



# Opinion

For additional workshop stories, photos and reporter profiles, visit our web site, <http://jat.uky.edu>. Click on "Community Programs" and then "Journalism Workshops."

## Teenage angst ails American society

By Greg Robinson



American youth are often characterized with stereotypical labels of being lazy, apathetic, and indifferent. In recent years, these negative connotations associated with being a teen have only increased and left our nation's leaders wondering who, in the future, will protect and instill the rights and privileges that our forefathers worked so diligently to establish.

An example of this problem was highlighted in a 2004 study conducted

by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which finances journalism and free-speech initiatives. This study found when 14,498 students were asked about topics dealing with the First Amendment, over 30%

answered that the press had too much freedom. When asked if musicians should be allowed to sing songs with lyrics that may be offensive to others, only 69% answered yes. Only 51% said newspapers should be allowed to publish freely without governmental approval, and only 58% said that high school student

newspapers should be allowed to report controversial subjects without the approval of authorities. This example of blatant ignorance should not be placed on American youth, but rather the educators and leaders who failed them.

Teenage angst should not be taken for granted. Informing students is the best way to arm them, and when threatened with losing a voice they have hardly had time to develop, they will surely act. Programs and workshops should be initiated in order to supply young people with the tools necessary to protect their rights, fortifying the values of our nation.

American youth is only provided with basic information about their rights and privileges, yet legalized immigrants, seeking citizenship, are asked to affirm their loyalty to the U.S. by taking detailed citizenship tests, concerning essential unalienable rights. This is an obvious foul, when U.S. citizens are not even aware of the basic freedoms guaranteed to them. It may reflect an unconcerned public, but more significantly it shows lack of leadership from our elected officials.

Action must be taken early. Children should be reached in their formative years and taught the importance and integrity of their Constitution and its

amendments. Modest attempts at these are already taken, but lack the zeal necessary to make change.

The future of the First Amendment certainly lies in the hands of American youth. When teens realize the responsibility placed before them, they will rise to the occasion; however, underestimating their abilities and placing them with unjustified labels only worsens the situation. If change is going to be made, it will come with increased support of the youth from America's leaders.

## Contention in media is a cause of public strife

By Olivia Packer



America is the most liberal, the most powerful, and yet the most hypocritical country in the world. In the media, our politicians fight for gay rights, abortion, and sex education. On the holidays, the country mocks the 1950s, with talk of family values and tradition. Our goal is to keep our fellow citizens free, represented, and uncompromised without demoralizing the moral standards of our conservative forefathers. It is for this reason that America is slow to accept the beneficial power of the media. Surveys have shown that many Americans think the press has too many rights under the First Amendment and those rights should be curtailed. This fact is not only ludicrous, but frightening.

Where would I, a sixteen year old, African-American female, be without the efforts of the media during the Civil Rights movement? Most know my freedom would be restricted in some way, shape, or form. My aspirations would become miracles, the impossible. The color of my skin would define my life. But despite those who contested against the media for helping African-Americans, they could not stop it. The media has the right to freedom of speech, press, religion, petition to government, and to assemble peaceably. The media recognized this right and acted upon it. I recognize this right and appreciate my freedom because of it.

America blames the media for focusing so much on the controversial issues. The Watergate scandal would have been just political jargon to the American people if not for the media's relentless search for the truth. When Nixon was truly revealed to the world, he did all he could to halt his embarrassment. Nixon's mysterious ways and dishonesty could have placed America in harm's way. And for

that we must remain grateful to our lifeguards, as they continue to look for shark-infested water.

Today, the Iraq War has become the Watergate and the Vietnam. Thousands protest, and the media covers the soldiers lost, their angry families, and their proud families. The feeling of resentment towards the media has grown. According to a nationwide survey on social-networking groups and the First Amendment, less than 60 percent of respondents trust their local newspaper." America's uncertainty is not helping this country. The media is our main source of information. They inform, to help us decipher the good leaders from the bad, and the topics that must be addressed. The First Amendment helps America stay the democratic nation our founding fathers dreamed of.

In order to stop America's negative outlook on the media, we must first inform. How is one able to appreciate the First Amendment if one is not taught the true impact and the true importance of all that the amendment entitles us to? Anytime freedom is given, it must be appreciated. This starts in the schools. The school systems of America must focus on our constitutional rights to the fullest. Children must be informed of new laws, important cases, and controversial discussions. It would be a tragedy to our nation if the future leaders of America were left out in the dark when the foundations of our government were involved. All of America depends on the youth to continue to govern as a democracy, and recognize its importance. Once America has come to terms with the First Amendment and its significance, then America will understand the importance of journalism and the media. Our nation is like no other, but no matter how perfect or imperfect, we must learn to appreciate its foundations.

## Freedom to love and hate both protected

By Melissa Belk



I live in the Washington D.C. area and I witness conflict with the First Amendment on a regular basis. Through the First Amendment, all Americans are granted freedom of speech, of the press, of religion, to petition the government, and the right to assemble peacefully. However, there are those who wish to spread hateful messages and narrow-minded viewpoints. Is it our duty as Americans to silence those who want to express their possibly detrimental ideas or is it our responsibility to stand behind the basic human rights of freedom of expression? I believe that no matter what a person has to say, as a freethinking human being they have the right to say it.

Through my experience in D.C., I know that a city government will prevent a speech, protest, or march from going on if they deem it potentially offensive. Some people support the discontinuation of a public showing by an organized hate group, because they believe that hate groups can influence people to think and act in a destructive way. Some do not see it as an infringement on the rights of the First Amendment to suppress the views of organizations with hostile and insensitive views. The truth is when the government suppresses the rights of any person they are suppressing the rights of every person. Essentially, when someone tells a person that they cannot say something they are telling another person that they cannot hear something.

Typically, many hate groups carry around a lot of hostility, and suppressing their freedom of expression would make them even more spiteful and possibly violent. I am in no form supporting racist or discriminatory organizations or views. However, as long as

they are not hurting anyone, I do believe that everyone should be allowed to express their beliefs and that people should be free to make their judgments on them afterwards.

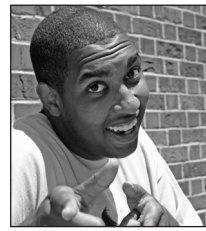
Noam Chomsky wrote, "If we don't believe in freedom of expression for people we despise we don't believe in it at all." This is one of my favorite quotes involving the First Amendment. It does not always involve something as extreme as a hate group, it could simply be a person against the war in Iraq or a group supporting abortion laws. Everyone has controversial viewpoints that are not accepted by society and even if they never plan on publicly expressing those beliefs they should still have the right to do so.

The fact of the matter is everyone in America should have the freedom of expression that is insured in the First Amendment, even people who do not have something commendable to say. To put it bluntly, if a person does not want to hear something, they should not listen. If they do not want their children or loved ones to see it, turn off the TV. What happens when one day people have something incredibly important to say or write and the government will not let them express themselves because they disagree with what they believe?

The United States of America is a democracy; if the people are against an idea being projected at them, they can influence the government to stop the flow of negative information. One of the last inherent birth rights we have is to speak our minds and express ourselves. If we hold on to anything in this country, let's not hold on to hatred and bitterness, but instead let us embrace the rights our predecessors lawfully bestowed upon us in the First Amendment.

## Bonds deserves record despite allegations

By Ashleon Butler



During Bonds' rookie year he weighed nearly 160 pounds. Now after 19 years of being in the Major League Baseball he weighs 210 pounds. This may not seem to be much but his forearm and arms are three times the size of what they once were. Barry Bonds has clearly had many changes happen to his body that does not happen through

regular development.

Due to his alleged use of steroids many people feel Bonds should not be allowed to surpass the record set by Hank Aaron. Personally I feel Barry has earned this record even though it may or may not be true. The fact remains that he has been dedicated, and even though in later years it seemed as if he was using enhancers, his early years also

contributed to his numbers.

In 2003, Bonds was a main player in the BALCO scandals. It is said that he used steroids as well as many other performance enhancers. He was never charged with the crimes or linked to any of the scandal other than by allegation. The actually steroids he used were in fact not illegal in the MLB but they were and are illegal without prescription. Bonds reportedly said he was given a clear substance and cream from a trainer. The trainer

reportedly told him the substance was nutritional supplement flaxseed oil and a pain-relieving balm for his arthritis. The Cream turned out to be a human growth hormone.

There has been much controversy lately over steroid use in MLB during the last couple of years. One man who is in the middle of all this controversy is Barry Lamar Bonds. Bonds is currently in route to break Aaron's record of Career Home Runs. Barry Bonds has 748 home runs (June 17,

2007) and is second only to Hank Aaron's 755. And currently is the holder of the most homeruns in a season, which stands at 73 surpassing that of McGwire (70).

Although Bonds has been thought to take steroids, he has never failed a steroid test. According to some journalist this is because somehow his steroids are undetectable with today's steroid tests.

## Athletes' answers disappoint

By Ashley Beeler



So what's really going on with different players on the University of Kentucky football team this year? Their wasn't a big number of freshmen recruited this year, so there will be at least some experience and knowledge on the team. With Heisman candidate senior, Andre Woodson and fellow senior Keenan Burton, the team does pose a few threats individually. "Our offense and defense are on the same page this year but were working on consistency," said Woodson.

Burton said, "We will have experience in the quarterback, receiver and running back positions but some problems in the defensive line. Coach will have this fixed during the off season, but we need consistency within the team." These players seem to be on the same exact page, which is a good thing, but is this what they really think?

In college athletics there is a person called a Media Information Director. This person travels with the team, tells players and coaches what to say during interviews and teaches them how to handle the press.

Sophomore running back Alfonso Smith and line backer Micah Johnson both stressed that the offensive passing is the strength of the team and the defense will improve but the offense as a whole needs work. "Due to grades and injury, our offensive line has to be stronger and be focused in order to be successful."

Within these interviews the players sounded rehearsed, brainwashed and said basically the exact same things. So what are the people, media and fans really supposed to believe? Will we ever know what the players really think or will we always have to go off of the minds of others who want to tell the truth but not the whole truth.

## Steroid use should be banned

By Tanika Danner



Steroids. The word itself sounds so energizing. In some cases it is. However, these powders and pills can be deadly. Steroids are becoming a huge problem in baseball and other sports. These death pills as I like to say, do terrible things to baseball player's bodies. Barry bonds tells the press he's not taking steroids but how can we prove that he's telling the truth.

There's a simple answer for that. It can't be proved. Anyway, why does he always avoid talking about it when the subject comes up? Why can't he just admit that he did it like Jose Canseco? The man did it but doesn't do them anymore and he can talk about it easily.

People like Barry Bonds just show that when people have something to hide, they don't want to talk about it or just avoid it. Steroids should

be banned from every part of the world and buried in the lowest place on the earth. Then it would make sports reliable and true. However, I do not think that all baseball records for any player who used steroids should be stricken because they could still play well, but in the future they shouldn't be used at all.

If they are used now, then it would be sensible to take their records off to teach them a lesson and be an example for everyone else who is interested in the drugs. Just stick to practicing and doing your best. It has worked for so long for players like Hank Aaron and Willie Mays, so why wouldn't it work for you? And hey, maybe one day you'll even break their records for real without any help but from your skills.

