

# Nestle's stirred up

We at Nestle found it disappointing, in light of a supposedly objective and educated survey of available information, that the double-page article in the January 21 *Gateway* was so blatantly biased and inaccurate.

For the benefit of those students and professional educators who are searching for accuracy in this issue, which has been characterized by oversimplification and hyperbole, let me take this opportunity to correctly state the company's perspective and policies on this issue.

First, Nestle believes that breastfeeding is superior to formula feeding. Nestle has promoted breastfeeding for more than 50 years and carries a statement on every one of its infant products sold in developing nations that breastfeeding is best for an infant.

Our infant formula, however, is the best supplement to breastmilk when a mother's milk alone cannot supply all the nourishment her baby needs - which in many developing countries occurs as early as three months - or when a mother cannot or chooses not to breastfeed or chooses to only partially breastfeed her child.

The alternatives to infant formula - the alternatives that have been used for centuries - are generally starchy gruels made from rice or roots and are nowhere near as nourishing as infant formula.

Second, your readers should be aware that Nestle fully supports the aim and principles of the WHO code on the marketing of breastmilk substitutes. The Nestle company testified on the code before the U.S. House of Representatives and I would be happy to send a copy of this testimony regarding support and implementation of the code to any of your readers who would care to write for it.

Third, your readers should be aware of our marketing practices. We do not advertise our infant formula in developing countries (and have not for some years). We do not give samples to mothers. We do not participate in baby shows, promotions of any kind or distribute posters or gimmicks with our formula brand name on them. We do have 35 mothercraft nurses in our employ; they work in four nations on the approval of

the governments there. Nestle is working closely with responsible professional and religious organizations around the world to affirm to all responsible, concerned persons that our practices are the most ethical that can



be developed. We even offered working with one church organization to establish a hotline system to investigate every allegation of grievance under the WHO code anywhere in the world.

Lastly, one of the most extensive studies to date is a World Health Organization five-year, nine country Collaborative Study of 23,000 mothers. Those results revealed that breastfeeding is virtually universal in rural areas of developing countries where, incidentally, infant mortality is highest because of poor hygiene conditions, lack of food, and inadequate medical care.

In addition, the study pointed out that a mother's decision for any changes in patterns of breastfeeding were due to illness of mother, illness of child, insufficient milk or second pregnancy. There was no confirmation of infant formula availability as a factor in the mother's choice.

The groups criticizing Nestle frequently imply that thousands of babies are dying because of Nestle promotional activities in the Third World, but these critics fail to mention the fact that the infant mortality rate in these countries has fallen dramatically

over the past 40 years. The International Red Cross and dozens of relief organizations use Nestle infant formula to save thousands of lives in disasters and famines all over the world. The WHO code recognizes the need for infant formula in the Third World and so does Nestle.

This issue has been fraught with emotion and hyperbole for several years. Now that the WHO Recommended Code has been adopted and is being reviewed and adapted by the developing nations of the world, we have an obligation to determine the facts. Nestle has begun consultations with some 50 governments in countries where we market infant formula; some of these were on the instigation of the local government, others were at the initiative of Nestle. We have taken positive, concrete steps to assist in the implementation of the Code.

Nestle fully believes that its policies and practices in the marketing of infant formula in developing countries can bear the closest and most critical scrutiny. We know of no justification to single out the Nestle company for criticism.

Institutions have a special responsibility to the individual students they represent, to investigate issues thoroughly before taking a position. And educational institutions that neglect to do this are violating their inherent philosophy of promulgating truth, and inquiry.

If the tremendous energy and enthusiasm of young adults is to be directed to improve the health of infants in developing countries, then the recommendation for action must be an informed one. Efforts must address the problems of lack of food, poor housing, hygiene, education, medical care, and poverty. By alleviating these problems, the infant mortality rate will continue its decline.

Any *Gateway* readers who have additional questions, may write me directly at Nestle Enterprises Limited, 1185 Eglinton Ave. East, Don Mills, Ontario M3C 3C7.

Yours sincerely  
Nestle Enterprises Ltd.  
R. H. Peterson  
Director  
Public Affairs

more letters page 6

## Store-goers deprived

In regards to Mr. Andersons' 'editorial' in the Feb. 11th issue. No matter the arguments for or against various graphic and/or literary representations of women. Forget the righteous indignation which any suggestion or illusion of (shudder) censorship invokes on either side.

Most especially, ignore Jens' drivel about how Charing Cross Books' decision to remove the *National Lampoon* and *Heavy Metal* is 'depriving' store-goers of something.

The fact of the matter is that Charing Cross belongs to its owners. What they choose to offer for sale, or withhold is their prerogative. Their reasons are not open to criticism or condemnation.

Of course if Jens and crew were prepared to endorse the recommendations of the Kent Commission, and extend them so as to apply to the purveyors of all forms of communication (bubblegum cards, graffiti, campus newspapers) then they might have a leg to stand on.

Pete Banuck

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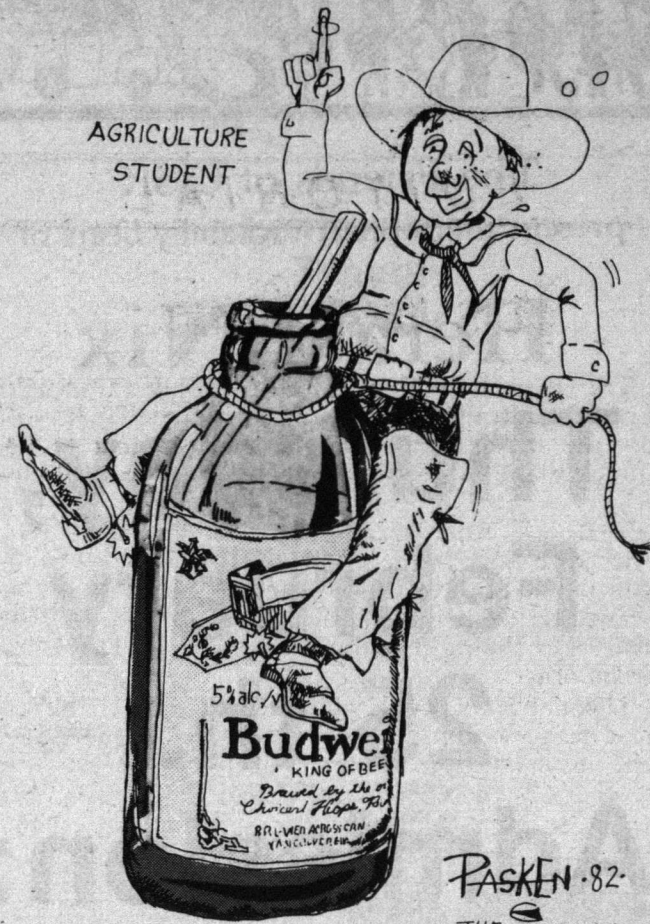
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## the Gateway

### NOTICE

to all  
**Gateway Staff**

Staff meeting for the express purpose of announcing the winners of the weekend in Washington.

Today at 4 P.M.  
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