

BEST OF '98 *people*

Clinton, Lewinsky, Starr top list of year's most influential, interesting personalities

BY AARON MEIER
The Battalion

While the past year may have been dominated with movies about doomed ships and television programs espousing the neurosis of borderline-anorexic female lawyers, the biggest crowd pleasers will become place on the six o'clock news.

Monica Lewinsky, Ken Starr and Bill Clinton
The three-headed hydra of the year. A sexual affair of such monstrous proportions that even a mention in Starr's infamous report was enough to send people scurrying to the Gap for blue dresses and make smokers re-examine the potential of cigars.

Lewinsky garnered national attention and even made a list of the most powerful people in their 20s, an honor most twentysomethings aren't cheering about.

Larry Flynt
The world's second most recognizable pornographer. While the publisher of Hustler magazine may be a moral toad, he knows that when it comes to the halls of Congress he isn't the only one riding a lily pad.

This past year, Flynt became the only man in the entire Monicagate and to put his money where his mouth was.

Sammy Sosa and Mark McGwire
The two powerhouses of Major League Baseball finally made a game still suffering from the negative impacts of the 1994 strike fun to watch again. Watching them battle it out for Roger Maris' record became a national obsession and a chance to forget about stained blue dresses.

When Big Mac broke the record with his shortest home run of the year, Sosa was the first to congratulate him and, for at least a while, the dignity of professional sports returned — that is until the NBA decided to have a temper tantrum.

The McCaughey Septuplets
Remember the days when twins were a rare sight? Apparently those days are long gone and volume is the name of the

game in the baby-making business. The McCaughey's small hometown in Iowa became proud of their seven newest sources of tax revenue and every news magazine and morning talk show cooed over the rugrats. Following the birth and media frenzy, and in the grand tradition of product placement, the offers to the family rolled in. Free diapers, baby food and even a free minivan landed in the McCaugheys' laps.

America, gotta love it.



RUBEN DELUNA / THE BATTALION

Matthew Shephard

A young college student found dead and tied to a fence post is a horror story for any college campus. Add the condition that it might be an anti-gay murder, and the University of Wyoming gained national attention following the murder of Shephard. While the motive for the murder has been clouded with other possible motives, the debate continues and in this week's State

of the Union address, Clinton called for the passage of an anti-hate law.

George Lucas

Heard of a little flick called *The Phantom Menace*? Who hasn't? Well, the film's little two minute trailer kept the Jedi Knight cult at the multiplexes praying for the long heralded trailer. Rumors of the trailer at *The X-Files* helped raise ticket sales the first few days. Lucas is now re-claiming his throne as a movie god. The lines at Hollywood 16 have probably already formed for the May 21st premiere. Cha-ching.

Dat Nguyen

The A&M linebacker with the talent and drive that made Aggie fans proud. His Vietnamese heritage made him unique to the football grid iron. It isn't every college player that can have the patrons and owners of a Houston-area sushi bar jumping around during the Big 12 Championship.

Calista Flockhart

The "Ally McBeal" star won critical praise and put a big dent in Monday Night Football Nielsen ratings this past year. She was simultaneously heralded as a post-modern feminist and the death of feminism itself, but her biggest controversy came when she showed up at this year's Emmys. More accurately it was the part of her that did not show up that had people concerned. Rumors of eating disorders dogged the star, and fellow television women Kristen Johnson of "3rd Rock From the Sun" went public, criticizing the unattainable body type Flockhart and other actresses were presenting to young women.

George Michael

"Why can't you set your monkey free?" Isn't it sad when art imitates life? Michael's arrest in a California men's restroom and subsequent revelation of his homosexuality had the tabloids falling over themselves trying to crucify the pop star. Michael had the last laugh though with the release of his video "Outside" depicting various couples in compromising positions and Michael himself wearing a police uniform and singing in a public bathroom.

The New Kids Clones

It does not matter what they call themselves, whether it be The Backstreet Boys or 'N Sync or 98 Degrees, pre-fab pop music has come back with a vengeance. With the sales of rock albums in a downward spiral, pop music kept the record industry afloat. Not surprisingly, the trend has spread to other music genres. CMT has started showing the videos of five attractive young guys snappily dressed and the clones of Latin descent are singing Tejano. But the big question still remains, what ever happened to the originals Danny, Donny, Joe, John and Jordan?

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