

# FEATURES

## Anne Frank exhibit details history with dense reading Idiot's advice column

**Sarah-Vance Goodman**  
Features Reporter

The Anne Frank exhibition, running through Nov. 15 at the Biltmore Square Mall, is more for a student of history than someone seeking to be entertained.

Although I learned a great deal, I was discouraged and impatient with the amount of reading and work I had to put into my visit.

Located directly outside Profit's department store, the exhibit was held in a space that used to befit a mall shop.

A folding table was set up at the entrance where my three-dollar donation was collected.

An extremely nice middle-aged woman gave me instructions, guided me to the first numbered panel and showed me how the tour would progress.

It was a well-organized self-guided tour.

Each panel of information, beginning with Anne Frank's early childhood history, was numbered. As long as you could count, you would not get lost.

I entered enthusiastically, started at the first numbered board and read the English version in its entirety (the panels were also translated into Spanish).

I proceeded in the same manner through the first 10 sections, reading not only about Frank's younger years, but also getting a better understanding of the parallel events occurring in Germany which led to World War II.

Excerpts from Anne Frank's diary jogged my memory, taking me back to middle school, where I first encountered the book.

I realized then how small of an impact this diary had on me at that time in my life; I do not think I fully understood the situation and conditions which surrounded it.

This exhibit recapitulated on what

I had missed. It filled in the historical gaps and helped to awaken my awareness as to what was going on simultaneously outside of the Frank's hideaway.

I had previously read "The Diary of Anne Frank" as required reading for seventh grade English class.

As I made my way through the words and photographs of this archive, I began to see how important this child's diary is to our understanding of Jewish persecution by the Nazi regime. Had I not been patient enough to take the time to investigate each numbered display, I do not think I would have gotten as much out of it.

After viewing about 10 panels, I glanced over to an adjoining room of similar displays, and realized I had a long way to go.

I read "48" at the bottom of one of them, and it was then that I decided to skim the historical aspects of the exhibit, instead of bogging myself down as if I were going to have to take a pop quiz.

In the middle of the self-guided tour, there was an opportunity to view various video interviews of the Shoah Foundation, an archive founded by Steven Spielberg to urgently chronicle first hand accounts of the Holocaust.

Not only was this a good chance for my eyes to rest from reading, but these testimonies gave further insight into the injustices experienced in concentration camps.

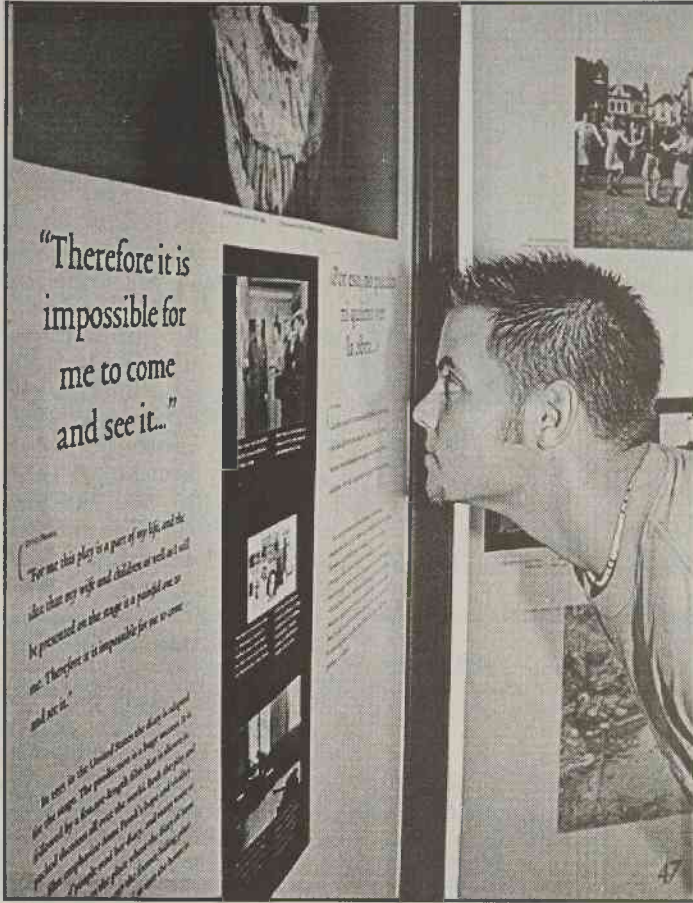
I listened to Rena Kornreich Gellisen, an elderly lady born in Poland.

Through her rich German accent I gathered that the German language was taught to her despite her Jewish and Hebrew background.

I could see a passion in her eyes for her heritage and a disgust at the hideous practices that took place during the war when she was a child.

Although I only watched a segment of video, there were numerous clips available to be viewed.

I continued my tour with renewed interest after hearing from Gellisen.



ERIK JACOBS/ STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
One man takes a close look at part of the Anne Frank exhibit.

I realized Frank's diary itself has become an archive, a living legacy. The tour comparatively drew excerpts from her journal about with events happening in the war and in concentration camps.

This historical content took me through the end of the war, Anne's death to typhus fever in one of the camps, and her father opening up their house as a museum in 1960. Much has been done in memory of the Frank family, including the production of a stage play and a movie.

The exhibition concluded with panels containing photos of people around the world who, in all their diverse natures, speak out against prejudice in any form.

This was not only a history lesson about World War II and a young

girl who eloquently writes her feelings in a journal, but it was a promotion for worldwide tolerance and understanding.

A careful study of the war, along with Frank's writings, reveals a yearning for humanity in the wake of tragedy. We could all use a dose of this, presently.

**Margaret Lee**  
Features Reporter

"Dear Alice...Rejected Letters to Advice Columns from Completely Insane Idiots," by Steven Ryniak, made me laugh and stop every two seconds to read another letter out loud. Stories containing R-rated language, sex and drugs fill the pages of this book, made up of rejected letters to columnists.

"I answered an ad in the newspaper to take part in these federal studies and get paid \$500 a week to get drunk and do drugs for only 20 minutes a day, and now they won't let me out," reads just one of the hilarious stories found in "Dear Alice."

Ryniak, while a student at Towson University, began writing to "stave off the furiously pacific onslaught of ennui while sitting in lecture halls and classrooms as a student."

This is his first book, and I found every letter, each beginning with "Dear Alice," funny and thought-provoking.

Letters range from people asking what to do about their "stoner" cat, to pondering whether a waiter should have been fired after making a man choke to death at a restaurant and if a pilot should continue using crack and other hard core drugs while flying.

A two-page, ridiculous math question makes up one of the letters, which Ryniak admits he actually asked his calculus professor. The professor "did not think it was funny." I wondered how he could

come up with such a question. About 70 stories make up the book, which is dedicated to everyone who has "ever written a letter to an advice column, only to be mercilessly sodomized by the suffocating frustration of never receiving a response to your urgent plea for help."

Several stories deal with extreme and improbable situations, but they are, nonetheless, funny.

One begins, "Squirrels always remember where their nuts are buried in the winter, but can they remember where other squirrels are buried?" The letter then describes a fourth grade teacher who posed such a question to her class and brutally killed squirrels in class.

She was fired when parents called her science experiments "inhumane" and asked if chipmunk would have been better. Who thinks about crazy things like this?

Everything in the book is fiction from the letters to the commentary found on the back cover. Alar Demerol from *The New York Times* says, "Dear Alice" is "not too bad, not too good," which is made up by Ryniak, but I agree.

I found some letters funny, some offensive, and I thought others were dumb. The book is a quick read and will certainly provide some spicy conversation-starters at parties.

As I read, I continuously stopped to read them out loud to my roommate.

However, I would not recommend this book for everyone, due to the drugs, sex and bad language Ryniak uses. I recommend this book but with a caution.

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