



Photo by David Corey

'Graffiti Gobbler,' a new chemical that is supposed to work wonders on graffiti may leave clandestine artists and writers with a blank slate.

Chemical may erase 'wall art'

By Kevan Houser
Of the Emerald

"Babylon Must Fall!" according to foot-high words spray-painted in black on various campus buildings. Meanwhile, eerie silver outlines of twisted bodies fade away from steps, walks, and walls.

The once prevalent "SPAM" (Super Punk At the Max, according to one source), is now almost forgotten. Its final vestiges adorn a Lawrence Hall stairwell and a Bean Complex wall.

But desk tops, rest room walls, stairwells and buildings may all become blank again thanks to Graffiti Gobbler — "the first effective, no-mix, inexpensive formula that quickly and easily removes graffiti without harming the original appearance of the surface."

Invented by Australian Norman Shuttleworth, this petrochemical solution has already proven successful at eradicating graffiti in a number of large cities, and is now being put to the test on New York subways.

Harold Babcock, University physical plant director, says his staff hasn't tried Graffiti Gobbler yet, but would certainly experiment with it, given the opportunity. They would use anything to help solve the "tremendous problem" of graffiti, Babcock says.

Building custodians handle most campus graffiti, such as in rest rooms, but the physical plant deals with the larger instances, such as the "Babylon" messages. So far this year, according to Babcock, the Physical Plant has spent at least \$400 on eliminating graffiti, and expects to spend some \$300 more to remove new appearances. Babcock emphasizes that this cost is just to the physical plant. Building custodians also handle a lot of graffiti, he says.

Graffiti is a "very serious, ridiculous form of vandalism," Babcock says. "It's like throwing money down the drain."

Vern Edney, supervisor of painting, says his department uses the most effective graffiti removers he knows of. The problem, however, is that these removers tend to strip paint as well as graffiti.

Both Babcock and Edney are not convinced that Graffiti Gobbler would solve this problem, but they are willing to give it a try.

It may help clean up brick around campus, Edney says, but for a painted surface it would probably be cheaper and easier to continue painting over the graffiti. Prevention is a better answer, he says.

Restrooms, with their anatomical drawings and phone numbers, are the most heavily adorned with graffiti, some of it tasteful, some of it abominable. Found in a Straub Hall men's room: "Hamsters are not self-actualizing beings, in fact they are evil, horrible rodents out to take over the world!" Straub is the psychology building. One math-inclined woman wrote in Deady Hall: "Calculus is easy."

The old, wooden desks in many classrooms are covered with names of cities, musical groups and romances. Occasionally someone is a bit more creative: "I ATE A PIE — the newest frat" can be found on desk in Deady Hall.

Stairwells are prime targets, especially in Lawrence and PLC. Between floors six and seven in PLC, someone wrote "No Nukes." The response was on the floor below: "More Nukes."

Scott Bentley, a graduate teaching fellow in the English Department, says some graffiti is attractive and "may be art by some standards, but it definitely isn't literature." But he doesn't like to see property defaced, he adds. If Graffiti Gobbler could be used to erase all campus graffiti, Bentley says, that would be "an overall good thing." But it would all spring back, he says.

Maybe not, if one writer can help it. On a booth in the Skylight Refectory are the words: "Nuke Graffiti-ists."

So how about the real story?

NEW YORK (AP) — The news that a book publisher is restoring cuts, changes and a whole missing chapter to "The Red Badge of Courage" nearly 100 years after Stephen Crane wrote it gives hope that writers will win out over editors in the long run.

Score one for our side.

Of course in the long run we're all dead, as are Crane and editor Ripley Hitchcock, who excised 5,000 words from the classic novel on the Civil War when it was published in 1895 to make it less gloomy and more palatable to the public.

Rumors are rife that a whole slew of literary masterpieces are about to re-emerge in their original manuscripts, exactly as their authors wrote them. Publishers row is agog with the possibilities.

Maybe this time around, we'll get the full story of "The Lady, or the Tiger?" which we all read in school without realizing it might have been a slick editor who stuck in that question mark to make the tale more saleable.

If you recall Frank Stockton's famous yarn, this semi-barbaric king practiced a rough form of justice in which an accused perpetrator was led into the arena and given the choice of opening one of two doors. Behind one waited the fiercest, hungriest tiger in the kingdom. The other offered in marriage the fairest damsel in all the land. The door prizes were always switched to keep up audience interest in the arena.

It came about that the king's daughter fell in love with a handsome courtier, who was sentenced to the double door bit for daring to rise above his station. There was this man-eating tiger behind one door and the loveliest lady in the court, whom the princess hated with a jealous heart, poised for marriage behind the other.

By bribery and cunning, the princess had found out which door held the tiger this time, and she shot a signal to her lover to pick the right-hand one. The editor, being a chicken, left it to the reader to decide whether the princess had sacrificed her lover to her detested rival or thrown him to the big cat.

Rumor is that in the original manuscript Stockton had the maiden emerge in wedding raiment, but the princess in fury jumped out of the royal box, tore her to shreds, then opened the door and kicked the slats out of the tiger, too. That apparently was considered too violent for 19th century readers.

Maybe this time around, we'll get the original uncut, unedited version of the movie "Citizen Kane." There have been whisperings for years around the studios that the final scene where the kid's sleigh burns up with the word "Rosebud" on it was added as an afterthought to make some sense from heavy cuts in the plot.

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