

Nader turns foe

One of the consumer's best friends has plans that would transform him into the electorate's enemy.

Consumer advocate Ralph Nader has proposed both state and federal laws which would force United States citizens to vote.

Nader contends that a mandatory voting system is needed in this country because voting is a basic civic obligation. Under his plan, a voter could either vote for a candidate or vote to abstain. Regardless, he would have to cast his ballot.

To punish those who did not vote, Nader suggests fines, orders to work at the polls or a study of the Constitution.

He says voters could be identified through Social Security rosters and signed up at the age of 18. (Nader fails to point out that, according to section 1106 of the Social Security Act, all such data is confidential.)

Not only is the plan a poor public policy, it is unconstitutional.

According to Yale Law Professor Alexander Bickel, such a law would violate the First Amendment, which "guarantees the right not only to express an opinion but to withhold one as well."

Aryeh Neier, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, says: "The right to vote is to be freely exercised, not forced or compelled or pushed on people."

Nader points out that Australia, Austria and Belgium have mandatory voting systems that work well. These countries, however, have very simple ballots on just one national question: Who will sit in parliament?

In the United States, a ballot with more than 200 candidates and some propositions with as many as 20,000 words may confront the voter.

Forced voting also would infringe on some people's freedom of religion. Jehovah's Witnesses refuse to vote as a religious belief.

Good government does not necessarily come with the expressions of the largest possible number of citizens. The vote of those concerned enough to cast a ballot is likely to be more intelligent and meaningful than a compelled vote by everyone.

Jane Owens



to the editor

Dear Editor,

After much deliberation about whether to take time to write this letter, I decided it was essential in order to clarify the "facts" in your article on Friday, Sept. 13, about the Ombudsman's Office.

First, the "functions" of the Ombudsman's Office are, in fact, fulfilled by me until an ombudsman is appointed. I would not object to others being attributed with fulfilling this role if it did not confuse the issue of availability and viability of this office.

If four individuals from various areas are fulfilling the ombudsman's role, then accessibility, along with credibility and confidentiality, becomes highly questionable.

Second, it is imperative that this office not become associated with any particular segment of the University community. The ombudsman position was established to be independent and impartial; he is not an advocate of, nor does he report to, any specific group.

The office is available to any person affected by the University system, particularly students, staff, faculty and administration. The primary goal, and the only way in which the office can function effectively, is to be at all times impartial and to seek equity for all people involved in a situation.

In seeking equity, the Ombudsman has access to information, which is where Dr. (Ken) Bader, Dr. (Ned) Hedges and others come into the picture through reassurances of providing whatever assistance I may deem necessary until a new ombudsman is appointed.

Finally, I do not know when the new ombudsman will be appointed—perhaps the selection committee has a projected date. Nominations and applications are being accepted until Sept. 27. I do appreciate, however, your establishing the point that this office is "alive and functioning."

Dee Nicodemus
Assistant to the Ombudsman

Resource Center hub of women's activities

Be to her virtues very kind;
Be to her faults a little blind;
Let all her ways be unconfined
And clap your padlock—on her mind.

Mathew Prior, 1700

I really did it. After two years of walking by and occasionally glancing in the window, I crossed the threshold of the Women's Resource Center. And the visit proved to be neither shocking nor startling.

The little orange room, tucked in a first floor corner of the Nebraska Union, was stacked with bundles of the latest addition of Women's Pages, and low bookcases against one wall held a small library, as well as nine various feminist publications. Plants lined the window sill and the air conditioner burbled like an aquarium as I talked with several women in an attempt to find out just what the center is trying to do.

The center is sponsored by the University Women's Action Group and is funded by ASUN. It is a combination office-lounge-library which is staffed by five work-study students and a variable number of volunteers. Official hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., but rumor has it the place often stays open after hours. The room can be used as a meeting

place for groups, upon request.

One of the Resource Center's main projects is Women's Pages, published twice each semester. It is written by anyone who is interested and volunteers, and although up to now the writing has been done by women, men are more than welcome to contribute. The first issue of this semester centered on facts about and ways to prevent rape. Plans for the second issue are for a study of women as artists.

amy struthers broad side

The center also acts as an information and referral service. They are prepared to answer legal and health questions, or to help find the answer. Information about the local women's groups is also available, and the center's bulletin board keeps track of coming events.

Aside from the information-giving, the Resource Center acts as a gathering place for women from a wide variety of backgrounds and interests. I was told that no one "type"

of woman visits the Center; they are young and old, single, divorced, or happily married. Their only common denominator is the fact that they are largely students. For example, this semester a group of middle-aged women returning to school has chosen the center as a meeting place.

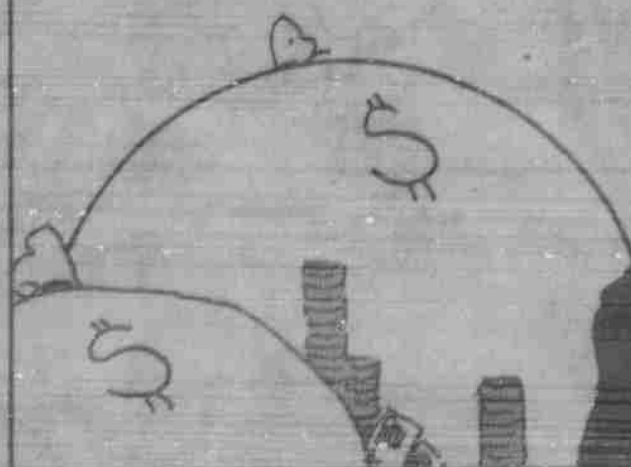
Getting women to come in the first time is an obstacle recognized by the staff. Many women are afraid of being affiliated with what they see as a "radical" group, said one of the women. The center, however, tries to take a "middle road" while still confronting the issues. Another woman remarked that women may hesitate to come in because they fear someone will tell them "they're zeros", that their lives are "invalid" because they haven't done certain things.

The organization of the staff is very loose and I was told that Sue Aitcheson, present coordinator of the center, just sort of "fell into" the job. The lone male in the room went on to say that I could have the job if I decided to "fall into it, because that's the way the government works around here."

Well, I'll have to keep that in mind. I've been trying to figure out what becomes of unemployed English majors...

ROCKY

DECLARES HIS NET
WORTH: \$132,000,000.00



LET ME TELL YOU,
MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING!

I SHOULD KNOW,
I HAVE THEM BOTH.

I HAVE MONEY,
AND I HAVE EVERYTHING!

This gag stolen
from David Frye.

by STEWART