

Funny, useful graffiti dates back to cave men

"You can't have two suns or you'll run out of yellow... We're all mad, you know... I love raspberries... Smokey the Bear is a hairy Boy Scout... Lung cancer cures smoking... Smash the state..."

Wise bits of philosophy and keen bits of humor have characterized the scribbles of graffiti writers throughout the years. Graffiti, scratches or scribbles on a surface, are unlike inscriptions which are deliberate and permanent. Although graffiti and its study is a recent fad, it dates back many centuries.

Robert Reisner, author of several books on the subject, said it began with the Paleolithic Homo Sapiens—cave men. A cave man probably hit one rock to another creating a design, and then repeated it to make more designs, he said.

Writing common

Writing on public walls was quite common during early Roman times. An inscription begging persons not to scribble on the walls was found at Porta Portuensis near Rome.

Well known graffiti such as the Egyptian hieroglyphics were a mixture of pictures and writing. These scrawls eventually became the basis of our alphabet.

Archaeologists uncovering the walls of ancient Pompeii found them covered with graffiti. Although

most of the graffiti was very ordinary, the unusual bits that did slip in between the scrawls provided an inspiring look at different aspects of their life.

In her book, "The Common People of Pompeii", Helen Tanzer said the graffiti found included lost-and-found articles, real estate advertisements, announcements of gladiatorial shows, personal and public notices, and local news.

Views reflected

The walls in the Tower of London are covered with graffiti. Most are only names, however the writings also include reflections on political views, religious views, and life in general. Not all graffiti was written by prisoners. Hugh Longworths, a prison keeper in the Tower, also wrote on the walls to help pass the time.

Graffiti is useful to students of past civilizations in two ways. It is important to the linguist because it furnishes information about the spoken language of the period and place. Linguists have even learned about foreign languages of the period by graffiti that was left by passing tourists.

Secondly, graffiti is useful as a tool for the historian. The scrawls and rude caricatures show the every day life of that period, and details of customs, institutions, and special celebrations.

Today's graffiti is widespread and has been

commercialized through books, magazine articles, buttons, stationery and wrapping paper. Much of it is ordinary, but may be useful to future generations.

Graffiti contest

In 1972 when a new building was being constructed on the University of Kansas at Lawrence campus a contest was held for the best and most original graffiti painted on the block-long boardwalk near the site. Some students created detailed paintings while others, in the true sense of graffiti, wrote impulsively whatever they wanted.

Advice, propaganda, and feelings expressed on the boardwalk included: "Damn everything but the circus, and all will be saved."

"This is dedicated to: all the buffalo imprisoned in concentration camps in Lawrence and throughout America. It is also dedicated to the proposition that this is the delegation of all free men and women to free those buffalo. Wire Cutters, cost—\$1.98."

"Ace Trucking Co. Anything you wanted trucked?"

"Once you go black, you never go back."

"HONDA—What? I can't read Japanese."

Graffiti, whether found on sidewalks or subway and bathroom walls across America, has served as a tool for both entertainment and education, as well as serving as an outlet for the spontaneous feelings of people throughout the ages.

Southeast campuses strive for alternative

Two years ago, a legislative mandate joined a junior college in Fairbury, a municipally-owned technical college in Lincoln, and a state technical college in Milford to create the Southeast Community College, an alternative approach to learning.

The college's three campuses offer classes which range from preparing adults for high school equivalency exams to courses concerning the Bicentennial and folk crafts. The variety is limited only by community response—or lack of response.

Practical study

Enrollment is high, as the public seeks less expensive and perhaps more practical courses of study.

Bob Eicher, area president of the college, reports an enrollment of 600 full-time students on the Lincoln campus alone, and over 4,000 adults now studying through the Adult Education

Program.

The college was recently named one of the three most innovative adult education programs in the nation by the Teachers College of Columbia University.

Mobile classrooms

It cited the use of mobile classrooms, a community outreach program which identifies adult educational needs, and an approach which serves adults at all levels as the major qualities which earned the college the high rating.

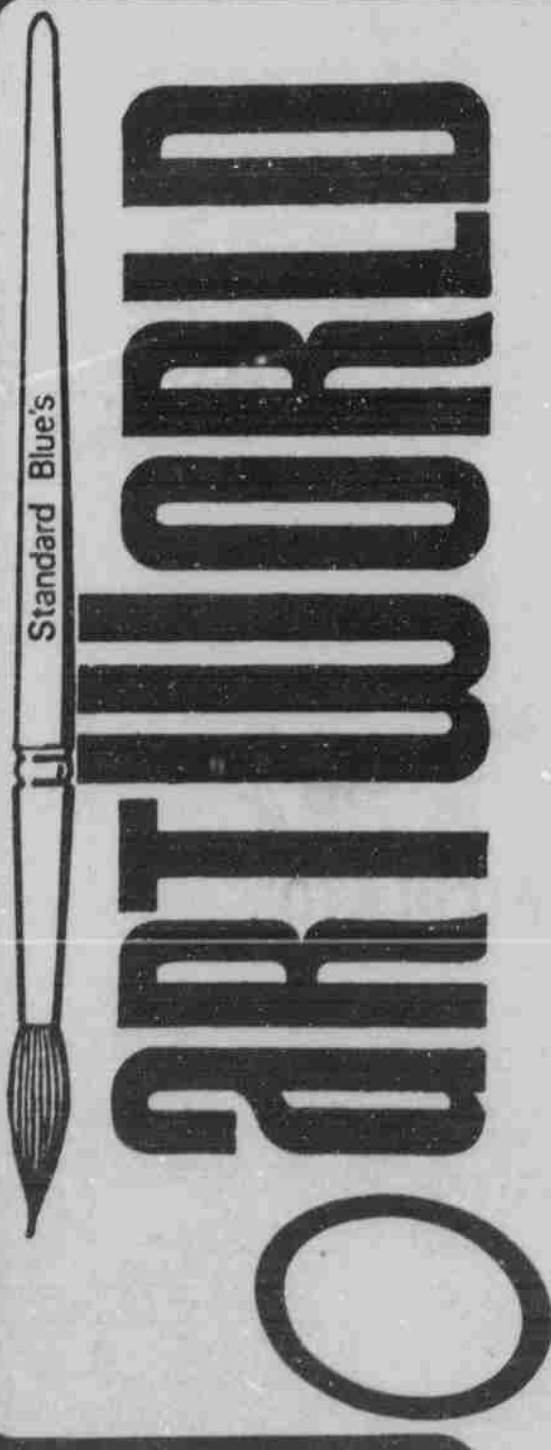
Until the summer of 1974, the Southeast Community College was funded by a 1% mill levy, which was then declared unconstitutional. The college is now funded through general fund appropriations by the state, as are other state universities and colleges. A small portion of the funding—15% to 20%—comes from the tuition students pay, \$10 to \$20 a course for six to eight

weeks.

Age spectrum broad

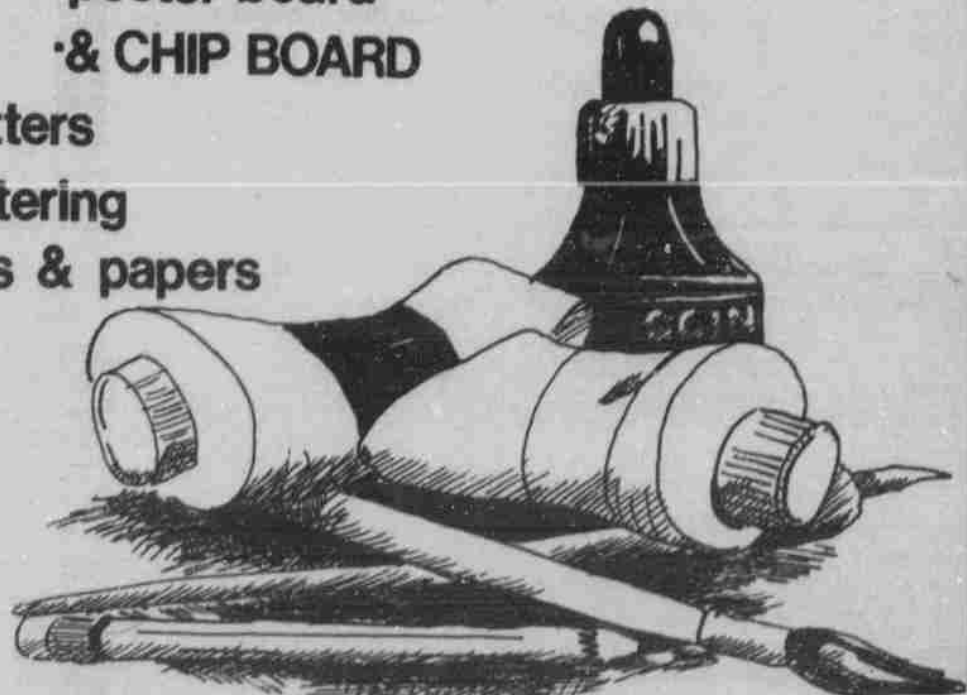
Eicher said the student body covers a "broad spectrum" of age groups. In Lincoln, he estimated the average age of the students at about 26, with somewhat older adults being the norm at the Milford campus. The programs are not limited to the young, however, as the Lincoln campus offers several classes aimed directly at the over-sixty age group, including "The Challenge of Retirement" and "The Remaining Partner".

The college offers a variety of Women's Studies courses also. The classes deal with the practical problems the single, divorced, or widowed woman faces, such as "Basic Home Repairs" and "Powder Puff Mechanics". A self-defense course is also offered.



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