License to Kill Raccoons?

REAL-LIFE HUNT ON GOLF COURSE
MIRRORS REEL-LIFE GOPHER PROBE
FROM ‘CADDYSHACK’ THANKFULLY,
NO ONE WAS HURT.

By James E. Guyette

Twice in a month, police were called to
the club to investigate shots fired, and
during the second incident, investigators re-
covered a 1-ounce slug from a 12-gauge
shotgun that shattered the window of a
$500,000 neighboring house. With a lux-
ury home bordering a golf course, owner
Jeff Radin says he expects a few golf balls
to come hooking into the backyard — but
it was a large piece of ammunition that
nearly hit his wife and children who were
relaxing inside, he said.

There are 80 to 100 houses near Pine
Hills, and homeowner Thomas Yatsko
said this type of unfriendly fire is more at
home on the frozen tundra. “These are
polar bear slugs. I don’t know why they
were using the weaponry they were using,”
he said.

Yatsko and Radin expressed concern
the hunters were untrained marksmen and
were firing weapons at night while using
only flashlights to guide them.

“Who knows what they were blasting
at?” Yatsko added. “They weren’t real
careful.”

Pine Hills’ reluctance to address these
colors remains a powder keg among
newly re-acquainted neighbors, who are
now trading tidbits of information. There
could be future attempts at obtaining leg-
islative relief through the township’s gov-
ernment, neighbors said.

“This is a classic case of what not to do
if you have a problem with a neighbor,”
Radin said of Pine Hills’ response. “The
lack of remorse is like throwing gasoline
on a fire.”

Meanwhile, club staffers declined to

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Pernicious Plague
A FOREIGN VISITOR SPREADS LIKE A WILDFIRE THROUGH CALIFORNIA’S EUCALYPTUS TREES

By Frank H. Andorka Jr.

The Australian Redgum Lerp Psyllid has descended upon California, and its destruction has been felt on golf courses across the state.

Scientists aren’t sure how it arrived in the United States — it certainly didn’t book an airline ticket — but the pest that defoliates Redgum eucalyptus trees and renders them open to other diseases has certainly wreaked havoc in only a year.

“It has spread quickly,” said Dr. Lester C. Young, an entomologist for California State Polytechnic University in Pomona, Calif. “I can’t say how quickly it’s going to spread across the United States, but where there are eucalyptus trees, there’s a chance this bug will attack them.”

“All you can do is sit back and watch it happen,” said Kent Davidson, superintendent of Industry Hills GC in Industry Hills, Calif. “There’s nothing we can do. I feel very helpless.”

Davidson said there are hundreds of thousands of eucalyptus trees on the 300-acre property that was built in 1978. If the Redgum Lerp Psyllid destroys the trees, he’ll have to replant with different species.

“As the weather cools, the lerp seems to be slowing down some,” Davidson said. “We’re hoping that as it slows down, a natural predator might come along to help us out.”

At press time, the Redgum Lerp Psyllid, which first destroyed the Redgum eucalyptus trees, has now spread to at least six other species, all related to the Redgum, Young said. When the Lerp Psyllid sucks the sap out of the eucalyptus leaves, the leaves fall off, depriving the trees of nourishment and weakening their immune systems.

Young said he has conducted some experiments with a new pesticide called Imicide from J.J. Mauget Co. in Arcadia, Calif. The pesticide is micro-injected into the base of the tree and moves through the tree’s vascular system to the leaves. When the Redgum Lerp Psyllid drinks the sap out of the leaves, it takes a swig of pesticide with it, and eventually dies. Young said the micro-injection system can last for four months.

Other tips for those battling these bugs:

• Minimize stress to infected trees.
• Provide supplemental water to trees during summer or droughts.
• Be careful not to irrigate too close to the trunk of the trees.
• Irrigate no more than once per month.
• Avoid fertilizer because the Redgum Lerp Psyllid prefers the young growth stimulated by the application of fast-release fertilizers.

“Quotable

“I will always remember that smile and that laugh and that beautiful, graceful swing. It’s hard to believe we’re not going to watch that effortless swing anymore.”

— Ben Crenshaw on the tragic death of Payne Stewart.

“...”

— The reaction of a golf clinic crowd to an insensitive joke by Fuzzy Zoeller (oh no, not again!) about JFK Jr. dying in an airplane crash. We hope Zoeller was wearing his spearmint shoes after putting his foot in his mouth — again.

“Running a golf course is a life; it’s not a job.”

— Alan Puckett, superintendent of Lake Region Yacht & CC in Winter Haven, Fla.

“The image of a player trying to incite the crowd ... if that’s what they perceive it to be, I’m not sure it was. I think they were just caught up in the excitement. Every hole of the Ryder Cup is like the final hole of a major championship, and you’re the leader.”

— Jim Autrey, CEO of the PGA, responding to complaints by European players that American players were inciting the crowd during the Ryder Cup.

“If you watch a game, it’s fun. If you play it, it’s recreation. If you work at it, it’s golf.”

— Bob Hope, from “Webster’s Dictionary of Quotable Definitions.”
Borland Devoted to Family, Career

Jack Nicklaus remembers Bruce Borland as a “wonderfully talented designer” and a “wonderful person.” So do others.

“He was a great guy,” said Bob Maibusch, CGCS at Hinsdale GC in Hinsdale, Ill., and Borland’s friend. “He really cared about his work. And he had a lot of respect for superintendents and what we do.”

“He was deeply committed to his family and career,” said Chad Ritterbusch, group manager for Sel/Seabolt Communications, a Chicago public relations firm that represents the American Society of Golf Course Architects, of which Borland was a member. “He was one of those rare individuals who found success on both fronts — personal and professional.”

The 40-year-old Borland was killed Oct. 25 in the private Learjet crash that also killed golfer Payne Stewart and four others. Borland was a senior design associate with Nicklaus Design. The Peoria, Ill., native, who held a degree in landscape architecture from the University of Illinois, lived in Jupiter, Fla., with his wife, Kate, and four children.

Nicklaus said Borland approached him a week before the crash to ask permission to do a design job with Stewart under the Nicklaus Design banner. “I said, ‘Sure,’ ” Nicklaus said. “I knew it would be a great opportunity for Bruce, and it would be a good experience for him to work with another golfer and another designer for a different perspective. Bruce was flying to Texas with Payne, and they were using the opportunity and time on this flight to get to know each other better.”

Borland, though, was supposed to fly to Dallas on a commercial plane to meet Stewart. He later decided to join Stewart on the private jet, Ritterbusch said.

Borland joined Nicklaus Design in 1990. He was the design associate on 10 Nicklaus golf courses. “He was simply a terrific addition to our company and a good friend,” Nicklaus said.

Donations in remembrance of Borland can be made to:
- Palm Beach Community Church, Bruce E. Borland Building for Life Fund, 3970 RCA Blvd. #7009, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. 33410;
- First Union National Bank Memorial Fund for the Benefit of the Bruce E. Borland Children, 2000 PGA Blvd. #2200, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. 33408; and
- the Wycliff Bible Translators, c/o Mark & Deb Borland and Linda & David Captain, P.O. Box 628200, Orlando, Fla. 32862-8200.

Bill And Ben’s Excellent Adventure

If he wasn’t already, Bill Spence became a big Ben Crenshaw fan after working with him at the Ryder Cup. Spence, superintendent at The Country Club at Brookline (Mass.) and Crenshaw, captain of the U.S. Ryder Cup team, collaborated to ready the course for the mega-event, won by the Americans in thrilling fashion in September.

“Working with Ben Crenshaw was one of the highlights of my professional career,” Spence said. “He deserved to win.”

The U.S. team was nearly upset — again — but managed to pulverize the Europeans on the last day to win. “You couldn’t have written it any better,” Spence said of the finale.

Spence said he predicted the Americans would dominate the singles matches on the final day. “That’s where they are most comfortable,” he added. “They have the spotlight solely on them, and they don’t have to play with a partner.”

Spence wasn’t surprised the Europeans ruled in doubles play. During practice rounds, they were buddy-buddy. “They were a fun group of guys and very likeable,” he said.

The post-Ryder Cup has brought plenty of work for Spence and his crew.

“We have a tremendous amount of restoration work that will probably go well into next year,” he said.
Scanning the Web

**** — Bookmark it and return frequently; * — Look at only if absolutely necessary

Excuse me if I seem a little blurry-eyed. All this studying about turfgrass and golf course maintenance has left me little time for sleep. But if you think you don’t have time to learn the latest information in turfgrass maintenance, think again. Here are some distance learning sites that are worth your while:

▶ http://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/pub/programs/turfgrass/ — Of all the sites I studied, this had the most complete course offering in turfgrass maintenance, along with other courses specifically aimed at superintendents. Best of all — the courses offered at this site can be accessed online, so you can learn at your own pace and own schedule. Its user-friendly format even gives tips on how to learn online. It’s the complete package.

▶ http://www.uoguelph.ca/istudy/hort.htm — At the University of Guelph (located in Guelph, Ontario, in Canada), traditional correspondence courses are the rule. The programs in golf course maintenance range from environmental management to design, with a host of turf management issues in between. Information is a little harder to find on this site, but it also offers a general professional development division to help you enhance your overall management prowess.

▶ http://www.gactr.uga.edu/dl.html — The University of Georgia’s Center for Continuing Education offers a full correspondence course in turfgrass management. The result is a five-year certification in the area, renewable every five years through re-examination. The course covers a variety of subjects across the turf maintenance discipline. It’s a survey course designed to help superintendents stay current in the field.

Scanning the Web is compiled by Frank H. Andorka Jr., Golfdom’s associate editor, who constantly thirsts for further education. You can contribute to that effort by contacting him at fandorka@advanstar.com to teach him about future column suggestions or sites you think he should visit.

License to Kill

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provide details of the incident and would not discuss the hunters or their experience.

“I’m not going to discuss it,” said Brian Vickers, the Pine Hills superintendent, who notes the grub control program has ceased fire.

Golf pro Steve Brzytwa, the club’s spokesman for the controversy, called for the investigation to be dropped.

“This is old news as far as I’m concerned,” he said, and claimed that using large-caliber firearms to remove raccoons is an accepted practice for golf course maintenance.

“Things like this can potentially happen anywhere,” Brzytwa added, noting that “this thing has been turned over to the attorneys and the insurance company.”

Radin says he contacted employees from about 15 golf courses in locations similar to Hinckley’s rural environment, and none said they used firearms to remove raccoons and varmints. Jeff Bollig, spokesman for GCSAA, would not comment on whether it was an accepted practice or not.

Clarification on Seed Testing

Our recent article on seed certification (“Testing Debate Continues,” Sept. 1999) spurred a critical response from Terry Hollifield, executive director of the Georgia Crop Improvement Program. He was particularly concerned with this statement: “In Florida, for example, where the certification program fell by the wayside, inferior quality seed prompted some turf managers to file lawsuits against seed companies after it was allegedly determined that a few Florida seed producers had sold turfgrass seed using fraudulent certification tags from Georgia.”

Hollifield challenged that assertion, which was sourced to John Mascaro of TurfTec International, so we checked back with Mascaro to clarify and confirm his comments. Mascaro said his original comments to our writer were not about seed certification, but about similar problems that Florida had experienced with “live vegetative turfgrass material in the form of sprigs and sod,” including several where Georgia tags were placed on the shipment.

Mascaro continued: “I acknowledge that there were numerous problems in the past, but I believe that the Georgia certification program was never to blame. In fact, because of the past problems (with the Florida sod program), I always recommend that all my customers purchase sod from Georgia because of its outstanding certification and quality control.”

Golfdom apologizes for this reporting error.