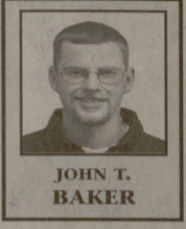


Taking 'The Body' shots

Ventura gives hope to bleak political system

Ventura is undeserving of elected-official status

The coming of each election year is heralded by public courtesies for change. Unfortunately, career politicians who figuratively take and sell fertilizer soon pacify the public's insistence for political improvement, as the public's unrealistic expectations allow smooth-talking liars, cheaters and "yes men" to fill civil-servant offices.



JOHN T. BAKER

views, devotion to positional duties and integrity have captured the nation's attention. While most politicians allow themselves to be shepherded by popularity ratings, party views and special-interest campaign donations, this former U.S. Navy Seal is intent on doing what is in the best interest of his constituency.

Ventura has again shown his constituents that he works for their best interests, not the almighty dollar.

His election as governor of Minnesota has not stopped him from coaching Champlain High School's football team, leaving Sundays open for his family and close friends or vocalizing his opinions. He represents the common man for the common good. America must learn to accept a sprinkling of the bad with the good. Not all of Ventura's statements deserve support, but hypersensitivity should not lead to his political destruction.

Mass media tends to develop its own biased spin on topics like Ventura's interview.

While most of his statements do not require further analysis to comprehend, his opinion on religion does.

Even though organized religion has been the root cause for more mass murder, war and intolerance than any other historical factor, Ventura tips his hat to religion and its appropriate role in communities but denounces those who pervert religion to seek financial gain.

Ventura was not referring to the neighborhood church, but instead, he was rightly targeting religious spurs like The Miracle Network, The 700 Club and Jerry Falwell. In golden sanctuaries built on sand, priests, preachers and holy men will mount their attacks against Ventura — but followers hopefully will stop and think before building a gallows.

What Gov. Ventura lacks in eloquence, subtlety and tact he makes up for in integrity, vision, and work ethic. America does not have to agree with every word a politician spouts. Focus should remain on Ventura's actual politics. A politician should not have to tiptoe around each and every issue for fear of political beheading.

Ventura is prepared to lose his incumbency race, but is still putting forth a happy smile and new ideas.

Minnesota should not throw out this new activist, but rather embrace him and forgive his inability to swoon the audience with sweet pillow talk.

Americans need a strong shot of political moonshine, and Ventura is an entire jug of fire water.

John T. Baker is a junior agricultural development major.

When Jesse Ventura was elected governor of Minnesota in November 1998, his popularity was based on a reaction to "politics as usual."

Ventura was seen by many voters as a refreshing change to the state's political landscape. But the morning after Minnesota's gubernatorial race, many of Ventura's supporters were sobering up and wondering just who is under their red, white and blue bed sheets.

Ventura's latest display of the difficult "foot-in-mouth" wrestling maneuver is just the latest in his continuing effort to make a fool of himself. He was quoted in an interview with Playboy

biggest black eyes. Just how Ventura goes about sinking his career is his prerogative, but what about the 770,000 well-meaning voters who elected him with high hopes of political change?

One phrase comes to mind in summing up the embarrassing and difficult position Ventura's supporters have been put in: It serves them right. In this Frankenstein-like story of bad judgment, the voters of Minnesota did not create the monster, but they are responsible for putting the monster in the national political spotlight.

Ventura's election was in every sense an experiment gone wrong. A candidate who vows not to say what people want him to say seems like an appealing choice, but one wonders what he is going to say. If people elect a sophomore former wrestler whose only political background is arguing his way out of a speeding ticket, they probably do not want him speaking his mind as their representative.

The Minnesota voters who showed just how low they could sink by supporting Ventura, deserve the bad press their decision has brought them.

In defense, thousands of Minnesotans did not vote for Ventura, but the fact there were not enough voters to say "Hey, I have more respect for my state's gubernatorial office than to elect a tactless, untested wrassler" does not speak well of Minnesota's population as a whole.

Now that Ventura is in office and has done what common sense should have predicted, what is to happen next? He should have some respect for his position and do one of three things.

First, he could shut his mouth and calm every urge to further humiliate himself and those he represents.

Second, he could resign, not likely since he does not do what others want.

Third, he could at least choose not to run for office again. Even though Reform Party chairman Russell Verney has been critical of Ventura's outbursts, there will still be

to support his next run at political office.

Whether he has any good decision-making skills left after years of being dropped on his head is a tough question.

If he does, he should overcome the urge to pursue a second term, much in the same way he overcame Rowdy Roddy Piper's devastating "Highlander Choke Hold" in SummerSlam '88.

As for the electoral pool of Minnesotans, shame on them.

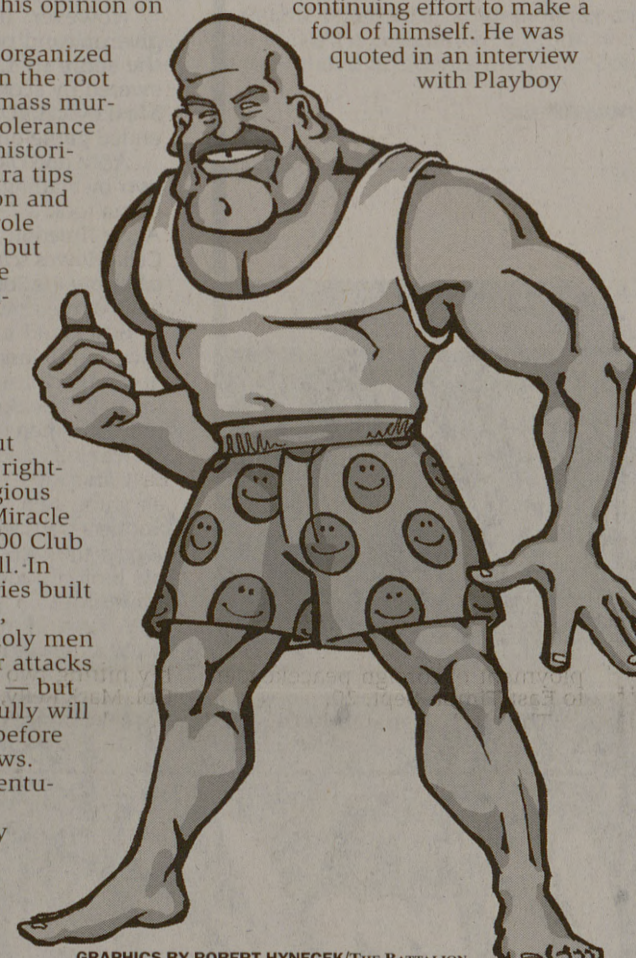
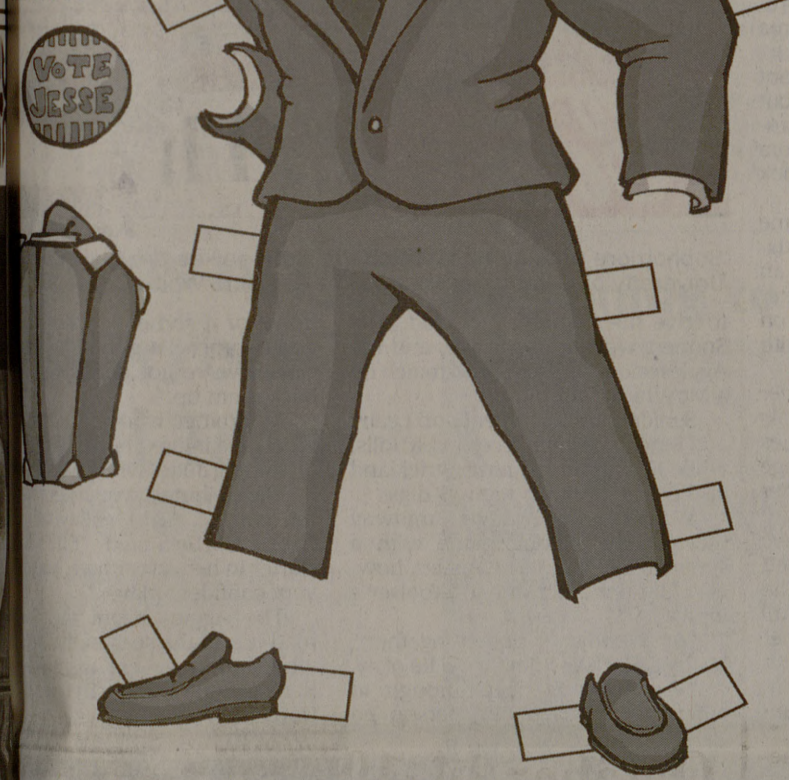
They should take the opportunity to save face by rejecting Ventura's likely second campaign and electing somebody — anybody — who does not refer to the Columbine High School tragedy as an argument in support of more handgun conceal-and-carry legislation.

Jesse Ventura may have seemed a good alternative to the problems of politics as usual, but the state of politics was never so bad to warrant putting an ignorant and uncouth loud-mouth into public office.

Ventura has brought deserved embarrassment to himself, his office, and his supporters.

One can only hope the voters who made a bad mistake last November have learned their lesson.

Eric Dickens is a junior English major.



GRAPHICS BY ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION



politics experience a ping-pong effect as the nation's politics bounce predictably between Democrat and Republican sides.

The United States' tendency to propagate business as usual will only be thwarted through new leadership styles and personalities, and to successfully attain the change a new breed of politician must be adopted, as well as tolerated.

Fortunately, there are a few figures in the political spectrum who refuse to act like the average politician. One such individual is Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura, who has established himself as a political anomaly by refusing to feed the public empty promissory sound bites.

Ventura has breathed new life into a stagnant status quo political system. Therefore, Americans should forgive Ventura's verbal indiscretions in his recent Playboy interview and embrace this all-American straight-shooter.

Public focus should be on his tangible performance, not his personal opinions.

Ventura's libertarian political

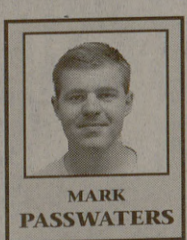
Seeking reelection often takes priority over common sense with politicians. Ventura, however, shows no fear of losing his incumbency campaign.

By not relying on popularity statistics in order to make decisions, he has freed himself from the enslavement of fluctuating public whims, permitting him to actually enact significant advances for Minnesota. The shackles of popularity will not hold "The Body" or restrict his style. His priorities lie with those he serves.

The public must understand Ventura's personal opinions do not necessarily reflect his political stance. An imperfect society will not produce a perfect politician, but at least he possesses the tenacity to not coddle a politically correct public.

The accepted practice of buying a politician's vote with special-interest campaign donations has burdened the United States political system, as politicians religiously cast votes for financial gain.

By refusing to accept special-interest campaign donations,



MARK PASSWATERS

Professor's lack of respect toward value of life is unacceptable

There is a long-standing relationship between Republican presidential candidate Steve Forbes and Princeton University. Forbes, a member of the school's board of trustees, has continued a tradition started by his father by donating millions to their alma mater.

However, in the past couple of weeks, Forbes has made an abrupt change in his relationship with Princeton. Forbes has decided until the University dismisses a certain professor he will not donate more money.

The offending professor is Australian-born bioethics instructor Peter Singer. Singer's viewpoints on the value of human life have made him about as popular as Atilla the Hun. In fact Singer's and Atilla's views on the matter would probably be eerily similar.

Since publishing his 1979 book *Practical Ethics*, Singer has professed that children less than one month old lack human consciousness.

Therefore, they should be able to be

euthanized if mentally or physically handicapped.

Singer has become a leader in the animal-rights movement at the expense of the human-rights movement. In another book, *Animal Liberation*, Singer says the life of a human is no more important than that of an animal.

Singer's pack mentality belief is easily supported for animals, who might imperil their own lives by supporting a weaker member, but it should not apply to human beings. With medical advances, handicapped people have the opportunity to lead active lives.

It is surprising that Princeton, an Ivy League institution with a renowned divinity school, allows a man who so openly minimizes the worth of a human being to draw a paycheck. Singer's beliefs are not only repulsive, but also set a very dangerous precedent.

Stephen Drake of the disability group Not Dead Yet said in an Associated Press interview that Singer's views, "provide a convenient ethical framework for bigotry."

Who is to define "severely handicapped?" If Singer had his way, people would be able to have a child, see if the

child came out the way they had hoped and then if not — kill it. Anyone who believes all humans have a right to live should be chilled by this concept.

Whether Singer intends for his views to lead to extremes is not clear, but spreading such a callous attitude toward human life could very well lead to the arbitrary elimination of infants behind the excuse of "disabilities."

A professor who minimizes the value of humanity and discounts one's right to exist has no place on the campus of any school.

Such an elastic value of human life would be the 21st-century equivalent of drowning baby girls because they are not boys. Deciding to end another human's life based on arbitrary reasons is not acceptable conduct. Singer's ideas

are the most obvious statement of discrimination in recent years.

Nazis performed genetic experiments in an attempt to get rid of physical traits they deemed unacceptable, including things such as long noses, dark hair and obesity. Singer is similarly advocating an attempt to change the face of society by getting rid of the "dregs" that might be a hindrance to society. Singer, a man of science, must know the impact of such measures.

He would need to look no further than the Princeton campus, where severely handicapped students have made their lives resoundingly successful.

These successes disprove Singer's argument that allowing the handicapped students to live is being done "for the good of the child," and add to the belief Singer is actually advocating a purified society.

Singer, ironically enough, currently is employed at Princeton's Center for Human Values. For someone in this day and age to say there is justification for killing the most innocent thing in the world — a baby — is not only barbaric but animalistic.

A professor who minimizes the value

of humanity and discounts one's right to exist has no place on the campus of any school, much less Princeton University.

In an editorial in the *Daily Princetonian* last November, University President Harold Shapiro complimented Singer for his work on "difficult and provocative topics [that] challenge long-established ways of thinking."

If Shapiro believes advocating the murder of less fortunate members of society is an acceptable "challenge to long-established ways of thinking," then Princeton's alumni should demand Shapiro be kicked to the same curb as Singer.

With the support of the Princeton administration, Singer continues to teach his course, "Questions of Life and Death." While support for him continues, Princeton should expect more of its alumni to react in the same fashion as Forbes.

It is the humane way to react to such a situation.

Mark Passwaters is a electrical engineering graduate student.