

In Boxing News: Oprah Winfrey Gets Counted Out

For those of you who are members of Oprah's Bookclub, or of an otherwise literary inclination, George Kimball - in [A million little pieces of boxing balderdash](#) - brings a boxing twist to the furor surrounding best-selling author James Frey's

A Million Little Pieces

. Frey, says Kimball, plays fast and loose with some details surrounding The Sweet Science in his (apparently fictional) memoir. C'mon Mr. Frey, is nothing sacred anymore? And, by the way, how did these boxing tall-tales get past

Oprah

and

Dr. Phil

?

No boxing news roundup would be complete this week without a **Manny Pacquiao** update.

Pacquiao's win has

[united the Philippines](#)

. Pacman

[arrived in Manila from Los Angeles](#)

before dawn Friday and was mobbed at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 2 by throngs of fans and media people. The atmosphere at the airport was euphoric as the fans saw Pacquiao emerge from the airport. Later, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

[welcomed Pacquiao in Malacañang](#)

with a hearty and creative breakfast -- chicken empanadas (pies) shaped like boxing gloves.

And in unexpected twist, World Boxing Council super featherweight champion Marco Antonio Barrera

[has praised Pacquiao](#)

and indicated he was not ducking a rematch with the Pacman.

In heavyweight news, **Nikolay Valuev** [will defend his World Boxing Association title](#) against American challenger

Owen Beck

in April. The fight will be held in Hamburg, Valuev's spokesman said.

Dan Rafael of ESPN writes that a win on Saturday could propel **Arturo Gatti** [into another significant fight](#),

perhaps against newly crowned welterweight champ

Carlos Baldomir

. But a loss, particularly another bad one, might spell the end. Carl Moretti of Main Events, a close friend of Gatti's said:

It's usually hard for a fighter to train over the holidays, but he had no problem with it. Buddy [McGirt] has been very pleased with what he's seen. Gatti's legs are fine. He's punching really

Written by Chris Gielly

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hard at the weight, so all the indications are positive. But you just have to see it in the ring Saturday night.

Ron Borges also

[previews this weekend's Gatti bout](#)

on the HBO site.

Scott Harrison, the World Boxing Organisation featherweight champion, has revealed he [intends to continue campaigning at featherweight](#)

for another 18 months, unless his promoter Frank Warren makes him a financial offer he cannot refuse to move up a division. He has as already defied the advice of both Frank Warren and his manager Frank Maloney by insisting on facing

Joan Guzman

, the mandatory challenger for his WBO title, on March 25th. Said Harrison,

the doctor has told me I'm good to fight at featherweight for another year and a half before I have to move up ... [but] if the right challenge came along at super- featherweight, against

Manny Pacquiao

or one of the other big names and it was for good money, then I would definitely take it.

Thomas Hearn [pleaded no contest Wednesday](#) in Southfield 46th District Court to a charge that he assaulted his 13-year-old son on New Year's Day and was sentenced to probation in the incident. Police reports indicated that the teen disobeyed Hearn's directive to turn up a thermostat in a bedroom where he was playing a computer game.

The "TV age of boxing" is long gone. But its current state is particularly deflating for fans who recall not only the 1970s, when Ali drew mammoth audiences on broadcast TV, but the early cable days of the '80s and the sporadic big fights and big names of the '90s. With HBO debuting its 34th year of World Championship Boxing tomorrow, [Neil Best asks: What happened](#) ? Ross Greenburg of HBO argues it is due to the lack of breakthrough personalities in the game and due to the fact promoters these days often want to cash in quickly on PPV shows, rather than developing fighters on TV.

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