

## Editorial Opinion

### Major step forward

*New legislation helps alleviate problems of people with disabilities*

Around the nation, people with disabilities must overcome obstacles others consider trivial. Cross looks from strangers and discrimination in the workplace only add pain.

In the past, legislation to provide services for people with disabilities has been limited in its scope. But the recent congressional approval of the Americans with Disabilities Act marks the passing of the most significant civil rights legislation since the 1964 act prohibiting racial discrimination.

The bill, which has President Bush's blessing, aims to alleviate some of the discrimination in the hiring of people with disabilities and also requires transportation systems and public facilities to be more accessible.

Among the bill's key provisions are clauses requiring restaurants, stores and professional offices to make their services available to those with disabilities; businesses with 15 or more employees to disregard handicaps in hiring decisions and make special accommodations for disabled workers; Amtrak, commuter rails, local and intercity bus systems to provide space for pas-

sengers with disabilities.

The bill brings home the message that people with disabilities must be considered equal and capable in the eyes of society. They must be privy to the same facilities, luxuries and treatment as the non-disabled. The bill has even been called a 20th century emancipation, but it can only be so if acted upon at local levels across the country.

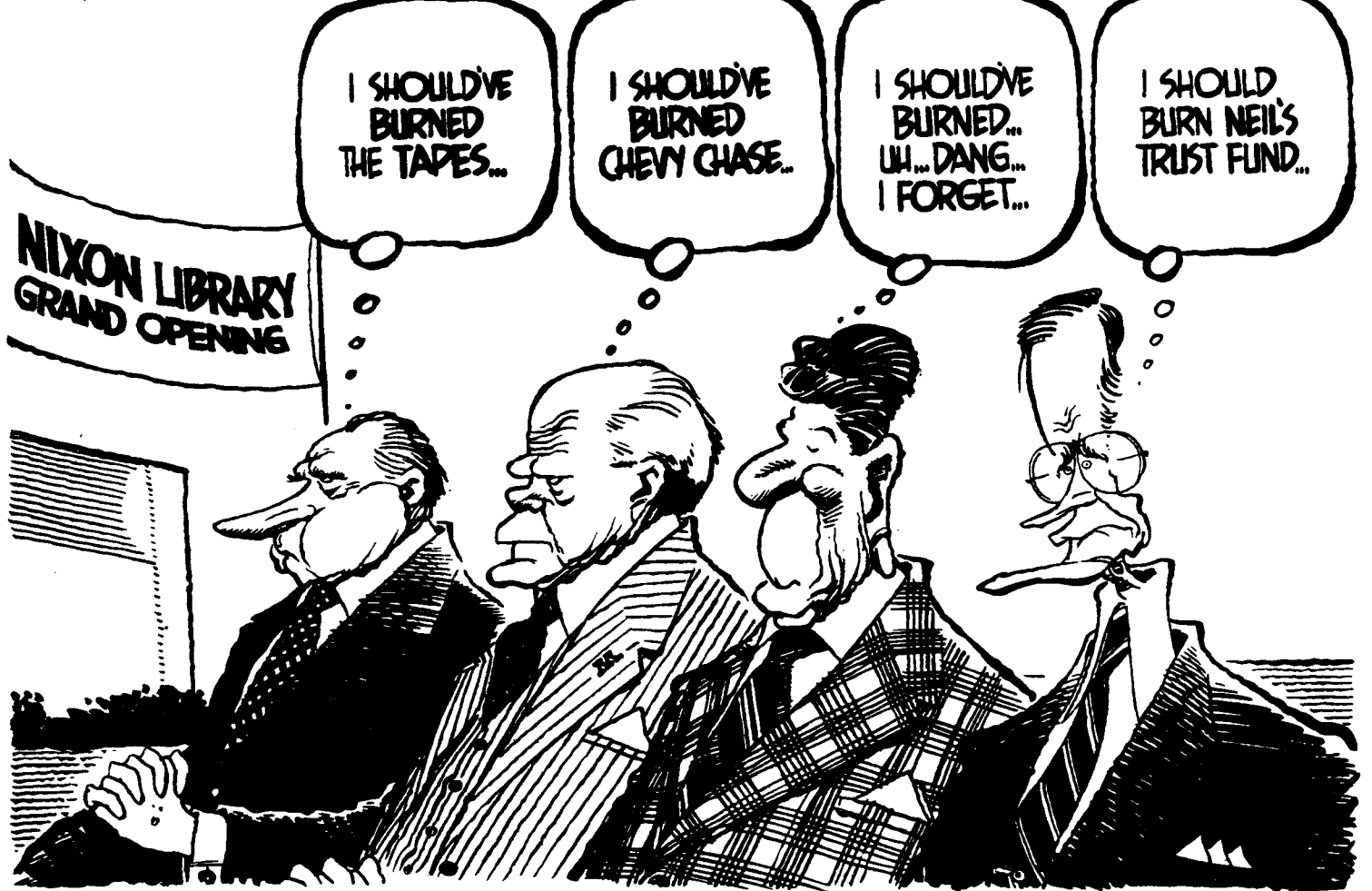
The University has taken some action to enhance conditions for students and faculty with disabilities, making strides toward upgrading campus buildings to include handicap-accessible entrances. However, there is still much to be done.

Not all campus buildings are wheelchair accessible, and some buildings lack elevators as well.

In light of the new federal legislation, the University needs to continue its efforts to make the campus easily accessible for all community members.

The federal bill is a major step toward eliminating the problems and prejudices faced by people with disabilities. Hopefully, in the not too distant future, disabilities will no longer limit the opportunities available to all people.

OLIVANTE CREATIONS  
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## Reader Opinion

### Promote tolerance

Recently there appeared in the *Centre Daily Times* a paid advertisement protesting "the University's promotion of the homosexual lifestyle as demonstrated by their advertisement in the *Centre Daily Times* on Monday, January 22, 1990." While respecting the right of others to offer criticism, the University categorically denies that it has "promoted" this lifestyle or any other lifestyle through the eight advertisements developed by the various groups of students.

The University is very concerned by the increased number of incidents of "gay bashing" which have taken place at this university and across the country. Members of this university community have an obligation to provide a safe and hospitable environment for all of its students, faculty and staff. Until we achieve the desired level of civility, the University will continue its efforts to educate and to promote tolerance.

Robert E. Dunham  
Penn State Vice President and Vice Provost

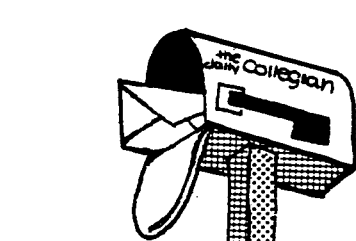
view pregnancy only "as something that can be terminated" and not as "a marvel, a special bond between mother and child." The decision to terminate a pregnancy is almost always a very difficult and painful one, filled with emotional anguish and certainly not taken lightly. Women who decide to have abortions are no less likely to view pregnancy as a very special event, but are all too aware of the difficulties involved in bringing an unwanted child into the world given the current state of affairs in this country.

This brings me to my third point. While Newman presents many valid ideas for the way things should be, the reality of the situation for women now facing pregnancy, especially poor, young and single women, is that there is very little available in the way of support. Also, many women get pregnant through ignorance, misuse, or failure of birth control and should not have to bear the burden of those mistakes if they are not ready or capable. Yes, pro-lifers must demonstrate support for life in all cases (and I would go even further than Newman with this concept, including opposition to capital punishment and war), but until the day when women and their young children are truly valued and supported, abortion must remain an option.

Leigh M. O'Brien  
graduate-early childhood education

### Not just women

I take exception to Michael Newman's column of July 17 attempting to distinguish between "pro-life" and "anti-abortion" positions for three main reasons. First, although I agree with his contention that to be truly pro-life one must endorse all policies which promote and take care of life, I have a problem with his exclusive focus on women. Of course women are the ones who get pregnant and then have to deal with the consequences of pregnancy most directly, but to leave men out of the equation as partners and equally responsible citizens makes this only a women's issue. This attitude is responsible for a large part of the abortion dilemma today. Males, and male legislators in particular, try to tell women what to do with their bodies and lives without acknowledging the crucial roles of women and children in society which require support, or males' need to share in solving the problem. Second, it is simply not true that pro-choicers



### Reject prejudice

So, the church leaders have decided to use their power to highlight their own self-righteousness — so what else is new? My first response was to shrug the whole thing off as local ignorance, looking for attention it doesn't

deserve, in labeling certain groups undesirable. Undesirable, meaning the homosexual portion of our community, which this new-found "moral majority" labeled as immoral, among other juicy phrases, in a full-page advertisement they themselves sponsored.

Though I admit I haven't been to church since they were passing out the Ten Commandments, I have yet to meet a single person who was seriously religious that wasn't a hypocrite, made even more contemptible by the fact that they won't even admit what they think. Instead, they hide behind some invisible God they claim tells them what to think. And, of course, if they have to listen to God, whose fault is that? You might fool yourself, but you don't fool me.

In all fairness, I must add that Thomas Searfoss, Pastor of St. John's United Methodist Church, said that "the advertisement went against the Christian message of love and forgiveness." He also said that the groups that put out the ad were "a small portion of the Christians in this area." Are they? Since only six churches out of 60 receiving letters protesting an ad Penn State ran in January promoting gay rights agreed to sign officially, it would seem so. But why is it we haven't heard from the rest of you? Silence is compliance. Do you want to be lumped into the same category as these xenophobic pinheads?

When I was a child, I was stuck in Special Education, where I obviously did not belong, since I am a "B" student in college. It was more in retaliation for my refusal to obey authority and violent tendencies than out of any real desire to help me. The violent tendency I had was a result of the treatment I got from the other kids when they found out I was "one of the retards"; not unlike the treatment certain portions of our society have gotten, and still get, from those who preach love with one face and hatred with the other. The point is, I know what it feels like to get singled out for something that isn't your fault. So hopefully, the majority of Christians will join this Atheist in telling those six out of 60 churches to shut up and mind their own business.

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## the daily Collegian

Tuesday, July 24, 1990  
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Students' letters should include semester standing, major and campus of the writer. Letters from alumni should include the major and year of graduation of the writer. All writers should provide their address and phone number for verification of the letter. Letters should be signed by no more than two people. Names may be withheld on request.

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## Discovering the feel of the earth through clay and pottery

Long in my dream appears the land. The bare land is in serenity — the texture of the land smoothly fluctuates, and the color of soil smoothly moves in the spectrum, from black to brown to red to yellow and then to white. I felt the urge of going closer and closer, to be close to the earth.

### My Opinion



Jinghong Mu

Clay, which is not quite the same as soil, gives me the touch of the earth. Both soil and clay are the result of rocks decomposed by natural erosion, wind and water, millions of years ago. Soil is grainy, while clay is more a body of continuity. In contrast to the soil lying relaxed on the surface of the earth, clay is usually found at some depth and can be mined out. Clay has similar color changes to soil, only more subtle. But there is one uniqueness about clay — its plasticity.

When you grasp a handful of clay, squeeze it slightly and then open your palm, your finger is a bit wet, and that piece of the clay clearly has your fingerprints on it and takes the shape of your finger. The feeling is warm and cool, very sensual. Because of its plasticity, the clay can be stretched, spreaded, squeezed and molded. It will take the

form under your very hand, and be whatever you want it to be. I would like to believe the material the first human being was made of was clay.

Pottery is made of clay. To pursue the cool sensuality and the lost touch of the earth, this summer I attended the pottery class in the Hub Craft Center. I must have advertised this feeling vividly, because I even made my friend, who usually shrugs at this sort of activity, attend.

It is a wheelthrowing type of pottery class, and the clay we use is red clay, the same type of clay bricks are made of. Pottery making consists of several steps: centering, shaping, trimming, drying, glazing and firing. After the first three steps the pot has its feature, and the last two steps will give the pot its full color.

At the first class, Rita, my pottery teacher, demonstrated the first two steps of pottery making. On the wheel between her hand, the clay rose and fell, opened up and took shape. The clay just flew. Watching the process of the clay smoothly taking form in her hand was a pleasure.

When I tried to sit down to do the same thing, the result was not that great. The clay in my hand was either not centered, or twisted in the opening up; the wall of my mug or bowl or whatever was never quite round and even. I secretly peered at my friend who was skillfully manipulating his piece of clay, and his "reactor" which was the primary shape of his mug series. I felt the bite of embarrassment and jealousy.

But there was another feeling growing bigger and stronger to neutralize that bitterness. Ever since I grew up, I



Collegian Graphic/Tammy Toth

never thought I would have such a chance to play so freely. With mud on my whole hands, and water here and there on my legs, face, hair and my clothes, there wouldn't be a sigh from Mom to make me feel guilty, and there wouldn't be a demand of washing my dirty hands and sitting tightly at the dining table. On the contrary, I was playing a game of water and mud with some playmates and some sort of competition. I was much like a girl who was too fond of the fairyland in the mist to go back.

Actually that type of game was not a part of my childhood. Thus, the hunger for the touch of soil, clay and the earth

grew stronger, gradually grasped me tightly, until I was relaxed by making my quite ugly pot.

The idea of making wonderful pottery does not mean that much to me. First of all, I am quite clumsy at hand work, so most likely I can't do it, at least in this sort of playing attitude. Second, I enjoy the process of work rather than putting the finished pot on the shelf. Third, just the possibility of breaking the wonderful pots upsets me — God, they are fragile.

The mixed feeling toward antique pottery may be rooted in memories of my childhood. When I was a little girl, my grandma used to collect the pieces of broken china and wait for the worker

who went around the street with a two-wheel cart to repair it. I would be very careful to stay away from her fine china and not to let her worry.

When I was in China, I had seen many marvelous pieces of pottery in the Forbidden City. Those pots, which consumed years of craftsmen's hard work, silently accompanied the emperor as time elapsed and witnessed the changes of history. They are very old and perfect pieces. Now they are kept in glass cases and adored by the people.

Those antique pottery pieces seem to me as cold, fragile and far beyond my reach. I also adore them, but personally the reverse style of pottery is more

close to me. I like the heavy and big pieces of pots in simple but original form, with one or more neutral colors flowing and mingling. They are closer to nature, and less fragile.

I remember a piece of pottery decorated with a pattern of a roughly sketched man's face and fish. It was made thousands of years ago in an early civilization called Banpo. That piece struck me as the early exploration for beauty on functional daily utensils.

The wheelthrowing brought me closer to pottery. During the time of the Arts Festival at Penn State, I lingered around the pottery booths and talked to the potters. I found I could appreciate their work more and understand more when they tried to explain some special techniques to me.

One thing about pottery, they said, is its fragility. Even the most satisfying pieces could break. Another thing is its uncertainty. During the process of firing the glaze tends to flow in different directions, precipitate at different locations and mix with other glazes. The effect is unpredictable. Thus it is often a delightful surprise to watch the colors and patterns of the pots after firing. They often say: "Let nature do the work."

Right now the processing of pottery has changed a lot from the traditional way; the ingredients of clay and glaze are closely examined by advanced scientific equipment, and the firing process can be computer controlled.

But no matter how it is modernized, to me the attraction of pottery remains as strong. It is the sensual touch of the earth. Without it, I will be homesick.

Jinghong Mu, a graduate student in molecular and cell biology, is a columnist for The Daily Collegian.