

**A**s director of communications for the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association, I'm on the road quite a bit. I live in Orlando and criss-cross the state from Tallahassee to Ft. Lauderdale, Jacksonville to Naples, Tampa/St. Petersburg to Daytona Beach, and all points in between. I don't want to say that I travel a lot, but some of the toll takers on the turnpike are now on my Christmas card list.

I'm really not complaining. I like to travel and see the sights along the highways and byways of our state, but there's one sight that saddens me. That's the amount of road kill I see.

On some trips, the double-digit total of dead critters is alarming, and I often think about how people are so concerned about pesticides harming wildlife when I saw more dead wildlife in one recent trip across Florida than I ever saw in 30 years of golf course work.

First, there was the armadillo pizza, thin shell with extra squeeze. I shed no tears shed there. Nothing tears up a golf course like a hungry armadillo digging for grubs or mole crickets. I know some guys who will risk an SUV rollover to swerve into the path of an oncoming armadillo.

That prostrate possum in the passing lane isn't "playing" possum. He found the enemy and it wasn't us. It was a steel-belted radial, instead.

It's not considered sporting to mount a 10-point buck bagged with a V8. If you do, the NRA will cancel your membership. As a result, the mangled bodies of those bucks lie by the side of the road for all to see. To all the white tailed deer out there — graze next to a fairway, not a freeway.

Nothing sadder or flatter than a squirrel that changes its mind halfway across the road. And what's with Chip and Dale high-fiving in the TV commercial after causing a car to crash? Is this some sort of warped case of rodent's revenge?

Turtles are not speed bumps, and people who run over turtles are clearly coordination-challenged. It's one thing to try and dodge a scampering squirrel, but how in the heck do you run over a turtle? That takes a special kind of skill — one that I don't want to see working for me.

In Florida, we have another kind of wildlife menace: the love bug. Nothing like the pitter-

## Road Kill on the Highway of Life

BY JOEL JACKSON



I HAVE SEEN MORE  
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COURSE WORK

patter of love bug splatter on the windshield to herald the beginning of spring and the end of summer in Florida. Love bugs have migrated to Florida along with armadillos, coyotes, New Yorkers, Michiganders and Canadians. Sometimes hard to tell which is the biggest nuisance, eh? If you come down in May through August, don't drive from 10 a.m. to sunset. That's all I'm going to say.

My cousin did his master's thesis on love bugs. He learned two things. The only natural enemy of the adult stage is Owens-Corning Tempered Safety Glass. If you drive under 38 mph, they won't splatter on your car. Try doing 38 mph on the interstate and see if there's any road rage out there.

Sometimes you're the bug; sometimes you're the windshield. I learned this from taking a GCSAA seminar on IPM from the renowned tag-team of entomologists, the two Pats: Dr. Vittum from the University of Massachusetts and Dr. Cobb from Auburn University. I called their presentation "Chowder and Grits." They laughed, but amusing them didn't help me on the final exam: I was the only person ever to flunk a course evaluation form.

Here's the final scorecard from the tallies from my most recent trip across the state (I warn you, the numbers aren't pretty):

Greyhounds 12, Raccoons 0,  
Mustangs 8, Possums 0,  
Harley Hogs 1, Wild Pigs 0

So next time you hear somebody complaining about how many furry friends golf courses kill, tell them to watch the side of the road when they're on the highway. Then ask them who's the greater menace to the wildlife: golf courses or Grand Ams?

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*Joel Jackson, CGCS, retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.*