

A pet is not a toy

Animals a long-term commitment; must spay and neuter



JESSICA CRUTCHER

caused by a lack of effort on the part of the shelters, but by the constant overload of stray, unwanted and abandoned animals.

Healthy, friendly animals are euthanized daily because there is not enough room to board and feed them all.

Adult animals are often the biggest victims of neglect and abandonment.

Somehow, an adult Labrador loses much of its cuddliness once it loses the baby fuzz and hits the 80-pound mark.

However, this is no excuse to take the animal to the shelter or give it away — prospective owners should take the entire life span of an animal into account when choosing a pet.

Before adopting an animal, one should consider whether the size and personality of the animal will be compatible with the potential owner's lifestyle.

Otherwise, the animal will end up abandoned, with little chance of finding another home.

The saddest thing about shelters is that adult animals are less likely to get adopted than puppies or kittens.

It does not matter if the animal is housebroken, loves children, fetches the newspaper and can practically speak English: it will not get a second glance if it must compete with the cute fuzzy babies the prospective owner thinks can be trained to "act just like I want them to."

The importance of spaying and neutering pets cannot be emphasized enough.

For example, according to statistics

from the Humane Society of the United States, one fertile cat and her offspring can produce 420,000 kittens in a seven-year period.

Even if 35 percent, or 147,000, of these kittens are adopted, 273,000 kittens are left to be euthanized, simply because the owner was too lazy or uninformed to get the first cat spayed.

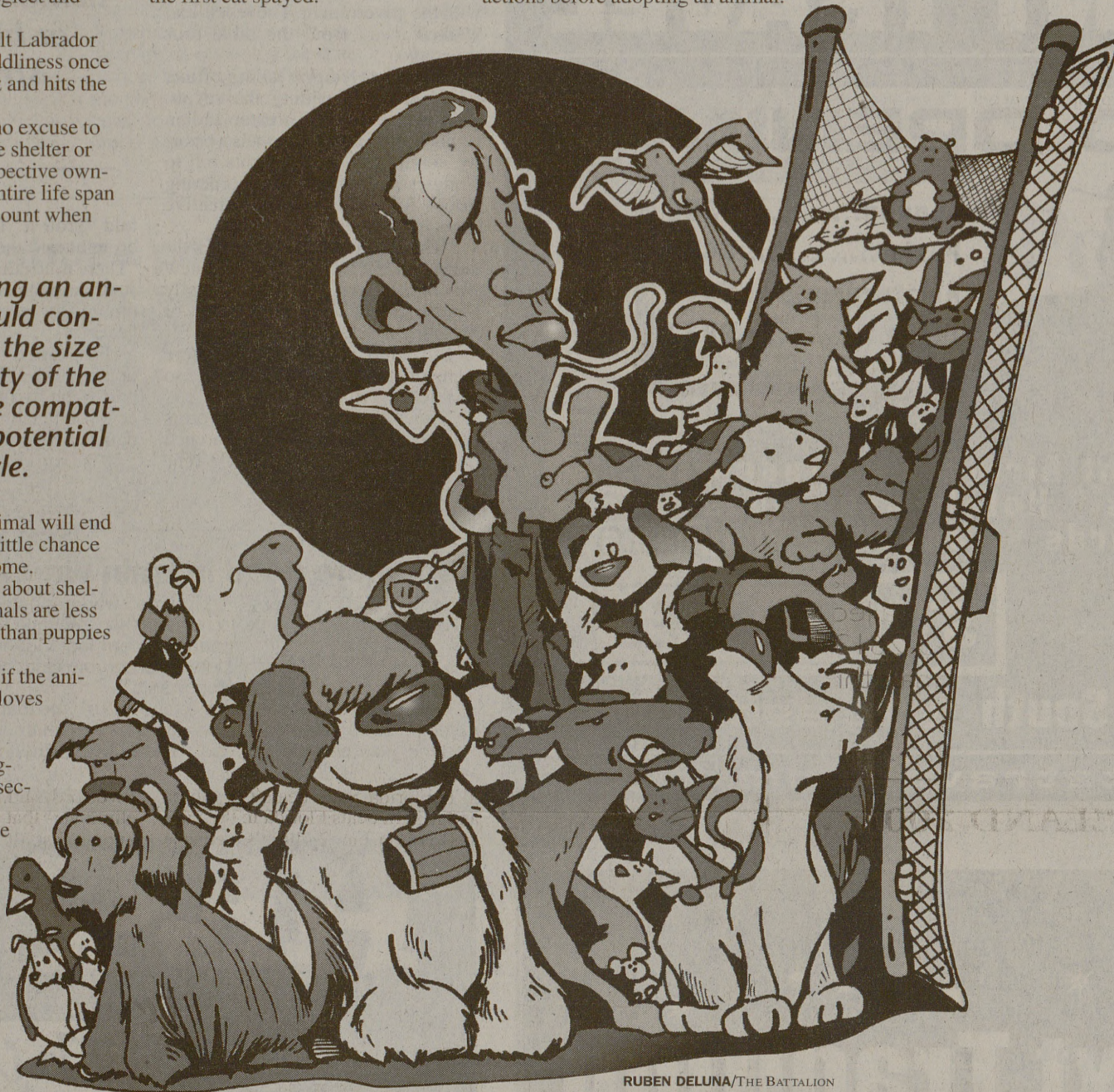
The repercussions of thoughtless breeding and adopting of animals will continue in a deadly cycle until pet owners become more responsible.

Spaying and neutering animals is the first step.

In addition, potential owners should think seriously about their actions before adopting an animal.

Animals are living creatures with feelings, not toys to be discarded on a whim.

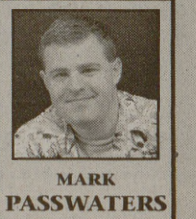
Jessica Crutcher is a junior journalism major.



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

Bye, Bubba

Departure of Clinton filled with memories



MARK PASSWATERS

In less than two months, it all will be over. Bill Clinton will be out of office.

Outside of Hollywood establishment and over-weight interns, the people who will be most distraught over Clinton's departure will be columnists. Love him or hate him, Clinton made life easy for them.

Now they have to work for a living!

Look at all the things that columnists will lose: Nicknames like "Bubba," "Billy Boy," "perjurer," "the extra value-president," and "the commander-in-Krispy Kreme" will have to be retired. At least if Gore had won, columnists would still have the use of catchy zingers like "President Android," "C-3PO," and "Albert Five."

So what are they left with? George W. Bush. And what can they call him, "Dubya"? That is bound to get boring after a few thousand uses.

They also lose Clinton's supporting cast, which is a shame as well. Gone will be Janet "I am the law" Reno, Bill "those nuclear secrets were there yesterday" Richardson, and Clinton's entertaining entourage of lawyers.

Gore eventually will go away, even

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though they will hear him kicking and screaming for months. They even lose Hillary ... oh, hello, Madam Senator.

There are many other reasons that columnists will mourn Clinton's departure. They have learned so many things from him, including:

"Is" is a complicated word: If the most powerful man in the world cannot comprehend the meaning of these two letters together, it must be tough.

Chicks dig chubby guys: Clinton has given hope to overweight men everywhere. Besides the young lady in the beret, there were Jennifer, Paula, Kathleen and Juanita. So pack on the pounds — they are a babe magnet.

Having problems at home or work? Blame Iraq! Americans all know Saddam Hussein is a bad guy, but it took the leadership of Clinton to prove that Hussein is the source of all the world's evils.

The president got caught with his pants down and had to apologize to the nation for his marital infidelity. He bombed Iraq the next day. The Republicans decided to impeach him for his naughtiness, and Iraq was bombed the very same day. Bad Iraqis! Look what you made him do!

China loves capitalism: Americans all thought that China's government was a totalitarian nightmare that had no interest in opening up to the outside. Clinton proved China is more than willing to play a game of economic give-and-take. You give a few hundred thousand dollars; you take our nuclear secrets.

Everyone loves a parade: And nobody puts on a show quite like the U.S. armed forces. In an attempt to make everyone happy, the president sent them to places like Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo. It is too bad that some people did not like the tunes and killed some of those troops.

Think the rules stink? Blame the rule makers: What is a little perjury and obstruction of justice between friends? How rude of the Republicans to butt into someone's personal matters.

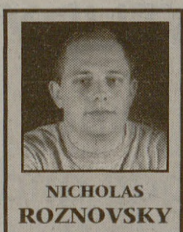
Yes, love him or hate him, Clinton will be greatly missed. He was, for eight years, the personification of entertainment. Bush probably will not be nearly as interesting. To compete, he would have to clothesline Dick Gephardt on the floor of Congress, appoint a federal commission to find out who let the dogs out, or drop the "F-bomb" on Ted Koppel during "Nightline." None of these things are likely to happen, and columnists will be left to mourn the days of yore.

A hot rumor floating around — that Clinton will run for mayor of New York City in 2002. You have columnists' heartiest endorsement, Bill. Working for a living is a pain.

Mark Passwaters is a senior electrical engineering major.

One step ahead of the law

Criminal celebrities should not be supported



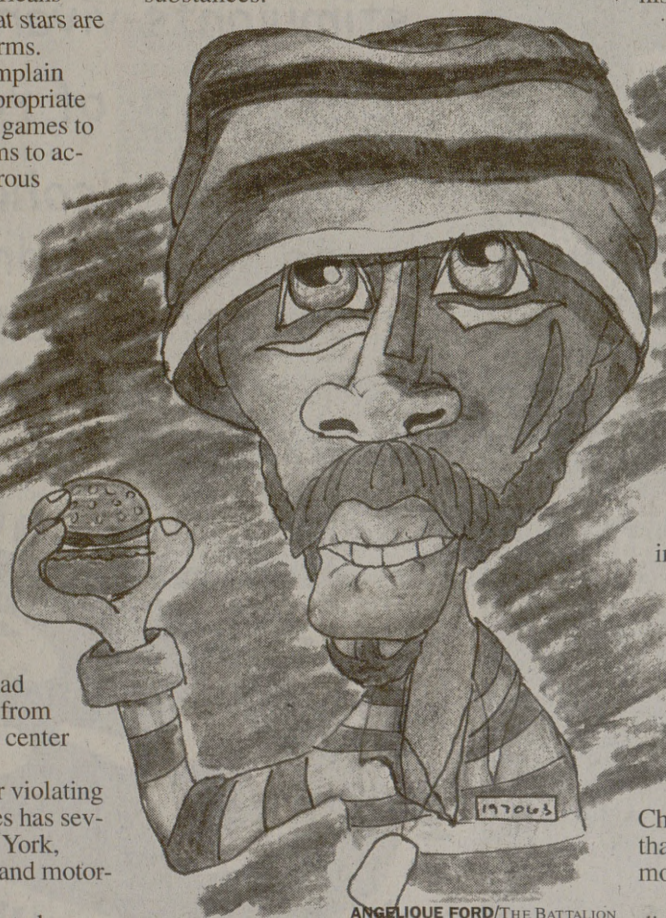
NICHOLAS ROZNOVSKY

lice by living "like a bird," living off "bird-seeds or whatever — you'll see."

Another recent example of celebrities choosing the wrong path is actor Robert Downey Jr.

In what now seems to be a regular occurrence, Downey was found in possession of narcotics last week.

He has been in and out of jail since 1996 for incidents involving controlled substances.



ANGELIQUE FORD/THE BATTALION

Two days after his arrest, Downey posted bail and returned to the set of the Fox television series "Ally McBeal," where he has landed a recurring guest role in hopes of resurrecting his acting career.

No doubt looking at the increased ratings

Downey has supposedly brought to the show, Fox executives issued statements last week welcoming Downey back to the set and wishing him the best in overcoming his "personal problem."

His problems may not end for quite some time. Downey is scheduled to appear in court Dec. 27, and he could get up to three years in jail for violating probation.

Despite the possibility of prison time in his future, Downey is under contract to begin filming a movie in January.

Downey told Details magazine during an interview in October, "The threat of prison has been eliminated for me. I know I can do time now."

The prospect of prison time for Downey is no doubt softened by the knowledge that he will still have acting prospects when he gets out.

"He was in demand and will continue to be in demand as long as he's available," said Downey's publicist, Alan Nierob. Downey suffers no real consequences from his pattern of substance abuse.

When Al Gore admits to smoking pot in college and George W. Bush refuses to reveal any details about his youth, it is a scandal.

When Robert Downey Jr. uses controlled substances for a period of years and bounces in and out of correction facilities, it is a merely an interruption in his string of paychecks.

A few years ago, basketball star Charles Barkley caused a stir by declaring that he did not want to be anyone's role model.

Compared to the murders, rapists and addicts who abound in professional sports today, Barkley looks like a saint.

At this very moment, it appears that former Carolina Panthers wide receiver Rae Carruth may receive the death penalty for allegedly orchestrating the death of his pregnant girlfriend.

Former baseball star and long-time "re-covering" substance abuser Darryl Strawberry was arrested in Tampa, Fla., just before Thanksgiving for driving under the influence and violating probation.

Former Green Bay Packers star Mark Chmura is facing charges of third-degree sexual assault after attending an underage drinking party and allegedly forcing a 17-year-old girl to have sex with him.

NFL quarterback Warren Moon, Atlanta Braves manager Bobby Cox and NHL goalie Patrick Roy have all been arrested on charges of domestic assault.

There is nothing fair or sportsmanlike about a professional athlete abusing his wife or girlfriend, yet none of these athletes have been reprimanded by their leagues for their actions.

An investigation by APBnews.com in June found that 18 percent of NBA players have been arrested at some point.

Clearly, the notion of a professional athlete does not include being a good citizen.

It is clear that responsibility and respect for the law are not requirements for celebrities.

They may receive legal slaps on the wrists, but there are no real repercussions for these household-name criminals.

After serving their deferred probation sentences and perhaps making a few donations to selected charities, they are free to go forth and receive the love and adulation they so desperately crave from the public.

It is time for the public to stop giving them this attention. Americans cannot criticize the behavior of stars and then reward them by paying for their record, a ticket to their latest movie or a jersey with their names emblazoned on the back.

It does not matter whether today's superstars want to be role models. They are.

Americans should stop supporting criminals and start looking for better people to admire and emulate.

Until they do, celebrities will continue to do whatever they please and not accept responsibility for their actions.

Nicholas Roznovsky is a senior political science major.