

OPINIONS

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Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace

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If the Declaration of Independence clearly states that, "all men [are] created equal [and] endowed with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness," then why is America still fighting a war to take away people's happiness?

Same-sex marriage is condemned and banned in 31 states. Why? Because it's not "normal." What isn't normal—love? Should we ban love too? Everyone is born with free will, including loving someone of the same sex. Some people have defined marriage as a "union specifically between a man and a woman in which procreation is involved." However, if mar-

riage is based on the ability to reproduce, then by that logic, should infertile couples still be allowed to marry? Society should not undermine the choices of people who wish to be in a same-sex marriage.

Fortunately, homosexual couples are one step closer to gaining equal standing with heterosexual couples. For the first time, the Supreme Court reviewed two cases regarding federal and state laws that define marriage as a union between a man and a woman. The first will be

a case against federal law that denies married same-sex couples the federal benefits that heterosexual

ban void, there is a high possibility that the 31 other states' bans will also become void.

equal rights exist and those who experience it will fight to the end to gain equal standing with the rest of society. In today's society, we should be able to surpass the general opinion and avoid discriminating based on sexual orientation.

In the past, people who are homosexual have experienced numerous hardships. Many have suffered through hate crimes, discrimination, harassment or self-harm, due

to their inability to match up to the public's expectations. America should have learned from previous gay rights movements that un-

derstanding and acceptance is key to progress. The Supreme Court's decision will be a major step forward in the fight for equality.



Responsibilities Over Rights and Regulations

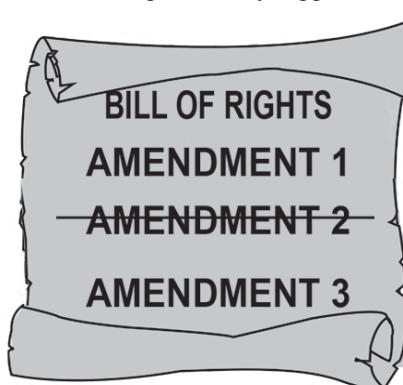
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Why do people recklessly pull the trigger, putting innocent lives in danger? What pushes them over the edge? As America mourned and struggled to find an explanation to Sandy Hook's shockingly heinous crime, many questioned the usage of firearms and called for stricter gun control laws. However, guns themselves are not responsible for crimes committed. The freedom to bear arms requires an individual's responsibility to keep weap-

ons from harming others. The possible mental instability of shooter Adam Lanza leads me to think that the guns should not have been anywhere near him, and that it was unwise for his mother Nancy Lanza to keep a firearm unsupervised. If an unstable parent or other close relative was living with me, I would not want weapons or the ability to shoot one to be so easily accessible, as it could potentially be dangerous.

There are definite pros to

owning firearms, of course, and the right to bear arms is one that some Americans particularly appreciate.



MOOR graphic by SHARON XU
ate. If I had a firearm in my house, I would feel safer if confronted with an armed

burglar, for example. The possession of weapons is a freedom that the founding fathers considered a priority and worth protecting. I am sure that they also realized the great responsibility that weapon ownership bestows. This may be what is lacking in terms of guns and gun control, and is a lesson learned at a terrible price.

Many believe that more gun control laws will lower the rate of deaths in such violent crimes as these. That may be true, but legislation can only be

enforced to a certain extent, and some may resort to illegal weapons instead. Personal responsibility is something that should be stressed more often. More important than regulations or our rights is the decision to do the right thing in the end.

The twenty children, as well as the six adults who died as a result of this violent act, will be mourned and remembered for a long time. As Voltaire once said, "with great power comes great responsibility," and, in this case, great consequence.

You Can't Just Facebook Everyone

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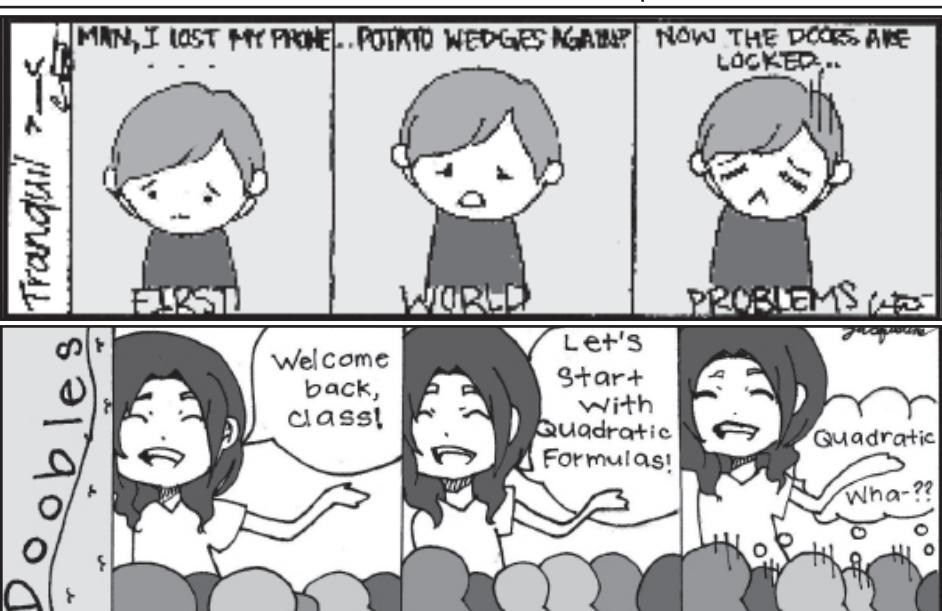
After four years of laborious work, students across the nation and students here at AHS are traditionally given the privilege of cracking open a yearbook to find out who among the student body were chosen to receive the glory of representing their graduating class as a "Senior Best." Yet, it is apparent that not everyone came out happy in the wake of the use of a more modern, online voting process. In a stunningly ironic display of electronic protest, a vocal group of students attempted to make it clear that Facebook is not an appropriate method of disseminating important information by voicing their fervent opinions to—Facebook.

I can understand the upset. This year's senior class totals to 727 students. At the time of this writing, the AHS Class of 2013 Facebook page used by Senior Council and ASB to inform us about key events only comes up to 454 members. Although there may have been an increase in this year's voter turnout, by relegating the Senior Best announcements to the online page, about 37 percent of the senior class has been potentially left out of the loop and unable to contribute to one of high school's most defining traditions. Moreover, this number does not account for those students who

are unable to regularly check Facebook, even if they maintain an account. Because Facebook was used as the primary form of communication, a sizeable group of our graduating class has been excluded from a process that they deserve to be a part of.

Still, why are those affected turning back to the very same method of communication that they are disparaging in the first place? If the students who were affected are attempting to make the point that Facebook is inadequate in successfully relaying information and including as many seniors as possible, then it is foolish and hypocritical to again rely on the same medium to demonstrate that point. Instead of relying on Facebook "likes" and comments to bolster these opinions, petitions should have been made, speeches should have been delivered and meetings should have been convened. Even if Facebook is the most direct method of voicing their disapproval, surely the students who have been denied their right to vote on Senior Bests can do more than drop a couple lines of abbreviated text.

There may be an unhealthy reliance on social media to communicate important ideas, facts and information. The ease and convenience of the Internet has become simply too alluring to ignore. This year's Senior Best controversy is because the Internet has been allowed to replace, instead of augment, more traditional and guaranteed forms of reaching the student body.



Twinkie, Twinkie, Little Star, How I Wonder Where You Are

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If your childhood fantasies consisted of leprechauns, Prince Charming and unlimited Twinkies, one of these three will probably be considered foreign to your grandchildren. Moreover, if you did not wish for boxes of Ding Dongs under the Christmas tree that could supply you for the next decade or have not headed to the closest County Fair for your very first—and last—deep-fried MoonPie, then you

are out of luck. As of Nov. 21, the company Hostess is now closed after filing its second bankruptcy, leaving thousands of workers unemployed and millions of snack-cake fans to fend for themselves. Such a tragedy, right? Obviously, Americans know what their priorities are; the Syrian Crisis and even our tax reforms are nothing compared to America's loss of the fattening cream-filled delicacy with little to no nutritional value, because we have finally realized we are too fat for our Canadian hat. As Americans slowly turn toward the direction of a healthier lifestyle and show concerns for child obesity, many disappearing companies like Hostess are causing a nostalgic frenzy among supporters who can only look back in 20 years and recollect all of the fat American childhood memories that Twinkies held. I say we should all run out to our nearest grocery store, buy the last remaining boxes of fat cakes and sell them on eBay to those who show no concern for their waistline.

Bright Eyes
MICHELLE PAULINO
Opinions Editor

Sorry, Your Dreams Are Out of Reach

To feel insecure is inevitable. When applying to college, whether you are ready for it or not, you are going to doubt your abilities. On your quest to apply to a reputable and reachable university, sites like College Prowler and College Confidential may become frequented on a routine basis. To help get a better idea of your chances of getting accepted, some sites offer a "Chance Me" option that enables other people to vote on the chances they think you will get into a university you apply for.

The process starts with filling out the information most wouldn't normally gloat about, like their grade point average and SAT scores. You can also enter in your extracurricular activities and rank your own high school's performance and difficulty, as well as a few other options. After all is said and done, you then anxiously await the blessing of a complete stranger. The stranger can vote from options ranging from, "Yes, it's very likely," to "Sorry, it's out of reach."

At times, it is hard for us to remember that most schools look at applicants holistically, meaning they take into account the experiences you mention in your personal statement, what you set out to do in the future and who you are as a person. Overall, these anonymous poll-style online predictions should be taken with a grain of salt because every college is different and you may just be admitted to the school that you thought was out of reach.