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VANDALISM from page 61

Perhaps, though, long-range considerations should go hand in hand with expedient decisions.

Jimmy Jackson's approach at Van Cortlandt should be given further thought. Superintendents might consider approaching school authorities with a proposal to give lectures to students on golf course ecology. Reaching young people is not as difficult as it might appear, particularly when they are approached with an unusual subject. How many kids, after all, know the years of tender nourishing a piece of land needs to make a green that putts true? Ecology, survival of our natural resources and our own environment, are subjects not necessarily part of today's curriculum, but they certainly are in the forefront of young people's thinking. The impetus for a lecture might well be the most recent rash of vandal attacks on the local course that have surely been reported in the local papers. Not to accuse, to point the finger, but rather to extoll the virtues of what is, in many areas, the only decent piece of open expanse of green terrain left.

Invitations to visit the course, watch work in progress by a maintenance crew, see first-hand the results of years of labor and tender care, might appeal to young people. The fenced in/out-of-bounds/private/exclusive attitude may well be triggering beligerence from young people of today who feel shut out about so many things. It may be time to open up and seek involvement with the ranks from which vandals generally come.

Use of golf facilities by the community, on an invitational basis, for activities such as picnics, concerts and school horticulture programs could be beneficial to the club as well as the kids. The club would benefit because it would help educate the kids to the tremendous virtues of maintaining a decent course in the best ecological interests of all members of the community. Not just their self-serving interests. The kids would benefit because they would be involved. And the parents. Non-golfers would better understand the concerns expressed over vandalism

through an appreciation of the physical beauties of golf course terrain. Closing down the range for two or three days a month could prove meaningful in the long run.

Community clean-up campaigns at municipal facilities have been very successful in introducing youngsters to the fascinations of a golf course. When Norwalk, Conn., completed Oak Hills Park, one of the finest public courses in the East, a great deal of trash was left behind. Having hacked their course out of a magnificent oak forest on several former private estates, the fairway edges were lined with mounds of stumps, branches, brush and weed clumps. The entire community was invited in to police their newest park facility. They responded proudly, golfers and non-golfers alike. Several weeks saw the completion of the clean-up project. Some dedicated golfers came out of the teenage and younger work contingents—and very few vandals.

Caddie ranks have always generated appreciative golfers. Caddie programs should be initiated, particularly at municipal layouts. Involvement of youth is the best insurance against vandalism. Decent caddie fees to encourage participation should also be included. It's a small price to pay for the benefits to be realized ultimately in reduced vandalism costs.

Earl Martin, head professional in his 20th year at Western GC in Los Angeles, said recently, "We need more junior classes and junior programs, especially at private clubs. The kids have to be involved. We recently ran a juniors tournament, up to age 18, with 137 in the field." Martin has been witness to a tremendous influx of youngsters to the game. Two years ago Western led the nation in rounds played at an 18-hole layout with 147,000. This past year they were second only to Rancho in Los Angeles with 113,000. "It's been my experience," he explained further, "that many professionals have had great success with junior programs. You don't get many acts of vandalism when the kids are involved."

Off-season activities when courses are winterized is a growing trend, as reported earlier in GOLFDOM,

continued on page 92