

UO proves free speech works



COMMENTARY

**Dave
Frohnmayer**

Robert Frost once said, "Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing either your temper or your self-confidence."

We have seen a test of our education, and of our dedication to free speech, this week during a visit by the Genocide Awareness Project, a national effort designed to provoke strong emotional responses through large-scale photo displays and historical juxtapositions.

This was a lawful display, invited to our campus by a registered student group. As is our charge as a public university, we allowed them to set up their display, and we provided security

for both the visitors and our campus.

Then most of us did more: We saw this attempt to manipulate our emotions for what it was, and we responded civilly, reasonably, thoughtfully, in discussions large and small, publicly in the EMU Amphitheater and privately in our own homes.

The open and unfettered discussion of ideas is what great universities are all about. Even — perhaps especially — when the ideas are unpleasant. Even — perhaps especially — when the imagery is offensive.

I am proud to say that on this occasion we proved, as the Emerald noted in its editorial (ODE, Oct. 13), that "Freedom of Speech Succeeds."

My thanks go out to, among others, the many student groups who worked hard to make this into a valuable, rather than divisive, occasion; to the University offices of student affairs, public safety and communications; to the staff of the EMU; and to the hundreds of students, faculty and staff who learned from this moment without losing either their tempers or their self-confidence.

Dave Frohnmayer is the University president

Letters to the editor

A right to free speech

The Hillel organization headed by Jessica Elkan is just like the Nazis she claims to dislike. She tried to stop the free speech rights of the Genocide Awareness Project. She is pro-abortion and cannot debate the issue but must silence those who have an opposing point of view. Who is she to si-

lence someone else's free speech rights? She is the person she claims to hate.

Rev. Donald Spitz

Director, Pro-Life Virginia

GAP argument hollow

I agree with the Jewish Student Union's condemnation of the "Genocide Awareness Project" display. By using disturbing pictures to provoke reaction instead of addressing their issue intelligently, GAP engages in an age-old

argumentative technique that is not only absolutely hollow, but that implicitly insults the intelligence of the people whom it wishes to sway. An argument based on aesthetic reaction instead of logic is simple-minded and deplorable; it leads to gay-bashing, book-burning, and, yes, genocide. Perhaps the swastikas belonged on the GAP display after all.

Dan Reynolds
Undeclared

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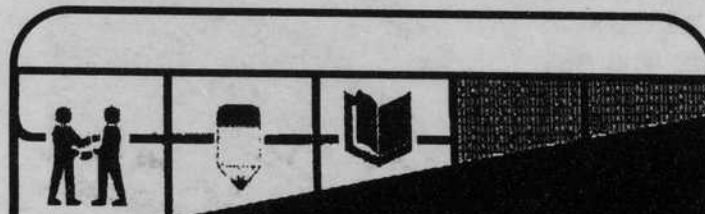
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