

Official discusses protesting rights

■ A former federal mediator will speak at the University about conflict mediation and free speech this week

By Amber Fossen
for the Emerald

Richard Salem, a former U.S. Community Relations Service federal mediator known for his role in mediating a potentially violent confrontation between a group of neo-Nazis and American Survivors of the Holocaust in 1976, will speak at the University Wednesday about his experiences and the issues they raised.

Salem's speech will address the topic, "Should We Mediate with Neo-Nazis?"

The University law school's Appropriate Dispute Resolution program (ADR) is sponsoring the free event in an effort to explore alternate ways for communities to handle group conflicts.

"These issues come up a lot in terms of hate speech," said Lisa Kloppenberg, director of the ADR.

The 1976 dispute began when Frank Collin, the leader of the neo-Nazi National Socialist Party of America, was denied the right to protest in a Chicago park without a \$350,000 bond. The group decided to relocate its demonstration to the small town of Skokie, Ill., causing distress among the thousands of Holocaust survivors living in the community. The village of Skokie contacted the Community Relations Service of the U.S. Depart-

ment of Justice, which assigned Salem and Werner Petterson to mediate the dispute.

"I think the 'Skokie-neo-Nazi Conflict' was special because it attracted worldwide attention, raising issues that people discussed over the next several years," Salem said.

The conflict reached the Supreme Court in 1978, when the court ruled that requiring a bond interfered with the neo-Nazis' constitutional right to freedom of speech. Just days before the demonstration, Salem persuaded the group to conduct its rally at a free speech plaza in Chicago, thus avoiding a potentially violent situation. Conflicts over free speech "force us to examine our community and diversity and how to handle them," Salem said.

The rights of both groups involved had to be considered because of the clash between free speech and personal rights.

Jane Gordon, assistant dean at the Knight Law Center, said, "What we can learn from him [Salem] raises a lot of critical questions concerning how we approach the community."

Salem will address the events of the Skokie-neo-Nazi Conflict and the issues it raised. The speech will cover whether conflicts should be mediated and whether demonstrations should be banned when there is potential for physical or emotional harm. The lecture will begin at 7 p.m. Wednesday in Room 175 of the Knight Law Center.

Peace Corps

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been in 26 years, Peace Corps spokesman Jim Aguirre said. Through intensified recruitment efforts on college campuses, Peace Corps officials hope to increase that number by 25 percent this year.

"We have more requests for volunteers than can be filled," Aguirre said. "This year, we're doing a bigger push all around to get more people involved."

With more volunteers, Aguirre said, the Peace Corps can make more progress toward goals that include fighting hunger, stopping the spread of AIDS, bringing clean water to communities, starting new businesses, and educating children.

The demand is particularly great for English teachers, Aguirre said. To teach English in the Peace Corps doesn't require any special certification — all that's needed is a college degree and a basic knowledge of the English language.

For students who choose to go into the Corps after graduation, the rewards can be great, said Skye Mendenhall, the Peace Corps representative at the University.

Mendenhall, a former Peace Corps volunteer, said the two-year

term provides an opportunity for graduates to try out what they want to do before committing to a specific career path.

"It's a great stepping-stone in getting more real-world experience," Mendenhall said.

Cooper knows firsthand what "real-world experience" in a developing country is like. As a teacher in the West African country of Liberia, she not only had to deal with obstacles in her work such as crowded classrooms, a lack of supplies, and inadequate technology, she also nearly lost her life after falling ill with malaria.

Despite all the hardships, the contributions she was able to make and the friendships she formed made it all worthwhile, Cooper said.

Her work in the Peace Corps made a difference in the lives of the people she was trying to help, but it also left a lasting impact on her own life. Cooper said she left Liberia with a new perspective on the world.

"Having your eyes opened like that is incredible," Cooper said. "It was a life-changing experience."

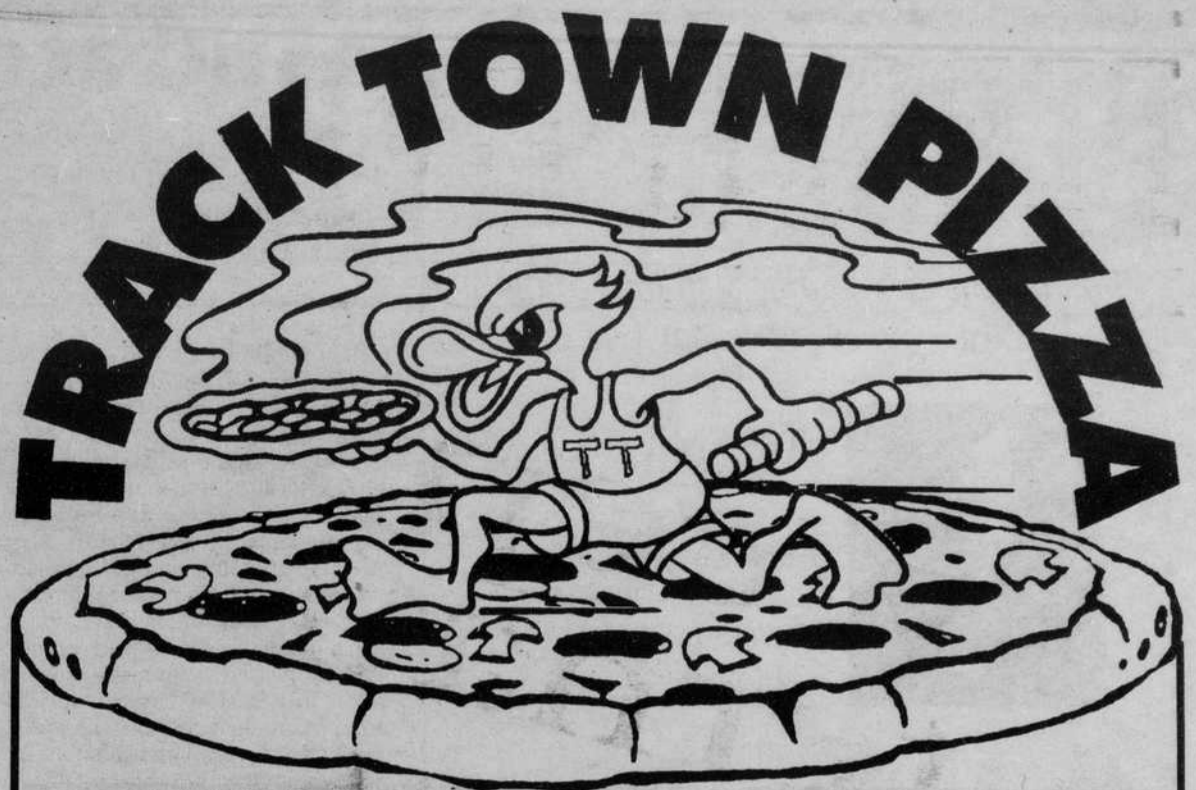
Students who are interested in becoming volunteers should call Mendenhall at 346-6026.

Monday and Thursday at the same time and same place for legislative work sessions. Unger said if the fee is debated, it will happen in those sessions.

Although the work sessions are not open to testimony, members of the committee can ask for input from the audience.

Erin Pursell, a former ASUO intern and OSPIRG member, said she will go to Salem to show support for the fee, which she said is one of the most powerful amplifiers of student voice.

"It's the biggest political tool students have," she said.



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"They can do anything," Unger said. "Whether the fee thing goes down or not, Wednesday is an incredibly important day."

The ASUO is offering transportation for students who want to speak or simply show support for the budget. Vans will leave from outside the ASUO office at 11:15 a.m. Wednesday and return about 4:30 p.m.

Vans will also go to Salem next