

# cougar print

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Clackamas Community College

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Bonnie Nelson is an art major enrolled Clackamas Community College but there is an obstacle standing in the path toward an associate degree. She has Multiple Sclerosis and a wheelchair is her basic mode of mobility.

Although CCC does provide some facilities for handicapped students, Nelson's situation is a special one involving several complications.

She enrolled this term as a full-time student, taking the painting, drawing, ceramics and sculpture class taught at the Smuckers Art Center building. Two of her selected courses are taught on the main floor of that building and the remaining classes are situated on the second floor. The Art Center was originally a part of the Smuckers Berry Processing Company and was purchased by CCC in 1968.

As she prepared to attend her first class, Nelson was surprised to find no ramp or elevator leading to the second floor. She declined an offer of being carried up to her classroom. "I don't want to be carried up and down the steps like a piece of furniture," said the mother of two. "If a piece of furniture is dropped, the damage can be repaired, but if a human being is dropped, the damage may be irreparable."

The former Portland State student possesses some validation for her argument. The distance between both floors is 18 feet and the width of the hallway is 5 feet. A wheelchair and its occupant moving through this area could be a hazard to both the handicapped person and his or her helper, as well as anyone traveling up or down the stairs. Under Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, all federal and state institutions are required to provide a safe and accessible location for handicapped persons pursuing their schooling or employment.

Nelson and her husband Larry, who operates a small store near Redland, are concerned not only with the safety aspect of the problem but also view the lack of proper transportation facilities as an inconvenience for future handicapped students.

Nelson, who hopes to start an art design studio, believes her situation to be the first problem of its kind at CCC.

## Conflict: art major seeks to change Smuckers

### Handicapped woman begins attempts to 'rehabilitate' art center

By Harry Bielskis  
News Editor

"I realize that Smuckers is an old building and the Art Department has fought hard to secure that location because of the scenic view the Ecology Pond offers. I don't expect to be the only handicapped person in the future to take art and I can only place the blame for this problem upon the school's short-sightedness in not allowing for situ-

ations such as this to have been resolved while the college was still in its planning stage."

The serious brunette then offered some solutions. "The most conceivable idea would be far less expensive than a regular elevator and allow future use by other handicapped students." A stair elevator is an electric movable chair that connects to the stair rail and can be dismantled after its use, allowing for no obstruction to other students.

"I've taken this problem to the administration and as yet have received no response," Nelson said. "After contacting several community agencies, a local television station interviewed me."

"Perhaps this will bring needed attention to the situation," said Mrs. Nelson. Her persistence did spark some comments from administrative personnel.

"In its planning stage, Smuckers was not part of the college," said Donald Fisher, Developmental Planning of CCC, "and up to this point there has never been a need or demand for a ramp or elevator. However, we are looking into the costs of these facilities."

"We are making every attempt to correct this situation," stated CCC President John Hakanson. "In the meantime, instructors, deans, and the administration have been working with her to seek alternatives until the problem can be resolved."

Art instructor Norman Bursheim said, "The art students and staff will be happy to carry her up and down those stairs anytime she wants us to. The gesture is a generous one and the concept of personal contact would promote a feeling of warmth and sharing. Over the summer, a handicapped young lady did some secretarial work in our office and she liked the friendliness and attention she received from the persons carrying her. This is the best alternative we can offer until a solution."

Nelson however, does not like the idea of being carried to and from her classrooms 8 times a week for 12 weeks and has refused to attend her classes on the second floor. "I don't want to make trouble," she said, "I just want to get to my classes in one piece."



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