

In preparation for last month's U.S. Open Championship, *Sports Illustrated* invited yours truly to join a roundtable discussion with PGA Tour pro Brad Faxon, Callaway executive Larry Dorman and USGA Executive Director David Fay. The first subject to come up was last year's U.S. Open at Shinnecock Hills, where Fay had claimed that the famed seventh green was rolled Saturday night.

David Fay: And on the rolling, we can go on and on about that, but that's our fault. The rolling took place. It was not done at our request. It was done in the middle of the night.

GeoffShac: In the middle of the night?

DF: In the middle of the night.

GS: Really?

DF: In the middle of the night.

GS: That's ... (laughs)

DF: In the middle of the night.

Naturally, I heard rumors that USGA officials claimed that something happened in the night, before Sunday's disastrous finale. Upon returning from the roundtable, I received an e-mail that may back up Fay's seemingly ridiculous assertion.

Earl Spackler, cousin of Bushwood Country Club's infamous assistant super Carl, was born into the Spacklers of Southampton a few years after Carl. He has never met Carl, but he's been a "big fan" of Carl's registered bent for years.

Earl sometimes sleeps on a cardboard box placed in underbrush near the intersections of Tuckahoe and Sebonac. Though he would not reveal how he accesses the Internet, Earl did answer questions via instant messaging.

GeoffShac: Did you, Earl Spackler, cousin of Carl, roll Shinnecock Hills' seventh green "in the middle of the night" between Saturday night and Sunday morning, June 19 and 20, 2004?

ESpack: I did.

GeoffShac: Have you been charged with trespassing or breaking and entering the Shinnecock Hills maintenance building?

ESpack: No, you see, I work quietly. The security guards never saw me. And the USGA people don't know it was me because they travel in a constant state of unconsciousness. It's a Zen power I have. I've always worked all over the radar screen. The only people who saw me

Yet Another Golfdom Exclusive

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



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were the USGA officials who dreamed of doing what I was doing, as I was doing it. You follow?

GeoffShac: And how do you know they saw you in their dreams?

ESpack: I looped for some of them Monday after the tourney. They shared their dreams with me as we waited for a crew to finish syringing the seventh green for, like, the millionth time.

GeoffShac: It was really windy in the wee hours Sunday. Andy North famously couldn't keep his hair in place. How did you operate the roller in such gusts and in the dark?

ESpack: It goes back to the Zen thing. I have great strength.

GeoffShac: So why did you pick the seventh green to roll? It's so far from the maintenance building?

ESpack: I was doing it for C.B. [Macdonald] and Seth [Raynor]. I wanted to bring attention to their genius, since, you know, William Flynn gets all the credit for that hole and it's just wrong, man. Wrong. C.B. and Seth built that hole before Flynn was even a shoveler working for Hugh Wilson at Merion.

GeoffShac: By turning the seventh green into a freak show, you thought that would reflect well on Macdonald and Raynor?

ESpack: Oh, no question. Their genius emerged Sunday when those guys had to come out and water the green.

GeoffShac: Why are you claiming responsibility now, a year after the Open?

ESpack: Because these USGA guys need vindication. We need more days in golf like Sunday at Shinnecock. And more like '99 at Carnegie.

GeoffShac: You mean Carnoustie?

ESpack: It's all one and the same, man.

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