

## Pretty is as Pretty Does

### Playboy poll adds to debate over female appearance and professional talent

Playboy magazine has never been a stranger to debate, and Hugh Hefner's company found a new way to place itself in the middle of controversy this month. On Jan. 12, Playboy.com announced that CBS sideline reporter Jill Arrington won its "America's Sexiest Sportscaster" poll with 26 percent of more than 221,000 votes. Arrington was offered \$1 million to pose nude in the magazine, which she quickly declined.



RICHARD BRAY

poll is not much different from most network hiring practices, in which female broadcast journalists enter their field with the understanding that their employment will last only as long as they can make men stop changing channels to ogle at a pretty face.

If experience and ability were more important than appearance, attractive young women would not make up such an overwhelming majority of females in the business. Attractive female journalists should not be stereotyped as unprofessional or unqualified, but they may not always be the best journalists available.

Network executives realized long ago that men are more likely to pay attention when the camera is focused on a smiling blonde discussing the intricacies of the 4-3 defense instead of, say, Mike Ditka talking about the same thing. Executives understand that their job is to increase ratings and advertising revenue. Young, attractive female sportscasters are an inexpensive way to accomplish these goals.

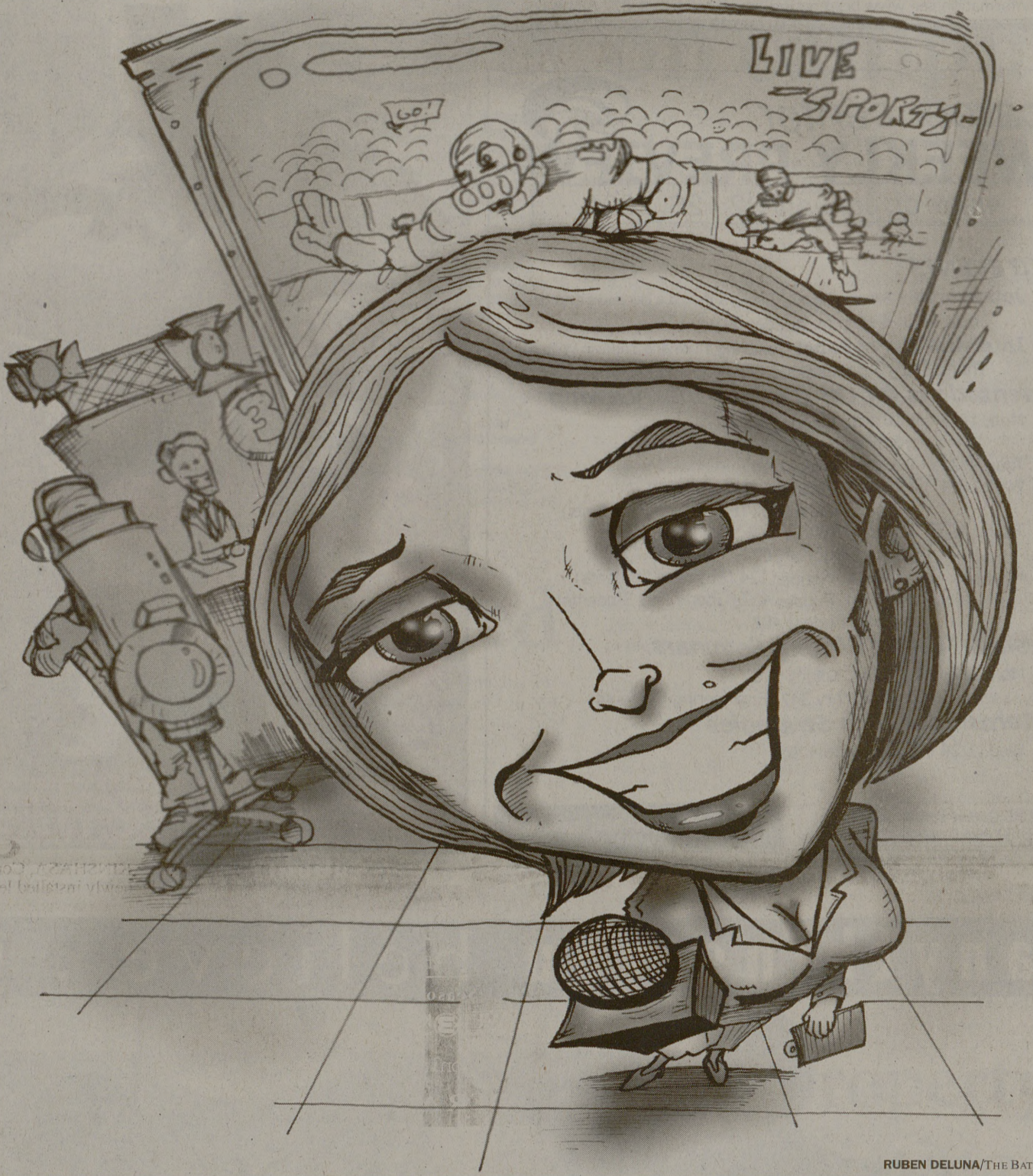
Even male broadcast journalists must battle to keep their jobs against those who have little or no experience in their field. Dennis Miller was certainly not hired by "Monday Night Football" because of his vast football expertise. He was hired for his entertainment value and his ability to improve ratings.

Beautiful young sports anchors are often hired over veteran women of more modest appearance for the same reason. They may not always be the most knowledgeable or the most qualified, but they keep the ratings up.

Rather than setting back the battle for equal rights, Playboy's poll brings the issue to attention by making readers aware of how the public selects which female sportscasters will be allowed in front of the camera. It may be sexist and offensive, but it also reflects a sad reality of sports broadcast journalism: Youth and beauty beat out age and experience a majority of the time.

While eye-catching women are often entirely capable of performing their jobs (and attracting male audiences in the process), they may not always be the best people for the job. As a result, qualified women journalists find themselves out of work when their abilities are reaching their peak, but their beauty is beginning to decline. As Leo Tolstoy wrote in "The Kreutzer Sonata," "It is amazing how complete is the delusion that beauty is goodness."

Richard Bray is a sophomore journalism major.



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

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Newspapers such as the Boston Globe and the Philadelphia Daily News and sportscasters such as Keith Olbermann of ESPN also blamed Playboy for damaging the credibility of female journalists.

However, Inga Hammond, co-anchor of "Sports Tonight" on CNN/SI and one of the 10 finalists named in the poll, said she did not find the poll to be demeaning.

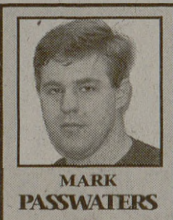
"It's a compliment," she told the Chicago Sun-Times after placing sixth in the poll. "I know my sports, and I know my stuff, so I don't worry about the credibility issue."

Perhaps Hammond realizes that Playboy's poll reflects the way female sports journalists are hired today. After all, the

## Misguided efforts

### Clinton's attempts at Mideast peace agreement have not had desired effect, hurt relations

Most presidents worry about how they will be remembered. As a result, they spend a good deal of time attempting to cultivate a positive legacy. Bill Clinton has spent more time than most attempting to improve his image, as he has no interest in being linked with an overweight, beret-wearing young woman for the rest of time.



MARK PASSWATERS

Unfortunately, Clinton might consider himself lucky if that is all he is remembered for. It looks as though his quest for remembrance may end with the Middle East in flames.

Clinton has spent much of the last six months trying to do the near impossible: broker a peace agree-

ment between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Clinton has pushed Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak into so many concessions that Barak's political future might be destroyed. Without Barak in power, war between Israel, the Palestinians and other Arab nations may become more likely.

As Mort Kondrake, executive editor of Roll Call, a Capitol Hill newspaper, noted in his Jan. 8 article, "In his all-out effort to achieve peace — and perhaps win a Nobel Peace Prize — Clinton may even have sown the seeds for a regional war."

Clinton has repeatedly pushed for a peace agreement that is not finding many takers on either side. Decades of hatred and bitterness make any sort of agreement hard to come by, and the differences between the two are far too large to be remedied in a couple of weeks. However, Clinton continued to rush

the impossible, regardless of the effect it could have on the principal players.

Any hope for peace hinges on the continued presence of Barak, who has risked the wrath of his countrymen several times by making generous offers to the Palestinians, including returning 90 percent of the territory Israel seized during the 1967 Six Day War. Instead of backing Barak, Clinton has demanded that the Israelis give up even more, including control of East Jerusalem.

Barak's previous plans cost him political leverage; his willingness to even consider Clinton's ideas has ruined his political fortunes. Two-thirds of Israelis are opposed to negotiating about the future of Jerusalem; a leader who would concede partial control of the holiest city in the world becomes a political leper at the drop of a hat.

Unwittingly, Clinton assisted in making Ariel Sharon of the opposition Likud Party the overwhelming favorite to win Israel's Feb. 6 election. If Sharon is elected, any chance of peace will go out the window. Sharon is the man who planned Israel's disastrous 1982 invasion of Lebanon, and he is strongly opposed to negotiating with the Palestinian Authority.

Indeed, Sharon is the man who set off the latest round of bloodshed by making an ill-advised trip to the Temple Mount (a site holy to both Jews and Muslims) and announcing that Palestinians would never have control over any part of Jerusalem.

Clinton has damaged the peace process by inadvertently boosting the political hopes of a man many Arabs despise, but he has made things worse by treating the Palestinians with kid gloves. While Sharon is to blame for starting the violence, Yasser Arafat has done next to nothing to stop Palestinians under his control from provoking the Israelis. Known terrorists imprisoned as part of the Wye and Oslo accords have been released from Palestinian jails, and Palestinian police have made no attempt to curb attacks against Israelis. In fact, there have been reports

of Palestinian officers firing on Israeli troops.

Still, Clinton continues to badger the Israelis while asking little from the Palestinians. If the Israelis will be forced to accept concessions that are contrary to their desires, the least the United States can do is exert pressure to make Arafat act responsibly.

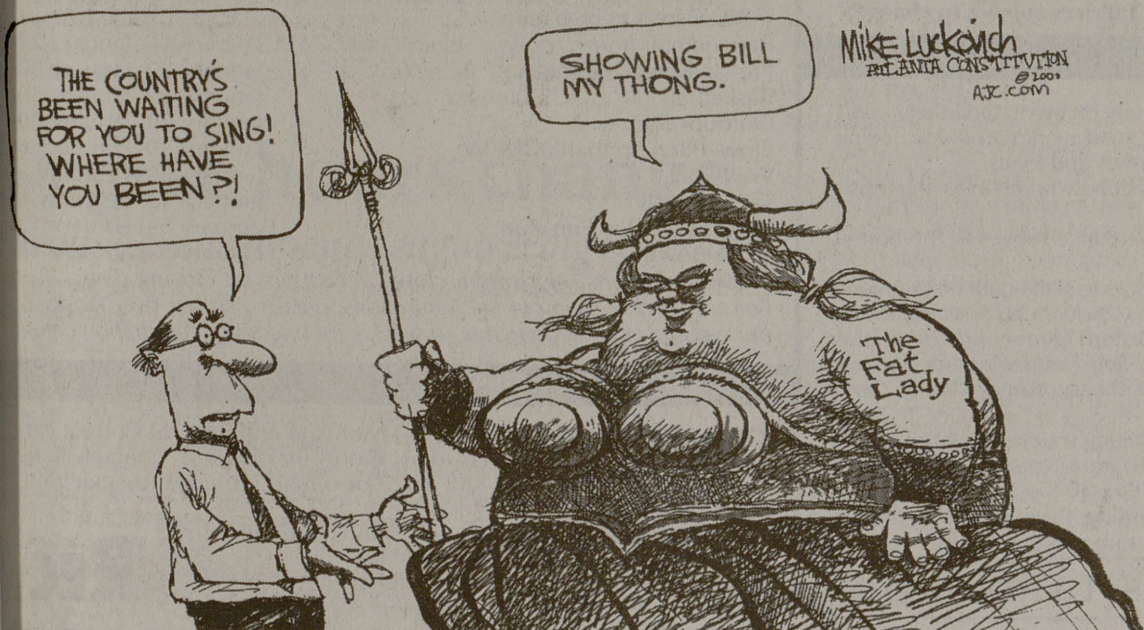
**Peace can come about only when the governments and the people of two nations want it. It cannot be readily supplied by a third party, even an overly anxious American president.**

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is far too bitter and intense for it to be settled in a matter of weeks. The United States should not expect one side to do all the giving while the other side does all the taking. Making a lasting peace requires both sides to give up something in order to achieve their final goals of peace, land and security.

Instead, Clinton has made an already tense situation far worse in an attempt to make himself look good. His repeated prodding of the Israeli prime minister has made Barak look like an appeaser in the eyes of most Israelis. Clinton has helped boost the political prospects of Sharon, who can be described as an anti-Arab hawk.

Peace can come about only when the governments and the people of two nations want it. It cannot be readily supplied by a third party, even an overly anxious American president. In the end, it would be good for Bill Clinton if he is remembered for "I did not have sexual relations with that woman" instead of "I did not cause this war."

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