

# BILLBORED

Number 3, October 1982

THE UN-OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF B.U.G.A. U.P.  
BILLBOARD UTILISING GRAFFITISTS AGAINST  
UNHEALTHY PROMOTIONS

Price  
20 Cents

## SCHOOLS REJECT KIDS' DRUGS

One of the most common claims against BUGA UP is that attacks on billboards are not limited to unhealthy promotions. Soft drink ads which have been refaced have often been cited as examples of "indiscriminate vandalism". But the tide is turning against the pushers of "kids drugs" as the public become aware of the ill effects of junk-food abuse.

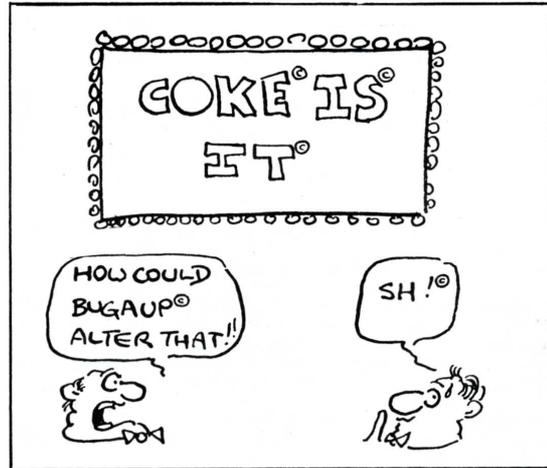
Recently a bid by the Coca-Cola Export Corporation to fight moves to ban soft drink sales in schools suffered a serious setback. A plan to encourage company employees to join Parents and Citizens' committees so that they could exert influence in schools was leaked to the press last month.

The public relations manager of the Corporation said that schools and trade unions were to become the focus of a campaign to defend the image of Coca-Cola. In a survey carried out in Sydney and Melbourne, 88 percent of respondents said that Coca-Cola is an unhealthy drink, and most thought that it is worse than other soft drinks.

In February this year, the N.S.W. Department of Education adopted a policy which recommended that sales of soft drinks in schools be phased out by the end of the year. This move was described by the Coca-Cola company as typical of "the growing militancy and sophistication of both the consumer movement and the union movement".

After persistent questioning on a Sydney radio show, a Coca-Cola spokeswoman confirmed that their product contains 10 percent sugar and has no nutritional value, but she - emphasised that the company had never claimed that it has.

One may well wonder whether slogans such as "Things GO Better With Coke", "Coke Adds Life", "Have a Coke and a Smile" and lately "Coke is It" might not be construed as implying that the drink does have some value. In fact, the misleading images of happiness and success portrayed by the clear-skinned youngsters that smile at us from their billboards in the sky have won the Coca Cola corporation worldwide sales in excess of \$US 5 billion per annum.



## RIPPING-OFF THE THIRD WORLD

Like all good drug pushers, Coca-Cola's key to success has been prudent exploitation of the under privileged. In third-world countries even the poorest people aspire to drink Coke. While other multi-national food processors aim their marketing at the elite upper income groups, Coca-Cola conspires, with alarming success to rob the poor of what little money they have by selling them bottled "good !lfell.

The Coca-Cola style of "saturation advertising" is often quoted as the standard to which all consumer advertising should aspire. An item in "Advertising Age" says that as a result of the good work done by the Coca-Cola advertisers "... a Palestinian refugee urchin, shining shoes in Beirut, saves his piastres for a real Coca-Cola, at twice the price of local cola."

In many countries the locals have been duped into believing that Coca-Cola is the best food they can give their children, to the extent that it is common for them to sell their own natural produce to buy Coke. In Brazil, Fanta Orange (similar to Coke but with orange colouring) is bought from America with the proceeds from sale of Brazilian oranges. Fanta contains no orange juice and many Brazilians suffer vitamin C deficiencies as a result. In a Zambian hospital, 54% of malnourished children surveyed had "Fanta Baby" written on their chart, their mothers having been misled into thinking that Fanta is a baby formula.

The Coca-Cola company have never revealed the constituents of its products. Tests by consumer organisations have revealed about 10% sugar and virtually nothing of any value.

The latest Coke billboards proudly proclaim that "Coke Is It." But they don't tell you what 'It' is.

In Australia Coca-Cola Bottlers is owned by Amatil, a multinational which also owns a wide range of junk food companies such as Smiths Crisps as well as W.D. and H.O. Wills tobacco and Steggles chicken processors. So if you smoke, eat lots of Kentucky Fried, crisps and Coke you are supporting one of the world's wealthiest junk pushers.

## W.A. DRUG PUSHERS FIGHT BACK

The growing activity of Perth BUGs has become a cause for great concern to the W.A. legal-drug pushers. They are going to great lengths in a vain effort to stop BUGA UP exposing their industry for what it is.

After the matter of billboard graffiti was raised in Parliament earlier this year, a certain government minister directed the police to arrest and convict a billboard graffitist.

Worried by the many BUGA UP cases which had been dismissed on technicalities by magistrates sympathetic to the cause, the police went to extraordinary lengths to ensure a conviction. In a Starsky and Hutch style swoop, they surrounded the homes of two known Perth BUGs and arrested them on a charge of wilfully damaging a poster. They seized various materials including clothing and shoes.

The prosecution's case was built on a collection of most unlikely evidence. Police forensic scientists were called to give evidence. They claimed that the paint used to write on the billboard was of the same type found on clothing seized from the defendants homes.

The proceedings went from the sublime to the ridiculous when the police produced their trump card - plaster casts of footprints which they claimed were made at the scene of the crime. Lo and behold, these perfectly matched the shoes seized at the time of arrest.

A videotape made by Channel 9 a year ago which showed one of the accused re-facing a billboard was produced as "similar fact" evidence.

Although neither of the accused denied that they have been known to paint on billboards, the fact is that they did not do that particular billboard on that particular night.

The case was heard over two days separated by a few weeks. In the intervening time, another Perth BUG had been arrested and pleaded guilty to damaging a cigarette billboard. A different magistrate heard this case and in spite of the BUG's admission of guilt, neither fine nor damages were imposed.

The magistrate's closing remark was "You can wear your conviction as a badge of honour".

Such sympathetic treatment was not well received in certain circles, and when the other hearing resumed, the police and the magistrate made it quite clear that they planned to make an example of these two to make up for it. A guilty verdict was a foregone conclusion. The hearing was little more than a tactic to run up some court costs to add to the bill. The magistrate was particularly concerned about the acronym "BUGA UP", and he dwelt on the fact that he



*High-quality refacing from Perth Branch*

found it quite obscene. He also indicated that the fact that the accused are "respectable" members of the community (a medical technologist and a teacher) made the offence quite inexcusable.

The two were found guilty and fined \$200 each, plus costs of \$111.

When asked if he would apply the "first offenders?" provisions, the magistrate replied indignantly that he had already made a great concession by not sending them to gaol.

The two BUGs said that they were disappointed by the judgement, but not surprised. They said that they would not be intimidated by a perverted legal system which holds more respect for property than for human lives.

An appeal against the decision and a complaint against the police is currently being sought.

Publicity surrounding the case has brought a flood of support from sympathisers.

## TEMPERANCE- TREATING THE SYMPTOMS

The Temperance Alliance recently celebrated their 100th anniversary with a thanksgiving service held in St. Andrews Cathedral in Sydney. BUGA UP was flattered and amused to read a letter in the Sydney Morning Herald saying that "everyone is welcome to attend, even billboard graffitists".

This was an offer hard to refuse. A delegation from UGA UP appeared at the cathedral just seconds ahead of the Governor's Rolls Royce. They presented the Temperance Alliance with a letter which suggested that if Temperance had attacked the cause of drug abuse (advertising) rather than the symptom (drug addicts), they would not have needed to be around for 100 years.

The letter concluded with the thought: "Hands that help are better than hands that pray, but hands that spray are even better".

After the service, the afternoon came to a traditional culmination with the arrival of the police who, for lack of evidence of any crime being committed, threatened to book the driver of the Official BUGA UP Van which was parked illegally, right behind the Governor's car.

## ROTHMANS MEDAL

On September 1st, the Rothmans Medal was awarded at the Sydney Hilton. The award was presented to the chosen footballer by the Government's Head Drug Pusher, Neville Wran.

A group of BUGA UP protestors picketed the entrance to the Hilton. News cameramen from the stations covering the presentation who came to film the protest stopped filming abruptly when one of the protestors accused the television stations of abusing the advertising code by broadcasting events sponsored by tobacco companies.

In view of the call for the winner of the medal to refuse the award, it was hardly surprising that Rothmans played it safe by giving the award to a Rothmans employee.

One could well wonder whether involvement in corporate promotions such as this is part of the Premier's public duty. Perhaps Wran's son, a Rothmans executive, could answer that question.



### FRED NILE DOES SOMETHING RIGHT (ACCIDENTALLY)

The existence of offensive billboards has not escaped the eagle eye of the Rev Fred Nile. He has lodged a complaint with the Advertising Standards Council over a billboard advertising Bluegrass Jeans, in which the word Bluegrass is replaced by just "BLUEGR---.", the space for "ASS" being over a photograph of the offending organ clad in tight jeans.

The Council said that the complaint could not be substantiated and therefore could not be upheld. Rev Nile said "It's a worrying development. You've got to draw the line somewhere in what is allowed in advertising."

Full marks for doing the right thing, even if it's for the wrong reason.

Maybe Fred will take a spray can and the law into his own hands. He might even branch out to cover other ads. How about the "Festival of No Lights" as the antismoking branch?

### CANADIAN EXPERT PRAISES BUGA UP

The Executive Director of the Canadian Council on Smoking and Health, Kurt Baumgartner, visited Australia recently to talk about smoking control in Canada.

At a lecture at Sydney University Mr. Baumgartner spoke of the great successes of the Canadian Non-Smokers' Rights Movement in having legislation introduced to restrict smoking in shops, banks, schools, buses and other public places. These controls were enacted by local government bodies, but attempts to regulate the tobacco advertising had failed, due to the strength of the tobacco lobby in the Federal Parliament.

When asked how the Australian situation measured up, Mr. Baumgartner said that the Australian system of industry "self regulation" meant that legal controls over advertising are virtually non-existent. However he added that BUGA UP certainly lead the world in actually doing something about the offending advertisements.

He said that in the course of his Australian tour he had been impressed by the widespread consciousness of the billboard advertising issue which has resulted from the BUGA UP campaign.

Mr. Baumgartner attributes the success of the movement to the wide cross-section of activists involved, including many so-called "establishment" people who can by no means be branded as radical ratbags. He said that when billboard refacing has happened in North America it has been very much a "hit and run" proposition, whereas here the perpetrators are prepared to accept full responsibility for their actions, thereby winning the respect and support of the public.

### U.K. POLICE GIVE UP ON COUGH UP

As reported in the May edition of BILLBORED, two graffitists who are part of the British movement called COUGH UP (Citizen's Organisation Using Graffiti to Halt Unhealthy Promotions) were arrested earlier this year. Both had been caught "red-handed" refacing cigarette billboards in Bristol, the home of the Wills tobacco company.

BUGA UP received a request for advice on how the court case should be conducted, and advice was offered, based on the many similar legal battles that have been fought in Sydney. News of this correspondence got through to the U.K. press, and when the London Sunday Times contacted COUGH UP for further details, they explained that BUGA UP had been their inspiration. The Times ran a story which started 11Subversives from an anarchist organisation in Australia have been sent to Britain. They have set up a cell in Bristol, and are now moving to London."

The Sydney Morning Herald reproduced the whole story on the front page, apparently fascinated by the concept of BUGA UP exporting the concept of billboard graffiti (and probably proud of having the Times write a story about something they have been reporting on for years.)

The latest news from Bristol is that just a few days before the case was to be heard, a 11 charges were dropped. One might well wonder what correspondence passed between Wills (U.K.) and Wills (Australia) to precipitate their change of heart.



*This cartoon accompanied the Herald story about BUGA UP's infiltration of .the U.K.*

### THANK YOU DAVID McNICOLL

At least one journalist present at the seminar on Tobacco Company Sponsorship of Sports organised by the Australian Consumers Association realises which side his magazines' advertising budget is buttered on.

Writing in The Bulletin, David McNicoll insulted his readers' intelligence yet again by trying on the claim that BUGA'd UP cigarette billboards draw the attention of people who have never thought of trying them.

He wrote how the well-meaning medics have become associated with 11ratbag merchants who deface and destroy".

What a pity he walked out half way through the seminar in disgust, before hearing members of the medical profession thank those who have taken real steps to stem the misery they see every day in their work.

We hear, however, that the story in the Bulletin did have a good effect. A Sydney woman who had long admired the work of BUGA UP but never dared take to the streets was so enraged by what McNicoll wrote that she bought herself a can and added the words "BUGA UP DAVID McNICOLL" to every billboard within reach.

## NEVER TRUST A DRUG PUSHER

As reported in the last issue of Billbored, two N.S.W. BUGs were assaulted by a service station owner as a result of verbally challenging a Rothmans rep on the premises. They filed a charge with the courts and the case was heard last month.

The altercation started when the two BUGs cycled into the service station to pump up their tyres. A Rothmans rep had just arrived so they took the opportunity to ask him not to fix cigarette advertisements to the front of the counter as they would be at eye level for children. When their appeal was ignored, they asked him how it feels to be a drug pusher, to which he replied "not me, you've got the wrong man".

At this point the service station owner lost his temper and told them they had five minutes to get off his property. He then threatened one of them by aiming a petrol hose at his face, and when the other intervened, he punched her on the nose.

The two were quite confident that they would win the case, as a customer at the service station had seen the event and would be called as a witness.

However, the case did not go as smoothly as expected. The witness claimed he hadn't noticed what was going on, and the service station owner claimed that he had been beaten about the head by one of the pair. The Rothmans rep collaborated this story.

As both the plaintiffs had 'criminal' records for billboard graffiti, the magistrate chose to believe the story concocted by those fine, upstanding citizens who were "just doing their job."

Both BUGs were found guilty of trespass and one was found guilty of assault. They were fined and placed on bonds, the whole exercise costing over \$1000 dollars. Considering that this money could have purchased 500 spray cans, they have learnt an important lesson about the cost-effectiveness of various forms of protest.

## IMAGES TOO REAL, WORDS TOO STRONG

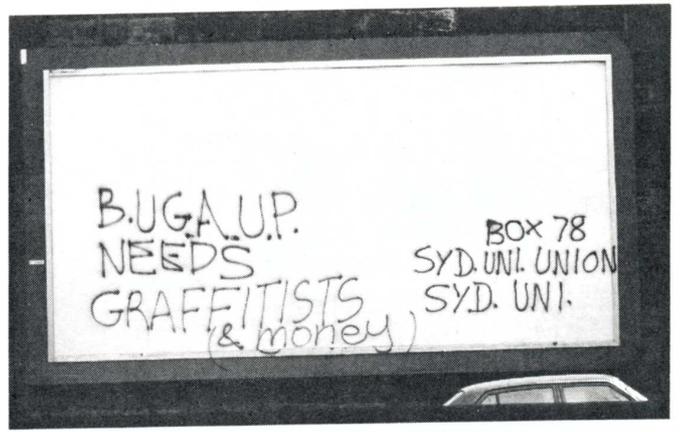
As advertised in the last issue of Billbored, the image "and Word" exhibition of BUGA UP work and materials was due to open at the Melbourne Trades hall on the 15th of September.

The exhibition was vetoed at the last moment by the administrators of Trades Hall, due to the controversial nature of the subject matter.

Although the organisers were flattered that the Union movement considers BUGA UP of sufficient social significance to be worthy of suppression, it is precisely this sort of censorship which makes it necessary to break the law to make the public aware of the issues.

The reason stated for this sudden attack of conservatism was that negotiations are currently taking place over the closing of a cigarette factory which will put 1000 people out of work. They feared that the exhibition might be just a little too appropriate for comfort.

They do have one good point - the 16,000 Australian smokers who leave the workforce prematurely each year to join that great union in the sky are doing the labour market a good turn.



## ABOUT B.U.G.A. U.P.

Now three years old, BUGA UP is an Australia-wide protest movement dedicated to ending the promotion of unhealthy products, mainly the legal drugs.

BUGA UP is not a group with a defined charter or organisational structure. "Membership" is gained automatically by anyone who speaks out, in whatever way they see fit, against advertisements, sponsorships or other manipulative techniques used to sell harmful products or promote destructive behaviour.

You can help by launching you own protest or sending a donation to B.U.G.A. U.P. at:

N.S.W      BOX 78, WENTWORTH BUILDING,  
                 UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY UNION  
                 N.S.W. 2006

VIC              BOX 285  
                 FITZROY  
                 VICTORIA 3065

S. A.            BOX 161  
                 TORRENSVILLE  
                 SOUTH AUSTRALIA 5031

Make cheques payable to B.U.G.A. U.P.

