

Editorial Opinion

A letter home

Dear Mom and Dad:

Please send more money.

The University raised tuition again — for the 23rd consecutive year — and I'll be paying about \$228 more than last year, plus a computer fee.

My friends from out-of-state will be paying more too. Last year, their tuition went up 5 percent more than in-state students', so I guess they're more content with this system. Everybody's tuition, even graduate students', went up 6 percent.

I'll try to get some extra hours at work, but at \$4 an hour, it would take about 57 additional hours of delivering pizzas for me to cover this year's tuition hike.

Also, I'm not going to save money for a personal computer like I had planned. The University, for the first time ever, is charging every student a \$35-per-semester computer fee.

At first I was really steamed about the fee because I rarely use the computer labs on campus, but then University President Bryce Jordan explained that everybody needs the computers for scheduling and billing purposes and most of us use the library computers, which need to be replaced.

The thing is, the fee is separate from tuition, so I guess they can charge whatever they want and still qualify for some of the state's programs that award state-related universities for keeping tuition down.

The state is pinching pennies too. Rather than giving the University all the money it asked for, the state had to trim Penn State's original appropriation request by \$19 million.

Maybe part of the reason is that the state doesn't know where its money goes, because Penn State has a closed budget.

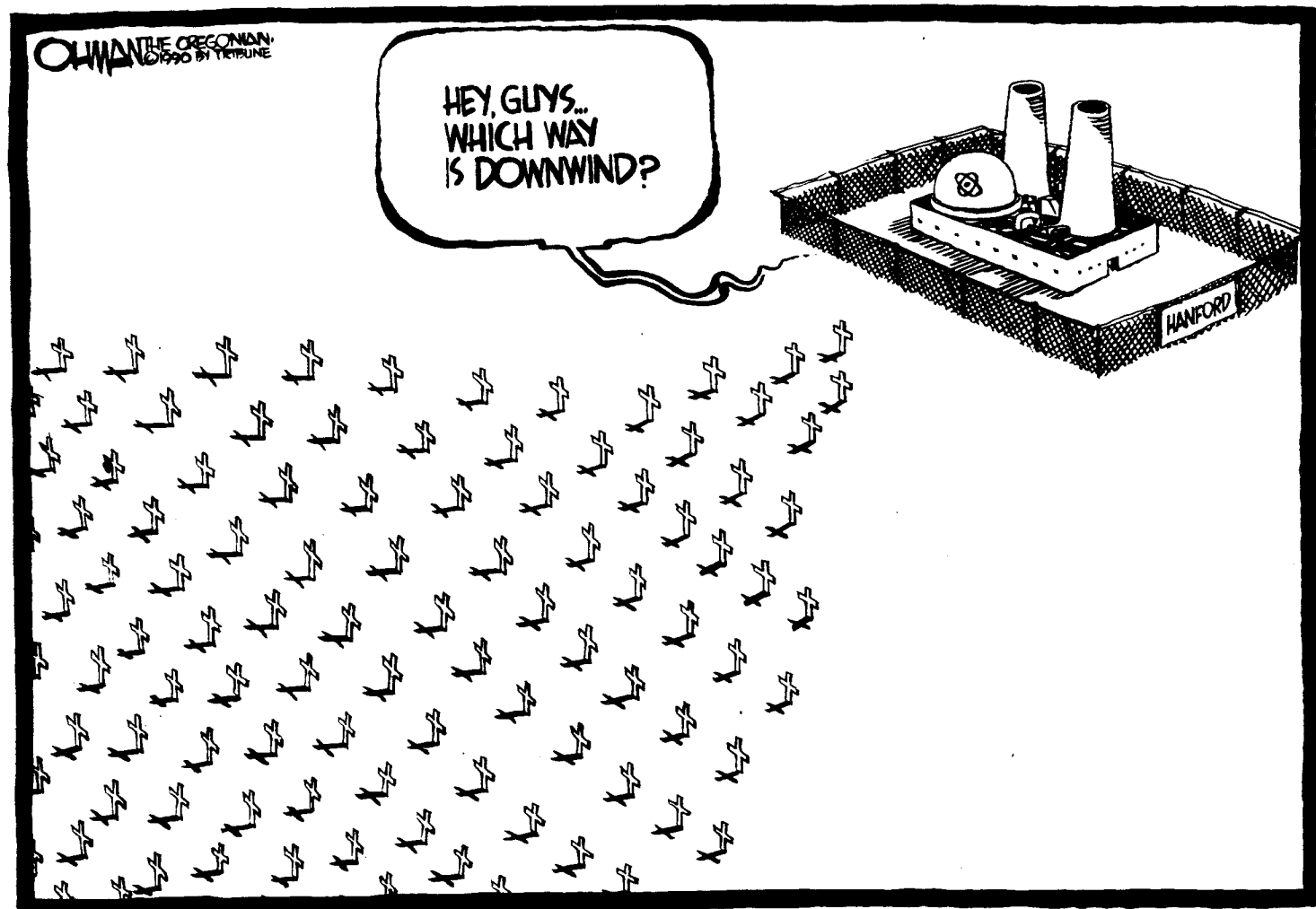
Last week I read some state legislators were on campus to investigate how worn down some of the buildings and facilities are here. University administrators asked them for additional funding to make repairs, but the representatives want to be assured the money will be spent for building improvements and not something else.

If the budget were available for everybody to look at, maybe the representatives in Harrisburg would be more willing to budget money for improving our laboratories and the campus' infrastructure. And with an open budget they would probably be more comfortable giving money to the University each year.

I guess I would too.

And since administrators and legislators will begin working on next year's budget soon, I'll have to fire off my annual letter to the local representative to encourage more funding.

Anyway, until the University decides to let us know where our money is going, and state administrators make affordable higher education a real priority, I guess I'll just keep writing out bigger checks to dear old State.



Reader Opinion

Raise awareness

On Sunday July 15, a full-page advertisement appeared in the *Centre Daily Times* addressed to the Board of Trustees protesting the University's proposed "promotion of the homosexual lifestyle." The ad was sponsored by six churches and was undersigned by approximately 700 people. This open letter was written from their Christian point of view, and with that in mind, we wish to state that we respect their beliefs and in no way wish to debate theology or interpretations of the Bible. We would like to point out, however, that elements of their argument and the mentality behind such an argument leads to ignorance and helps to reinforce stereotypes, bigotry and prejudice.

An advertising campaign was begun on January 22, 1990 by Penn State to raise the awareness of minority issues. It was hoped that this would be an effective tool in combating an alarming rise in intolerant acts toward all minorities on campus. The campaign included but was not limited to: African Americans, women, Native Americans, handicapped individuals, Jews, and yes, Christians. The creators of this series of advertisements chose to address gay and lesbian students first because numerous reports have shown that these students are the number one targets of harassment and violence and thus, their issues needed to be addressed first. Not to mention the fact that they comprise the largest minority on campus, next to women. This was in no way a promotion of the "homosexual lifestyle."

We feel it is important to realize that whether or not an issue is discussed, that issue will still remain. Gays and lesbians are not created by talking about homosexuality. Many of the gay and lesbian students at Penn State were probably quite aware of their sexual orientation before they ever came to Happy Valley. Denying their existence and the very real problem of homophobia and homohatred will only lead to eventual intolerance of all who are different.

At an institution in which freedom of ideas is a most cherished right, and where people of many faiths come to educate both their minds and their spirits, it becomes a dangerous situation when any one group of believers try to impose their views and suppress others', especially in an institution that recognizes the importance of separating church and state.

We would argue that homosexuality is a perfectly acceptable lifestyle. Gay men and lesbian

women have been shown to function normally in every aspect of life, if treated equally and given the same opportunities and rights. The myths and stereotypes that surround homosexuality are no longer being socially accepted and many institutions are reevaluating their position on gays, including the Christian church. In fact, many denominations such as the United Methodist, the United Church of Christ and the Episcopal Church all support gay men and lesbian women as unique and equal. Also, religions such as Reformed Judaism and Buddhism see no sin in love between same sex couples. Therefore, it again becomes dangerous for any one group to claim divine knowledge and try to implement that into policy-making decisions.

It is very rare that an opportunity arises in which we, the students, can become the teachers. Teaching not only the facts, but how facts and inaccuracies can be used to influence others. A person's beliefs, especially spiritual beliefs, are very precious. We hope that we can eventually learn to keep our beliefs from intruding into the lives of our fellow man. We seek a university in which all ideas can be expressed without being insensitive or, even worse, totalitarian.

Choosing to raise awareness of hatred and ignorance does nothing but promote peace and understanding.

J.P. Muir
President, Undergraduate Student Government

Michael LaFlam
Political director, Lesbian and Gay Student Alliance

History of prejudice

I am writing in response to Jinghong Mu's column two weeks ago, "A voyager learns 'God's children need traveling shoes,'" describing her admiration for America. I am glad that you have enjoyed your time living here. However, I was frustrated when I read your column. Yes, the glossy surface of America is "the land of the free," the famed melting-pot of cultures. In reality, though, living here has not been a fantasy come true for everyone. As a native of China, you would have been denied entry into America by the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882-1943), and along with other Asians, would not have been eligible for U.S. naturalization until 1943.

America's history shows an obvious system of selective discrimination and harassment

(whether backed by law or institutionalized) against people based on such things as their country of origin and color of skin. Does anyone even dare say the black people who were forced into slavery in America immigrated here? Or that the Native American Indians are much better off today after being "discovered" and then "civilized" by the Europeans? Or that thousands of Chinese enjoyed the back-breaking job of building America's first transcontinental railroad in the 1870s, only to be faced with decades of laws denying them entry into this "wonderful" country?

You may say that every group has suffered at one point or another, or that things have changed. But anyone who has attended U.S. schools only knows about America's history from a very biased European context. Who ever hears of the many activities and accomplishments of the people of color who were present since the early days? We are here but remain invisible.

I am tired of hearing rave reviews of the U.S. as the great democracy. I am fortunate to be living a comfortable life in the U.S. I was born here and my parents came here from Taiwan and China two decades ago. But I cannot forget the countless people living here now who are treated unfairly. Millions of people of color have had to suffer in order for even some of us to live without the direct discrimination. Yet, the problems are rising again as a result of our government's indifference to people of color.

America has many good qualities, and I realize that for some people, life here is in many ways better than other countries. However, until the U.S. becomes what it claims to be, where all men (how about women?) are created equal and people respect each other's differences, then I will not celebrate its "greatness." And, until then, the U.S. has no business sending Americans to other countries to teach democracy. I realize that there are many who are aware of the problems and work to resolve them. But, the rest of us must open our eyes. Instead of quickly accepting the propaganda that the U.S. puts out, do some real homework by looking at all sides of America's history. To conclude, there is an Asian-Pacific American student organization forming. All interested students are invited to come to the first meeting on July 18, in 225 HUB at 8 p.m.

Susan Y.F. Chen
senior-nutrition

the daily Collegian

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Letters Policy: The Daily Collegian encourages comments on news coverage, editorial policy and University affairs. Letters must be typewritten, double-spaced and no longer than one and one-half pages. Forums must also be typewritten.

The difference between pro-life and anti-abortion

I am pro-life.

On this issue I am, generally speaking, in agreement with conservatives, a group of people with whom I normally disagree. I say "generally speaking" for two reasons: First, not all conservatives are opposed to abortion, just as not all liberals favor abortion. Second, I'd like to make a distinction between the term "pro-life," which many conservatives claim to be, and the term "anti-abortion," which many conservatives in reality are.

My Opinion

Michael Newman



A politician who is anti-abortion simply (and admirably) opposes abortion. A politician who is pro-life not only opposes abortion but also advocates policies which promote life. This distinction can be seen in the varying political reaction to child care issues, such as America's disgraceful infant mortality rate.

Led by conservatives, but without opposition from acquiescent liberals,

state legislatures across the country responded to rising health care costs and shrinking federal funds in the 1980s by tightening eligibility standards for Medicaid. Between 1975 and 1985, the percentage of Americans below the poverty level covered by Medicaid fell from 63 percent to 46 percent.

As a result, many poor pregnant women, unable to pay for proper prenatal care, see a doctor for the first time during labor, resulting in many preventable infant deaths. The U.S. infant mortality rate is among the worst in the industrialized world. A true pro-life politician would be appalled by this state of affairs and try to change it.

Unfortunately, this is not the case. Many anti-abortion conservatives see any expansion of social programs as the equivalent of apocalypse now. For the pro-life movement to succeed, it must fight for the life of the newborn as fervently as it fights for the life of the unborn. It is hard to see how those anti-abortionists who fail to do this can call themselves pro-life.

This distinction becomes even clearer in light of the debate over a parental leave bill making the rounds in Washington. The Family and Medical Leave Act would force firms with 50 or more employees to give their workers unpaid leaves for pregnancies or for illnesses of family members. With the support of business lobbyists and right-wing conservatives, George Bush vetoed the bill,

which has bipartisan support in Congress.

The bill's opponents claim it would hurt smaller companies unable to effectively replace those who leave and that bosses might have to cut other benefits to make up for leave costs. Data from companies that have implemented such plans make these contentions debatable, but nevertheless economics is not the only issue. It is also a matter of fairness and of creating a kinder and gentler nation.

Bush seemed to recognize as much when he said during the 1988 campaign: "We need to ensure that women don't have to worry about getting their jobs back after having a child or caring for a child during a serious illness."

Just as he did on the tax issue, Bush is renegeing on a campaign promise. And in so doing Bush — who has done more than an adequate job opposing abortion in the last year-and-a-half — and all conservatives who support the president have hurt the pro-life movement.

There is no reason why working women can't have the best of both worlds which this law comes close to offering. Under the bill a woman could become pregnant knowing it would not jeopardize her job. After having the child she could spend an extended period of time with her baby, providing her with time to contemplate her and her family's future. Maybe she would return to work, but she could also choose to quit her job



Collegian Graphic/Tammy Toth

to spend more time with her child.

Without this option, however, abortion automatically becomes a more convenient alternative. In this world of fast food, pizza delivery, and word processors, convenience is highly valued. This point is best illustrated by a conversation I overheard. One college student was explaining to another how her view of abortion had changed over the years.

"I used to be pro-life," she said, "then I entered the real world. I wouldn't want to have a baby at this stage of my life."

Translation: abortion is convenient. Opponents of parental leave make abortion even more convenient.

Just as the parental leave bill is consistent with the anti-abortionist's goal of reducing the number of abortions, it is also consistent with anti-abortion view of pregnancy. A pro-lifer views pregnancy as a marvel, a special bond between mother and child. Pro-choicers, on the other hand, view it as something that can be "terminated."

By supporting the parental leave bill, anti-abortionists can elevate pregnancy to a new level of respect. The parental leave bill shows society that pregnancy and its end result, birth, are at least special enough to merit a minor disruption of the workplace. The anti-abortionist who fails to support parental leave on purely economic grounds also fails to support one of the basic concepts of the pro-life movement, reverence for pregnancy.

While most issues in American politics come and go with the wind, abortion will stick with us for quite a while. Because of its complexity, abortion affects many of the other social issues with which our country must struggle. If the pro-life side is to succeed in eliminating abortion it must show America that it is truly pro-life in all cases, and not just anti-abortion.

Michael Newman, a junior majoring in health policy and administration, is a columnist for The Daily Collegian.