



Central Florida Crowfoots

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How Do I Spell Vandalism? **FRUSTRATION!**

van.dal.ism. (van'deliz'em), n. 1. deliberately mischievous or malicious destruction or damage of property. That's the definition of vandalism. When I ride my golf course and see the spin and skid marks on the greens, the broken flagpoles, the smashed trash containers, the missing tee markers, the chunks of sod ripped from the trap lips, the words that come to mind are *anger*, *disgust*, and *frustration*.

Our resort complex has several hundred rental accommodations and one of the extras available is a two-seat electric cart. These carts are provided to allow the guest to leave his car parked and use the cart to travel to food and shopping locations. Unfortunately, these carts are responsible for 95-99% of the vandalism done on the golf course. The remainder is done by car, truck, or motorcycle that has access from the public roads that pass near several tees and fairways.

In the ten years that I have been here, I was able to trace the tracks of one cart back to its origin and locate the perpetrators. They were company employees. I stress the word WERE. There have been a few other cases where damaged carts were billed to the guests involved, but most of the time the cart is reported missing or was

taken from the rental area. There are several areas that are being pursued to help combat the "theft" and vandalism:

- 1) Prevent access to the unattended rental cart fleet.
- 2) Install fool proof ignition switches.
- 3) Improve hot-wiring prevention methods.
- 4) Prevent access to the golf course.

Items 1, 2, and 3 are being done gradually. Item 4 is the most effective and most expensive solution. However, there are only a few key areas that would require some attractive fencing to secure the course for the night.

Fortunately, the vandalism that we have sustained has not ruined a major event staged at our course. Of course our daily guest has had the aesthetics marred and has had to contend with the damaged areas. Then there is the special attention that must be given to regenerate the damaged turf and groom the resodded areas. Somehow, the dollar estimates that I am asked to give for the few hours of labor and the sod and top dressing needed for repairs just doesn't seem enough to sooth the ugly scar that lasts until the healing over is complete.

Because the dollar amounts for turf repairs is comparatively low and the revenue from the carts is so high, there hasn't been much incentive to spend the money needed to protect the golf course. I will continue to document the acts of vandalism and hope that one day someone will be willing to invest in the security of that expensive, well maintained, beautiful asset that spends each night at the mercy of the potential vandal. If you have pride in your work and you devote a lot of your time to produce a respectable product, it is very painful to see others treat your efforts with such wanton, vulgar, disregard. ■

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