

the reactor

By Paul Azevedo



In the old west, a rancher's enemies would poison his wells. We have enemies, too. They live among us—mindless destructive vandals who poison our wellsprings of generous thoughts and kind impulses.

A local couple has a talent. They grow wonderful fuchsias. When they bought a small business in one of Pacifica's shopping centers, they beautified their store and shared their fuchsias with all of us who passed by. Their fuchsias added a touch of color and were just nice to ~~be~~ around. The mindless ones destroyed them — not just once, but repeatedly.

WHEN PACIFICA built a fishing pier, less than two years ago, the men's room was made almost indestructible. Not quite, though. The mindless ones must have taken it as a personal challenge. I'd swear they used a sledge.

Even the thought of vandals withers generous impulses. How many times have you thought to yourself, "Why doesn't the (fill in "city," or "school district" or "local service club" or "public spirited citizen") do (fill in a good public service or project).

If it's really a good idea, more than likely "they" have already thought of "it". Very likely, too, they would have been glad to do it, "once." But thinking of the mindless ones, they realized that they couldn't afford to do it time and again, or they couldn't afford the extra cost to make it indestructible, so the idea was dropped.

WE ALL lose when that happens.

My "Why don't they" happened a few years back, when my family stopped in Ukiah's city park. We saw a pair of

giant tires, the kind used on off-road earth moving ve-

hicles. Ukiah uses them as playground equipment.

They are simple, yet imaginative. My kids loved them. Not long after, I spotted a pair of similar tires where Challenge Construction Company had discarded them, in Park Pacifica.

My kids were then in the co-op nursery school in Pomo Park. I made the suggestion, the city and Challenge agreed and Challenge even transported them. Everyone felt good. I drove by Pomo park a cou-

ple of days after, and the tires were swarming with kids having a ball.

End of story? Sorry, folks, this is real life. Within a short time the smell of urine was so strong, it covered up the marijuana odor. And shortly after the fall term of nursery school started, the tires were set afire. They were made unusable. They had to be hauled away.

WITH THE tires went a pleasant dream of children playing.

With them, too, went some idealism and naivete. In their place, some bitterness and disillusionment. I felt a little richer when I had seen the kids swarming over the tires. I feel poorer when I realize how shortlived was the children's fun. I feel sorry, too, for those whose only pleasure is destroying the pleasure of others. What a shame . . . for all of us.

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