers and the Atlanta Braves from Orlando,

• Noah Wyle returns to "ER" (10 p.m., NBC, TV-14), but he's far from his old Chicago hospital. Dr. Carter and medical colleagues (Eamonn Walker, "OZ," and Mary McCormack, "The West Wing") treat hundreds of refugees in Sudan's war-ravaged Darfur region.

## Tonight's other highlights

- Jeff Probst hosts "Survivor Panama: Exile Island" (8 p.m., CBS).
- The "American Idol" (8 p.m., Fox) results show used to seem long at 30 minutes. Tonight,



Kevin McDonough

they've got an hour to kill. • Reese Witherspoon and Patrick Dempsey star in the 2002 comedy "Sweet Home Alabama" (8 p.m., ABC, TV-PG).

• Keeping the lid on a bad grade on "Everybody Hates Chris" (8 p.m., UPN, TV-PG, D,

• Lindsay Lohan plays a set of twins bent on reuniting their divorced folks (Dennis Quaid and Natasha Richardson) in the 1998 remake of "The Parent Trap" (8 p.m., Family).

• A body found in a chimney on "CSI" (9 p.m., CBS, TV-14, V) is not wearing a red suit.

• Back taxes inspire an act of contrition on "My Name is Earl" (9 p.m., NBC, TV-14).

• Public speaking fears on "The Office" (9:30 p.m., NBC,

#### Cult choice

In 1970, as Hollywood dallied with revolution and looked for the next "Easy Rider," Americans fell in love with the old-fashioned romance "Love Story" (10 p.m., TCM), starring Ali MacGraw and Ryan O'Neal.

#### Series notes

Silver Kryptonite on "Smallville" (8 p.m., WB, TV-PG, D, L,  $V) \ \dots \ Behavior \ modification \ on$ "Love, Inc." (8:30 p.m., UPN, TV-PG).

Shelly meets her replacement on "Eve" (9 p.m., UPN, TV-PG) ... Three teams remain on "Beauty and the Geek" (9 p.m., WB, TV-PG) ... Kevin gets mushy on "Cuts" (9:30 p.m.,

#### UPN, TV-PG). Late night

Harry Connick Jr. appears on "Late Show With David Letterman" (11:35 p.m., CBS) ... Jay Leno hosts Salma Hayek, with music by Rhett Miller on "The Tonight Show" (11:35 p.m.,

Jenna Fischer and Dwayne Perkins chat on "Late Night With Conan O'Brien" (12:35 a.m., NBC) Craig Ferguson hosts Jeremy Bloom, Roseanne Barr and Wolfgang Puck on "The Late, Late Show" (12:37 a.m., CBS).

Kevin McDonough is a TV columnist for United Features Syndicate.

## ACCENT ON

# **PEOPLE**

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES

#### **Courteney Cox returns** to television in 'Dirt' When "Friends" left television,

so did Courteney Cox, who played Monica Geller on the long-run-

ning series. But the actress is coming back in "Dirt," a drama pilot for the FX network, in which she will play tabloid editor Lucy Spiller.



Production on the pilot is

scheduled to begin this month. Along with the show's director, Matthew Carnahan, Cox and her husband, David Arquette, are credited as executive producers.

WASHINGTON

#### Missing sex scene was projection error, really

Jason Reitman says a projection error, not **Tom Cruise**, was responsible when Katie Holmes' sex scene was missing in a screening of her upcoming movie, "Thank You for Smoking," at the Sundance Film Festival.

"I was sitting there in the theater, the scene was missing, and my immediate thought was, 'Oh

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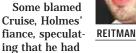
# **Hoosiers**

Sponsored by: First National Bank

Admission: \$5 adults, \$4 seniors \$3 children under 12

my God, Fox cut the scene out of my movie," Reitman said in an interview. "And

then I realized, 'No. if it's at the end of the reel, the projector probably just accidentally cut it out.'



pressured Reitman to remove the

"That's a fun story. I'd read that story. The problem is that it's not true," the director said. "The problem with 'projection error' is that it's the truth but it sounds like a lie. It sounds an awful lot like 'wardrobe malfunction."

Holmes, 27, and Cruise, 43, have been engaged since June. They announced her pregnancy in October.

**Aaron Eckhart** stars with Holmes, Maria Bello, William H. Macy and Sam Elliott in "Thank You for Smoking," adapted from Christopher Buckley's satiric novel about a tobacco-industry spin doctor.



NANNY MCPHEE (PG) Mon-Thurs 5:00 & 7:15 8 BELOW (PG) Mon-Thurs 7:00 DATE MOVIE (PG-13) Mon-Thurs 5:00 7:00 CURIOUS GEORGE (G)

Mon-Thurs 5:00 7:00 FINAL DESTINATION 3 (R) Mon-Thurs 5:00 7:15 FIRE WALL (PG-13) Mon-Thurs 5:00 7:15 PINK PANTHER (PG)

Mon-Thurs 5:00 7:15 STARTING FRIDAY ULTRA VIOLET (PG-13) 16 BLOCKS (PG-13)

AQUA MARINE (PG)

2:10 2:40 4:40 5:10 7:20 7:50 9:50 10:20 **RUNNING SCARED** (R) 1:50 4:50 7:40 10:30 DATE MOVIE (PG-13)

12:15 2:20 4:15 7:00 9:10

EIGHT BELOW (PG) DIGITAL CINEMA PRESENTATION EIGHT BELOW (PG) REGULAR ENGAGEMENT 12:10 3:00 6:40 9:20 FREEDOMLAND (R) 2:30 5:00 8:10 10:35 SECOND CHANCE (PG) CURIOUS GEORGE (G) 1:45 4:00 6:15 8:45 CURIOUS GEORGE (G) 1:45 4:00 6:15 8:45 FINAL DESTINATION 3 (R) 12:20 3:10 7:10 9:30 FIREWALL (PG-13) 1:40 4:20 7:45 10:25 THE PINK PANTHER (PG) 2:15 4:30 7:15 9:45 THE PINK PANTHER (PG) 2:15 4:30 7:15 9:45
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS (PG-13)
12:30 2:45 5:15 8:00 10:15
BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2 (PG-13) 9:00PM DAILY
NANNY MCPHEE (PG) 1:10 3:40 6:30
THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA (PG)
2:50 6:45 9:40

Tuesday night, especially among advertiser-desired young viewers, convinced NBC that the time was right to move "The Office" and its

Earl," to Thursday nights in January. So far, it's working. "Earl" and "The Office" don't beat the CBS juggernaut "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation," but they've improved NBC's fortunes. Last season, "The Office" averaged 5.3 million viewers per week; this season it's up to an average of 8.1 million viewers weekly. The

higher-rated lead-in, "My Name Is

(R) ('92) ★★ (CC) Tucci. Comedy-Drama. A European living in an airport befriends a stewardess. (CC)

Matthew Broderick, Bette Midler. Comedy. (CC)

National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1 (6:35) (PG-13) ('93) \*\*

STARZ Bill Murray, Olivia Williams. Comedy. (CC)

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

rated, critically

lauded TV shows:

"Remember how

Usually the

suits ignore their

long it took

'Seinfeld' to

cries, swiftly

swinging the

cancellation ax

on low-rated dis-

catch on?"

Network executives often hear

CARELL

this plea from producers of low-

appointments like CBS's "Love

Monkey." Or, in the case of Fox's

"Arrested Development," critics

shamed the network into keeping

NBC's "The Office" has been

in the ratings footsteps of "Sein-

feld." "The Office" began in the

steadily is growing into a hit.

Nielsen basement, but slowly and

"Seinfeld" didn't: iTunes. Since it

Dec. 6, at least one episode from

one) has been among the Top 10

iTunes weekly video downloads.

with slow-but-steady growth on

"The Office" (and often more than

That boost from iTunes coupled

-465 AT US HWY 31 SOUTH - INDIANAPOLIS

SHOWTIMES FOR MARCH 01 – 02 DOOGAL (G) 1:20 3:30 6:20 8:50 MADEA'S FAMILY REUNION (PG-13) 12:00

SHOWPLACE 16
Movies with Magic 76
1-800-FANDANGO 1598#

debuted as an online download

"The Office" had an advantage

the exception to the rule, following

it on the air even though its rat-

ings continually eroded.

Rushmore (6:50) (R) ('98) \*\*\* Jason Schwartzman, Starz the

"The Office" and "Earl" for the 2006-07 TV season. Based on the British series of the same name that starred Ricky Gervais as a terrible boss trailed by a documentary crew, the American "Office" opened its doors with the same format a year ago. Edgy and emphasizing uncomfortable comedy, the American "Office" introduced Steve Carell ("The Daily Show") as Michael Scott, the idiot boss of the Scranton, Pa., branch of

network has already renewed both

Dunder Mifflin Paper Co. **Gervais picked Greg Daniels** ("King of the Hill") to exec-produce the American version ("He's a very quiet man, which really excited us for some reason") and said he took the show's poor test results as a positive sign.

"That's exactly what it did on



# GREENWOOD PARK 14 Madison Ave and Fry Road

Madison Ave and Fry Road

DOOGAL (G) ✓ 3:00, 5:40, 7:50

RUNNING SCARED (R) ✓ 1:00, 4:10, 7:10

TYLER PERRY'S MADEA'S FAMILY

REUNION (PG13) ✓ 2:00, 4:50, 7:30

DATE MOVIE (PG13) 1:20, 3:20, 5:20, 8:10

EIGHT BELOW (PG) 1:00, 3:50, 7:25

FREEDOMLAND (R) 1:30, 4:20, 7:45

CURIOUS GEORGE (G) 2:10, 4:30

FINAL DESTINATION 3 (R) 2:40, 5:10, 8:00

FIREWALL (PG13) 1:50, 4:40, 7:40

THE PINK PANTHER (PG) 2:30, 5:00, 7:20

WHEN A STRANGER CALLS (PG13) 3:10, 5:30, 8:15

BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2 (PG13) 1:40, 4:30

MANDY MCPHEE (PG) 1:10, 3:40

MATCH POINT (R) 7:15

BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN (R) 3:30, 7:30

WALK THE LINE (PG13) 7:35

WALK THE LINE (PG13) 7:35 GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK (PG) 1:00, 7:15

#### BBC2," Gervais said last week. Today "The people that get onto focus Meetings groups are force-fed big, broad comedies with laughter tracks

and guest appearances. They're

not going to like 'The Office' the

they're not going to know what

"But if you stick to your vision

and auteur it the way you think it

should be done, there are enough

people in the world that are like-

minded and they're going to find

it and it's going to be their

favorite show," he said.

first time they see it because

they're watching exactly.

50 Plus of Greater Whiteland, 1 to 3 p.m., New Whiteland Town Hall, 401 Mooreland Drive, euchre

Hostage (10:35) (R) ('05) ★★ Bruce Willis. A former

Radcliffe. The young wizard confronts the fugitive Sirius Black. (CC)

Suspense. Bank robbers try to outwit an evil sheriff during a flood. (CC) (11:25) ('87) ★★

Woodmen Club, 6 p.m., Calvary Lutheran Church, Shelby Street, Greenwood. Information: 888-6146

Edinburgh Lions Club, 6:30 p.m., Lions Club building, South Walnut Street Sertoma Club of Greenwood, 6:45 p.m., Southern Dunes clubhouse, State

Road 37 and Wicker Road Greenwood Community Band, 7 p.m., Greenwood Community High School band room





### 'Office' slowly, steadily growing into hit **CALENDAR** By Rob Owen

The Stepford Wives (PG-13) ('04) \*\* Nicole Kidman, Hard Rain (9:45) (R) ('98) \* Morgan Freeman, Randy Quaid.

11:14 (R) ('03) \*\*\* Henry Thomas, Blake Heron

The lives of 10 people converge in a small town. (CC