

Time to try something new

Published: Tuesday, August 18, 2009 3:21 PM PDT

Break out the pink jumpsuits and the sandwich boards.

They can wear the jumpsuits while they're repairing the damage they caused. When they've completed their community service, let them march up and down Main Avenue with the sandwich boards that explain how they vandalized public property.

For far too long we have tolerated scuzzbuckets who ruin things for the rest of us. A report in this newspaper last week detailed how the city had locked up new restrooms at Aqua Park because vandals continued to wreak havoc on the \$75,000 taxpayer investment.

Priscilla Derry, a former member of the city council, expressed her outrage in a letter-to-the-editor. She said the damage done by vandals disgusted her and that she was tired of seeing her tax money wasted. She asked that the courts do more to punish anyone caught in an act of vandalism.

She's right.

It may not be easy to catch vandals, but when they are caught the punishment should more than compensate for the damage they wrought. There are plenty of public projects that always need to be done. Whether it would be making improvements or maintenance on the waterfront or picking up trash in the city, there is an endless list of community service projects that need doing.

More important than the punishment should be public enough so that people know that vandalism will not be tolerated. Pink jumpsuits would certainly attract attention to anyone doing community service. A sandwich board would go a long way to informing people what prompted the community service.

Oh sure, the hand-wringers would not like that. Such public humiliation might scar the little scoundrels for life blah, blah, etc. etc. While that is not likely, it would certainly embarrass them profoundly and be a great way to spread the word on how vandals are punished in this community.

And that just might go a long way to curtailing the damage. What we're doing now certainly is not working. Dan Hammes