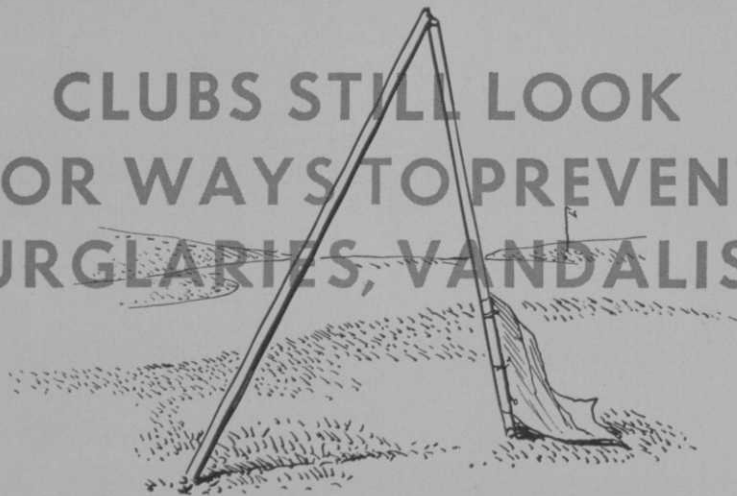


# CLUBS STILL LOOK FOR WAYS TO PREVENT BURGLARIES, VANDALISM



Attempts of clubs to cope with the vandalism and burglary menace have not been too successful, according to club managers and officials. Once it was thought that because of the general remoteness of their locations, country clubs were easy and what almost amounted to fair prey for those bent on destruction and looting of property, but the fact that cities and housing developments have moved practically up to their front doors in recent years, has probably only aggravated the situation. As one manager puts it, "Since the housing developments have pushed up to our doorstep, it seems that the hoods don't have to travel so far to reach us." Another points out that where damage or looting once was pretty much confined to greens, course property and pro shops, it now spills over to clubhouses, maintenance buildings, locker-rooms and even parking lots.

Nobody apparently has come up with a completely effective way of guarding against the invasion of club property. Possibly the best method of protection is use of a burglary alarm system, but, of course, only buildings are covered where such a device is hooked up. Police patrolling has been stepped up mainly because of the proximity of the many new housing developments to country clubs, but managers and other club officials generally agree that such protection is only of hit and run character. Night watchmen are only about 50 percent effective because of the large expanse of property they have

to patrol and, as so many managers point out, they are easily vulnerable to assault.

## Lights, Baseball, Ads

One club has partly solved the burglary situation by installing more lights on its property. Another has gone in for better community relations by supporting boys' baseball and thereby winning over an element that might otherwise cause damage to the course. One manager tells how he advertised periodically in the sports pages of a local newspaper offering a reward for information leading to the arrest of persons who might be inclined to trespass on club property. This was a preventive measure since the ads were inserted early in the season and without the club previously having been burglarized or visited by vandals. At any rate, it worked out well since there were no nighttime visits. But whether these or other protection measures would be effective in all communities is debatable.

William M. Gibbons, manager of Timber Lake CC in Peoria, Ill., tells how after three costly burglaries that on each occasion depleted the club's liquor stock, a sonic alarm system was installed that has discouraged such thefts. It is an extremely sensitive device that is triggered by the wind blowing through an open window or even by movement in the clubhouse building. Timber Lake's alarm system, of course, is dependent on how quickly Peoria police answer its signal.

There are two alarm systems at

Phoenix (Ariz.) CC, one in the pro shop and the other in the maintenance building. When either of these is set off, it rings so shrilly that anyone bent on breaking and entering probably isn't going to stop running until he is several miles beyond the course's outskirts. Phoenix CC is located near the heart of the city, according to N. W. Storey, the manager, and its biggest problem is guarding against petty thievery in the parking lot.

#### How to Win Friends

The CC of Salt Lake City was victimized by petty vandalism in the summer of 1960, much of which was attributed to youngsters in the neighborhood. But rather than make a police case of it, the club offered last spring to make land that it owns available for a baseball diamond. In addition, the club and one of its members each sponsored a team in the neighborhood Little League. At the end of the season one of the teams was invited to the club for a swimming party. The result, according to Manager R. W. Wasson, who became a rabid Little League fan during the season: No damage whatever to the course so far in 1961.

Equally encouraging reports, however, don't come from three other clubs: Columbine in Littleton, Colo.; Myers Park in Charlotte, N. C.; and Oakwood in Kansas City. All have tried the usual protective measures — guards, double locks, Pinkerton operatives working as employees, electric-lock alarm systems, etc. — but the destruction, especially to the courses, still goes on. Prosecution, says officials of the Oakwood Club, doesn't seem to deter people intent on damaging greens, benches and other equipment, and at Myers Park, officials charge off the damage to business expense and forget it.

#### Catalog of Troubles

One large Eastern club lists quite an extensive catalog of thievery and vandalism that it has been subjected to in the last two or three years. Hose, tee markers and other equipment have been stolen, fir trees have been cut down and stolen at Christmas time, and vehicles and ponies have been driven or ridden across the greens. The pro shop has been burglarized and there have been thefts of members' equipment from the lockerrooms. Quite a few hub caps have been removed from cars in the parking lot and this year a new automobile was stolen from the lot, used in the robbery of a store and finally wrecked when police pursued and caught the thieves.



Members of the Scottish Dagenham girl pipers, with a batoneer aboard a golf car, were among those who took part in the parade that marked the official opening of the Tropicana CC in Las Vegas in September.

The club has done everything possible to protect its property, keeping uniformed guards on duty around the clock and working closely with police who have been most cooperative in trying to apprehend the persons who have damaged or stolen property. The next step, according to club officials, is to erect a high fence around the course and clubhouse grounds, since the surrounding neighborhood is building up. Whether this will improve protection is a matter of conjecture. The club's manager sums up the situation rather ruefully: "We've got so much property to patrol that sometimes it seems impossible to cover all of it."

Besides being bothered with burglaries and vandalism, this same club in the past year or so has been troubled with an "invasion from within". Teenage imposters, posing as sons and daughters of members, have been availing themselves of all privileges that are offered the Junior membership. The club is large enough that it has been relatively easy for them to do this, although the loophole has been quite effectively plugged in recent months. It has taken the cooperation of bona-fide Junior members who have been instructed not to unwittingly tell or show the youthful imposters how they can take advantage of the club's charge system.

The whole problem of burglaries, vandalism, etc., is probably best summed up by the Eastern club manager who points out that there is perhaps just too much territory to try to cover. Probably the solution lies in a combination of protective measures — the shrill alarm that scares the intruder away, guards, night watchmen, effective police patrolling, prosecution of persons who are caught trespassing.