

## Civics Can Fight Graffiti

### A Message From Queens Civic Congress' partner, CAGE.

Citizens Against Graffiti Everywhere (CAGE) is a Queens wide organization dedicated to eradicating the graffiti blight that is plaguing our major cities. CAGE trains civic groups on how to fight graffiti and change the mindset of people who don't see graffiti as a problem. CAGE works actively with the NYPD Vandal Squad providing info on suspected graffiti vandals. Many of our tips have led to arrests of those who destroy both public and private property alike. CAGE also works with the Queens DA and the Sanitation Dept. because everyone needs to get involved to beat this criminal activity.

If you are sick and tired of graffiti and want to start making a difference in your neighborhood, contact CAGE at [graffitibuster01@yahoo.com](mailto:graffitibuster01@yahoo.com).

CAGE has the resources to provide paint over and solvents that remove graffiti. But most importantly, we are the community voices that want graffiti cleaned up and vandals make restitution and clean up their own mess.

Isn't it about time graffiti is fought and eliminated? If you are tired about just talking about getting rid of graffiti, CAGE has the cure!

[http://www.nypost.com/seven/04212008/news/regionalnews/urban\\_scrawl\\_is\\_spreading\\_in\\_city\\_107387.htm](http://www.nypost.com/seven/04212008/news/regionalnews/urban_scrawl_is_spreading_in_city_107387.htm)

## URBAN SCRAWL IS SPREADING IN CITY

By CHUCK BENNET

April 21, 2008 -- Graffiti arrests and complaints are skyrocketing as so called "taggers" treat city walls as their personal canvases, new police statistics reveal.



City graffiti skyrockets

The NYPD recorded an unprecedented 81.5 percent surge in graffiti-related complaints from 2006 to 2007.

During the same period, graffiti arrests spiked nearly 28 percent.

"We did an excellent job turning the tide against graffiti in the '90s and the beginning part of this century," said Councilman Peter Vallone Jr. (D-Queens), the chair of the council's Public Safety Committee who has turned the war on graffiti into a personal crusade.

"Unfortunately, because of the lack of police officers, the fact that they have to do double duty and combat serious threats like terrorism, minor crime, including graffiti, are on the rise," he added.

Vallone also blamed a pop culture that portrays graffiti as a cool, legitimate form of art.

Graffiti complaints in the Manhattan North police precinct jumped 94 percent, from 442 to 858, in the one-year period, and arrests climbed 19 percent, from 218 to 267.

"This was clean since 2004 and this is the first graffiti of 2008," lamented Kevin Ferguson, 36, at the tags on the aluminum gate of his cousin's coffee shop, Cup of Harlem, at 67 St. Nicholas Ave.

"It's not art - it's just scribble," he said.

In fact, graffiti complaints in the 28th Precinct, which includes Ferguson's eatery, shot up from 10 to 44 - an astounding 440 percent - between 2006 and 2007.

Manhattan South had a more modest increase of 52 percent more complaints - from 426 to 647 - and 8 percent more arrests, for a total of 383 last year.

Brooklyn North saw complaints more than double, from 489 to 1,084 - 122 percent - while arrests were up 69 percent to 488.

Brooklyn South had an 81 percent increase to 1,421 complaints, and arrests climbed 16 percent, to 680.

Queens North had an 84 percent spike, from 904 complaints to 1,662, and arrests went up 11 percent, from 615 to 680.

In Queens South, complaints climbed 80 percent, to 864, and arrests were up 17 percent, to 259. Bronx graffiti complaints increased 59 percent, to 1,416, and arrests rose 61 percent, to 780.

Staten Island saw a staggering 95 percent surge in complaints, from 468 to 914, and arrests were up 37 percent, to 198.

The NYPD say it's too soon to conclude whether the numbers indicate an actual rise in graffiti or just an indication of better reporting and police work.

"That arrests have been astronomical has nothing to do with the fact that it's worse and everything to

do with the focused attention on the local level," said Chief Edwin Young, the NYPD's citywide graffiti coordinator.

"In the past, if a citizen called 911 and said, 'There's somebody out here graffitiing and the cops got there and looked around and didn't see anything, there'd be no need to follow up,' he said.

Beginning in 2007, he said, police began logging all 311 and 911 graffiti complaints in a "graffitistat" database. At the same time, Young said, officers began documenting the identities of known taggers and their work so police can now bust the vandals long after their paint has dried.

Until more data is collected, he added, "I don't think we can make any judgment whether conditions are better or worse."

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