

second runs

By Louise Okrutsky
special writer

Give a child a paint box, and you'll end up washing paint off the walls. Give Ted Turner the computer colorization process, and you can only wish you could wash the color off.

Turner, the man who brought us superstation WTBS and the Cable News Network, is determined to indiscriminately spray paint on the more than 100 black and white films his concern owns.

It makes as much sense to decide Whistler's mother ought to be wearing a magenta dress or that Greta Garbo's hair should be colored blonde in Edward Steichen's famous 1928 black and white photograph. Many of the movies scheduled to be colored were filmed in black and

white for artistic reasons.

But why let that stand in the way of making a few bucks? Locally, the movies will be shown on WKBD-TV, Channel 50. On Halloween, the station aired the color version of "Night of the Living Dead." Here's a list of other films, some with an almost cult following, that are on the colorization hit list:

"IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE" Frank Capra's 1946 Christmas card to the world didn't do wonderfully at the box office but, like "The Wizard of Oz," it's managed to claim a small part of our hearts during the holiday season. James Stewart plays a small-town banker on the edge of financial and personal ruin. Who else but Stewart could make us even consider believing that a bumbling

guardian angel could make him see how miserable others would be if he had never been born?

That gloomy December night Stewart plows through the small town considering suicide won't look any gloomier or more foreboding in color. Channel 50 airs the movie in color on Wednesday, Nov. 26.

The cast also includes Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, Beulah Bondi and Ward Bond. They can still be seen in glorious black and white on videocassette.

"Casablanca": A few years back, television tried to tamper with this one by presenting David Soul as Rick in a series set in wartime Casablanca. You'd think people would learn to leave well enough alone. It did a swift, merciful death.

The color version ought to vanish just as quickly, if there's justice in the world. Somehow the thought of seeing the newsreel-like maps in the beginning of the movie in added-on color doesn't sound as if it will provide new insight or pleasure. Ingrid Bergman's Lisa is radiant without color. Humphrey Bogart's performance in the film makes it just about everyone's favorite movie. Here again, videocassettes will come to the rescue of a few injured sensibilities.

DISNEY, WHICH watches over distribution and ownership of its films like the proverbial hawk, added color to its 1961 comedy "Absent Minded Professor." For those who missed wearing a set of Mousketeer ears, the movie features the 1980s

favorite television dad, Fred MacMurray, as a slightly nutty professor who invents flubber, a substance that ultimately makes the college basketball team jump higher than the competition.

Unlike Turner, Disney was mind-

ful of its audience and asked subscribers to its cable-television magazine what they thought flubber ought to be. The vote came in. Flubber is kind of a grey, which makes one wonder why they bothered coloring this one, at all.

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