

Consumer awareness essential

By JOHN DUSENBURY
Staff Writer

Americans need to become more aware of consumer issues and monitor politicians more closely, national consumer advocate Ralph Nader told a group of 500 people at UNC-G Monday night.

"In many ways, our country is in big trouble," Nader said. "Politicians have their solutions—the more consistent they are, the more vague they become. Politicians are very rarely challenged either by a two-party system or organized citizenry which sets little or no limits on government actions."

Nader said problems with electoral politics stem from a lack of citizen freedom and self-determination.

"It is quite simple to paint a picture of what the future will look like if there is not a citizen's resurgence. The electoral system is simply too corrupt."

"Consumer issues are very serious. They are not there just to save a few cents at the market. People are much more aware of the package of abuse. In the early 1960s the people had to be persuaded that General Motors could produce defective cars; since 1966, GM has recalled more than 56 million of

them." Nader said people are beginning to realize that if they take their time, they can shop at different stores and make considerable savings.

"If students learn in school how to develop consumer citizen skills, they might upset the status quo and begin to take a more thorough and involved look at matters concerning the broad population," Nader said.

Nader cited differences in the consumer perspective, how a person thinks for himself, and the corporate perspective in which a person allows the torrent of information coming from the corporations to affect his actions. "Looking from the consumer perspective raises different questions and demands different answers," he said.

"From their viewpoint, the government and utilities told the consumer all he had to know about nuclear power; but that's from their viewpoint," Nader said. "If one of the (nuclear) plants Duke Power is building has an accident, the people who survive will never be able to go home again—nor would their grandchildren. That's the kind of fire we are dealing with."

Nader said he is suspicious of corporations which claim their

technology is safe, yet are unwilling to insure it in the private market.

"If nuclear energy is so safe, why (does the nuclear industry) have to hide behind limited liability insurance," Nader said. "And why do they make the victims bear the financial risk rather than at least expose the full assets of the utilities to lawsuit claims?"

"The refusal to stand in the same position as the chemical industry and other hazardous industries, all of whom have to expose their assets to lawsuit, indicates that the utilities do not believe at all in their own propaganda."

"There is so much excess electric generating capacity in this country that even on the hottest day of the year, when all the air conditioners in the country are on full blast, there is still a 35 percent excess generating capacity. That means that on a normal day there is probably a 50 percent excess," he said.

"If the consumer does not assert his perspective, the seller will overcome the consumer," he said. "The consumer must organize. The dentists, lawyers, and doctors are all organized. The only people who are going unorganized are the small taxpayers and consumers, which is why they pay all the bills."

Nader said gas probably will reach \$2 a



Ralph Nader, advocate ...spoke at UNC-G Monday

gallon by December and natural gas prices also will rise substantially.

"One trillion dollars will come out of families' pocketbooks in the next 10 years because of Carter's abandoning of price controls on oil. Had programs been televised which explained exactly what was going on politically with the oil situation, the oil companies would have been sent packing months ago."

News In Brief

Strike shuts down NYC transit

NEW YORK (AP)—The biggest rapid transit strike in the nation's history shut down all bus and subway lines Tuesday in New York City, but the city's 7.5 million people made the "unthinkable" workable.

For the most part, they got to work, in an expedition to Manhattan one Wall Street businessman described as like the British amphibious evacuation of Dunkirk in World War II.

The work stoppage by 35,000 transit workers was compounded by a simultaneous strike by 6,200 employees of the Long Island Rail Road, which serves heavily populated suburbs of 2.7 million people.

Commuters by the tens of thousands walked, rode bicycles and skated to work. They pooled their cars and chartered buses, boats and airplanes to get to the island of Manhattan.

While many of the city's larger companies, which had prepared for the emergency, said most workers were on the job, others saw their staffs depleted.

Mayor Edward Koch said his operations office estimated 25,000 rode bicycles to their jobs in Manhattan, another 30,000 walked and 10,000 to 12,000 arrived by boat.

Study analyzes wife-beating

One of every five North Carolina women believes that men are justified in beating their wives under certain circumstances, according to researchers at the University.

A survey, conducted by the UNC Institute in Research in Social Sciences, found that the less educated the woman, the more likely she is to believe wife-beating is sometimes justified.

Karen M. Gentemann, a research associate who is analyzing the findings, said women over 40 years old and non-whites also are more likely to accept wife-beating.

She said more than 20 percent of those questioned believe the woman causes the beatings she receives.

The research also showed that women tend to rationalize the behavior of men who beat their wives by blaming outside causes such as drunkenness or unemployment for their actions. But the study showed that women believe a man is more influenced by the amount of family violence he grew up with.

U.S. dollar making comeback

LONDON (AP)—Thanks largely to high U.S. interest rates, the once mighty American dollar is making a strong comeback on foreign exchange markets. Yet doubts persist about its well-being and about the strength of the U.S. economy.

On Tuesday, the dollar finished at its highest mark against the German mark since September 1978, against the Swiss and French francs since June 1978, against the Italian lire in nearly four years and against the Japanese yen in 2½ years.

Many experts in Britain and on the European continent say the upturn will last only as long as interest rates stay high, though one senior trader in Frankfurt said the dollar is also benefiting from the Carter's administration's announced plans to balance the budget next year.

The prospect of getting 20 percent a year lending dollars in America, the experts say, makes the U.S. currency a much better bet than gold, which pays no interest, costs money to store and can require expensive borrowing to meet rising margin rates when its price drops.

silver

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Johnson said his business had been steady in recent weeks, but also said panic about plunging silver prices would keep sellers away until prices rise again.

Johnson said most of the people selling were those with only a few scrap pieces who want to make a little money.

"People bring in their old, odd pieces of silverware to sell, candlesticks and such," he said. "We even had someone come in and sell us an old sterling whiskey flask this week."

For the record

For the record: in the April calendar the film *The Bicycle Thief* and the Lacrosse game were incorrectly scheduled for April 4. *The Bicycle Thief* shows at 7 and 9:30 p.m. April 5 in Carroll Hall the Lacrosse game against Maryland is at 2 p.m. April 5 in Fetzer field. The calendar also should have listed the film *Limelight* showing at 8 p.m. April 4 in Carroll Hall. The *DTH* regrets the error.

silver

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comparable price.

"We have not sold a lot of silver this year, not because of the market fluctuations so much as it is that people just aren't buying much of anything," she said. "The only time we sell a lot of silver is when we have sales."

All of the stores surveyed said silver sales had dropped because of previous high prices. Ken Jackson of Wentworth and Sloan Jewelers on Franklin Street said he anticipated continued low prices for the metal. "If the prices continue to stay down, people will find it much easier to buy silver," he said.

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growth

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the area growth center designation since it would not meet the necessary criteria. Chapel Hill could be a growth center by itself, he said. Such a designation requires that the area contain 5 percent of the regional population or generate 5 percent of the regional retail sales.

Carrboro would, however, be eligible as a community employment center, although the funds available to the town would be less. A community employment center must contain 5 percent of the

county population or 5 percent of the county's retail sales.

The town of Carrboro currently is preparing an application for designation as a growth center and a resolution to be considered by the Board of Aldermen.

The Chapel Hill Town Council is expected to consider the issue at its April 14 meeting. The deadline for submitting applications for the balanced growth program is April 30.

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