

# The Enemy Without

One sunny morning recently, the owner of a well-known golf club in California rose from a restful night's sleep and found someone had taken his fifteenth green. The whole, round green, that was so carefully manicured, had been lifted out of the ground like a piece of pie.

At that same moment, a homeowner in a suburban development near the club, was patting into place the last piece of his new and beautiful lawn. The neighbors came to gawk at its crisp, green "billiard table" surface and many said it looked just like grass on a golf course. In fact, it looked exactly like a putting green, according to some. Harry put the last piece of expensive sod in place with a knowing smile.

He stopped smiling a few days later when detectives found him.

Sound impossible?

It isn't.

Ever since the golf boom in the '60s, when millions of Americans took to the links for the first time, golf club owners have been faced with new headaches. Gone are the days when golf was the game of a few placid Scotsmen in knickers. Today — amazingly enough — there are more Americans three-putting, duffing, and swatting golf balls down the fairways than there are soldiers in the American, Russian and Red Chinese armies combined. And, if you put all the country's thriving golf courses into one land mass, it would cover most of the Midwest.

The rapid growth of the industry, however, has brought with it one growing pain or by-product: increased thievery, vandalism, and sophisticated theft at golf clubs. Among the thousands of Americans who have taken up golf, there are inevitably some bad apples.

John R. Hitt, vice president for security at Pinkerton's, Inc., the nation's largest security firm, confirmed the rise of deliberate damage and pilferage. Most common of the mishaps, Hitt said, is the theft of golf clubs and bags, valuables in the locker rooms, heavy equipment from maintenance sheds, like trac-

tors and sprinkler systems, flag pins, ball washers, and shrub trimmers. There are glimmerings of a new type of theft too — the con artist who poses as a member at a private golf club and gets free meals and service by forging members' names on meal chits. There has also been a rising incidence of damage to greens and fairways from teenagers who carom

Who does the stealing and vandalizing?

What sort of people go out of their way to plague something as harmless as a golf course?

Some of the known troublemakers are in the following rogue's gallery:

The Kids: teenagers, boys usually in junior high, who have "sleep-



**Walking the beat:** More and more clubs are hiring security personnel to watch the course after closing. Above, a guard and his dog stroll near the clubhouse.

over them in golf cars or dune buggies, using them like "bumper cars." But the increase which Mr. Hitt reports is fairly common knowledge to every golfer who uses the sheds, greens, and accessories at the course in his community and sees the damage.

outs" on golf courses and have fun burying flag pins in the sand traps. They tear up greens and spray-paint golf sheds because "it's a no-no".

Big Hearted Harry: comes to the golf club, looks like every other golfer, over-friendly. But after his

to page 32



## Enemy continued

game, he eats in the clubhouse, signs the chit with a phony club number and name. On his way out, he might pull a second cart of golf clubs out to his car in the parking lot and put them in his trunk, while their real owner drinks a beer in the clubhouse.

Old Joe: the man who provides

towels in the men's showers. Never says much. Everyone calls him by his first name. Golfers wonder why their wallets disappear from their lockers.

John and Martha: the most excusable wrong-doers of all. Usually on a date. In a moment of passion after midnight, they drive their car to a lonely part of the golf course — to a sand trap, perhaps — for an anatomy lesson under the elms. The

only problem is that they have dug up the fairway by driving overland.

Herr Lenin: young political activist, angry at the establishment, sees the golf club as the plaything of the idle ruling class. For kicks, he will spray-paint obscenities or slogans on the walls of golf sheds "to get even with the establishment".

Why the increase in vandalism?

Can it be avoided?

Golf club owners ask these questions because they foresee a loss in their business if they can't curb the rash of minor, and sometimes major, mischief on their premises.

Of course, mischief has increased because interest in golf has generally increased. However the biggest reason for rising vandalism on courses is it is so easy. After all, aren't golf courses the only sport facilities of their size without walls?

Some of the ways a golf course owner can prevent theft and a tarnished public image are:

Get outside, professional help. Too often companies or clubs think they can provide their own security programs and end up losing money.

Choose a security firm with established credentials that provides you with references from their past clients.

Spend enough time with security experts in studying the layout of your golf course. All courses are different. List the locations of all equipment, greens, and golf sheds on the course. Then determine which parts of the course are most accessible to outsiders. For example, which parts of the course border on a residential area? Does your course front, in places, on a major highway or a road that is poorly lit at night?

Security at the course and clubhouse is most important at night, when the premises are most vulnerable. Be sure your clubhouse is well-lit or equipped with alarms. Also provide lighting in parts of your golf course where greens and property are close to open highways or residences. (It should be noted that one West coast pitch-and-putt golf club lit up its course completely at night and stayed open, thus drawing more business and reducing security exposures.)

Hire a minimum of two guards

to page 52

# TEE-RIFIC TRIO

## • DERBY TURF-TYPE PERENNIAL RYEGRASS

Joins Manhattan and Pennfine on the "highly preferred" list of turf-type ryegrasses. A durable dark green beauty, Derby persists under close mowing, has better-than-average heat, disease and drought resistance and a fine record in the South when used for winter overseeding. A fast germinating grass, it's normally ready for mowing in three to four weeks.

## • HIGHLIGHT CHEWINGS-TYPE RED FESCUE

Named world champion at the 45th Annual Royal Agricultural Winter Fair at Toronto, Canada, Highlight is the brilliant green grass that performs in shady areas and in the dry root zone around trees. It blends with Kentucky bluegrass and turf-type perennial ryegrass. Unusually disease resistant, it requires less fertilizer and fewer mowings, and it may be cut to heights of 1/4" in specialized use.

## • EMERALD (SMARAGD) CREEPING BENTGRASS

Here is an improved bent for greens, tees, fairways and other fine turf. Vigorous and dense, it heals rapidly if injured. It has persisted under hot, humid conditions and yet with all its vigor does not tend toward "puffiness." University trials show it superior to Seaside at all cutting levels, the equal of Penncross at putting green heights and superior at tee and fairway mowing levels.

For free brochures & more information write



**INTERNATIONAL SEEDS, INC.**

Dept. G / P.O. Box 168 / Halsey, Oregon 97348

Telephone: A/C 503 369-2251

Circle 118 on free information card



## Enemy from page 32

to watch the clubhouse and course. One guard could be used to watch both the premises of a large country club in addition to making periodic rounds on the course. A possible security program would include one guard making periodic rounds on the course in a golf car, perhaps, with a K-9 watchdog to sniff out intruders. The fact that distant parts of the course are lit-up enable him to have visual control over the entire course without covering all the course on each patrol.

Better-known courses have used larger guard forces in the days immediately before a large tournament. A good combination would be one guard patrolling the course while another guard patrols the entire perimeter of the premises. Walkie-talkie communications between them enable them to "head off" and anticipate the moves of a trespasser.

As a psychological deterrent, signs should be prominently dis-



**Checking In:** A club guard checks the pass of a member at the entrance to private club. Management is striving to keep non-members and trespassers off the grounds and an identification system seems like the likely solution.

played in golf sheds, green areas, in the clubhouse and on perimeter fencing that trespassers will be dealt with severely.

At night, all but one gate onto the premises should be locked at all times and the guard should retain the key. A guard should be assigned to man the gate and should lock it when he leaves his post, for example, make his rounds.

In areas where homes or roads are adjacent to remote greens or property, a fence should be erected with the bottom of the chain links entering the ground, preventing youths from climbing under it. Three strands of taut barbed wire should be strung parallel to one another across the top.

Require the guards to investigate all empty cars near the course.

Guards should also be required to use several routes alternately in patrolling the course so that intruders cannot predict their whereabouts at any given time.

Theft of maintenance equipment such as tractors, fairway gang units and trimmers which are often stolen from maintenance sheds can be eliminated. Such storage facilities should be equipped with burglar alarms and checked hourly by guards. Many maintenance sheds have gas tanks and pumps which

should be locked and lock-checked by a guard on the first round. Pumps should be turned off and locked at night.

Applicants for positions which allow access to keys, cash, or golfers' valuables in the locker room, should be polygraphed to determine any criminal history. All club personnel should be issued I.D. cards, containing a picture of the bearer.

Golfers or club members should be encouraged to use only combination locks on their lockers. They should also be taught to lock valuables in their locker when taking a shower.

Golfers should be advised to leave all valuables with a guard, who would keep them in a locked box.

Some owners have tried these security measures and have seen their losses fall off dramatically. Some owners feared initially that these were "police state" tactics that would be distasteful to their patrons. But this fear has largely been proven unfounded. In fact, members of the more exclusive clubs respect and often appreciate the efforts of owners to "watch out for them." Said one jaunty Midwest golfer: "My course has got to be hassle-free and perfect. When the owners try to protect it, they protect me too." □

### CUSTOM CLUB MAKING SUPPLIES

## WOOD HEADS

PERSIMMON or LAMINATED  
FINISHED or UNFINISHED  
call or write

custom made by  
**BERT DARGIE  
GOLF CO., INC.**

2665 Broad Ave.  
Memphis, Tenn. 38112  
901 327-1674

Circle 108 on free information card