

An Attempt to Reduce Vandalism

By: Jack Fogel, Director
Rock Island Park & Recreation Dept.
Illinois

The Rock Island Park and Recreation Department has recently compiled a complete report on vandalism during the calendar year of 1977. A similar report was compiled for the calendar year 1976, in which over \$21,000.00 was spent in vandalism related maintenance. The purpose of this inventory was to obtain an estimated dollar figure on the cost of vandalism and malicious mischief during a 12 month period throughout the facilities under the jurisdiction of the Park and Recreation Department.

The total cost included in the report reflects the damaged item, replacement value, and man hours involved. The vandalism impact related to loss of user participation cannot be determined but in the case of golf course damage, hundreds of rounds may be refused due to damaged greens or unfavorable playing conditions.

The amount of damage occurred during the year of 1977 totaled over \$9,000.00 Same time period in 1976, \$21,000.00 These figures are within a 5% variance for the periods involved. Vandalism does not only involve the

immediate loss of facilities, materials and time, but also involves the need to reschedule man power on such projects. This reduces the total production of the Department and many times normal capital improvement projects must be postponed.

The Rock Island Park and Recreation Department extended their research period over a 2 year span in an attempt to make various changes in their operational procedures in the combatants of vandalism. The total vandalism cost factor was reduced one half in the 2 year period. The reason for such a drastic cost reduction cannot be pin-pointed but certain rational can be mentioned.

Security patrols on a special contract basis were hired during the 1976 (\$21,000.00 period). At the end of 1976, with a \$21,000.00 cost factor and private security patrols, we felt we could afford to gamble. We did so by cutting the patrols and depended entirely on the city's police force. In doing this, we reduced overhead by \$3,200.00, plus spent 50% less on vandalism.

Vandalism in general, was down in Rock Island from 1976 to 1977. This information was substantiated through city police department information, plus experiences encountered by area school districts. School districts do not have accurate data to compare "dollars," but general consensus is that school facility damage is down approximately 15% to 20%.

All of this is in direct relation to a change in the attitudes of the general teenage population. The early 1970's teen, of which most of the vandalism revolved around, has changed. We feel the vandal prone teen of the late 70's has had a change of attitude either through education, a care for facilities, nature or whatever. In any case, we feel they are thinking before acting. This comment is based on more "assumption" than on fact.

In addition to the above statements, the Department has aggressively been working on vandal prevention precautionary methods. This we are sure has also had an effect in the 1977 reduced cost. In late 1975 through 1977, the Department has initiated various preventative measures. These steps have included:

- 1) Burglar alarm systems on all concession stands, pro shops, office buildings and major building sites.
- 2) A step-up in awareness, plus better city police patrol of park facilities.
- 3) Added lighting in troubled areas.

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- 4) Up-graded illumination street light and security systems, by adding 80% higher wattage.
- 5) Constant inventory and replacement of "out" street lamps and security lamps.
- 6) Trimming of all trees and shrubs to provide greater light penetration and reduce potential hiding areas.
- 7) The promotion of more adult activities in facilities where vandal prone youth have created problems.
- 8) Publicity announcements making citizens aware of the cost involved and urging their support in notifying police when vandalism is in progress.
- 9) Revision of lock replacements to curtail break-ins.
- 10) Plus immediate repairs to damaged areas so as not to invite and/or suggest continued vandalism by later occupants of the facility.

Although the above methods will not eliminate vandalism completely, they do represent a step in the right direction in lessening the damage. ■

Arnold Palmer/Lofts Relationship Extended

Bound Brook, NJ — Arnold Palmer will continue to act as spokesman for Lofts products. That announcement was made recently by Palmer and Jon Loft, President of Lofts Inc., one of the leading U.S. seed companies.

The Palmer/Lofts relationship is somewhat unique in Palmer's involvement with the use of Lofts products. Lofts turf varieties are seeded on Palmer's golf courses at Latrobe Country Club in Latrobe, PA; The Bay Hill Club in Orlando, FL; and Ironwood Country Club in Palm Springs, CA. Lofts products also play an important role in the Palmer Course Design Company; Palmer and Golf Course Architect, Ed Seay, not only design courses throughout the world, but also develop special seed mixtures using Lofts turf varieties.

For the past several years, Palmer has represented Lofts on its packaging and advertising. Lofts even named a perennial ryegrass after Palmer, because of its outstanding performance.

Palmer was chosen by Lofts because of his unique position as pro golfer and course owner. In the latter capacity, Palmer takes an active interest in turf management, evaluating turf varieties from a performance and maintenance standpoint. His experience as pro golfer enables him to appreciate the special qualities needed for a playing surface.

Palmer's contract with Lofts has now been extended until 1989. ■

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