

Golfdom

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Several men are in the locker room at the club, getting changed for the 19th hole. A cell phone on a bench rings, and a man picks it up and engages the hands-free speaker function. (W=Wife, M=Man)

W: "Honey, it's me. Are you at the club?"

M: "Yes."

W: "Great! I'm at the mall. I'm looking at a simply to-die-for leather coat. Can I buy it?"

M: "What's the price?"

W: "Only \$1,000!"

M: "OK, go ahead if you like it so much."

W: "Y'know, I also stopped by the Mercedes dealership and saw a model I really like. The salesman will give me a great price... and since we need to exchange the BMW we bought last year anyway..."

M: "What did he quote you?"

W: "Only \$60,000!"

M: "OK, but I want it with all the options."

W: "Great! But before we hang up..."

M: "What?"

W: "I stopped by the real estate agent this morning, and the house we looked at last year is for sale! Remember? Pool, English garden, beach-front property?"

M: "How much?"

W: "Just \$640,000! It may seem like a lot, but I was reconciling your bank account, and I see we have enough in the bank to cover the down."

M: "Well, don't bid more than six-twenty, OK?"

W: "Thanks, sweetie! See you later! Love you!"

M: "Goodbye... Love you, too..."

The man hangs up. The others are looking at him in astonishment and derision. He holds up the phone and asks "Anyone know who this belongs to?"

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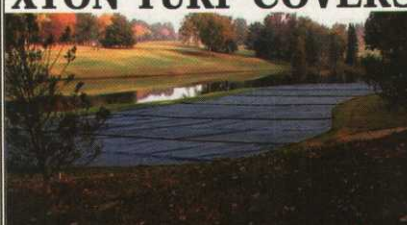
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Golfdom's



JUKE

of the month

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odd facts

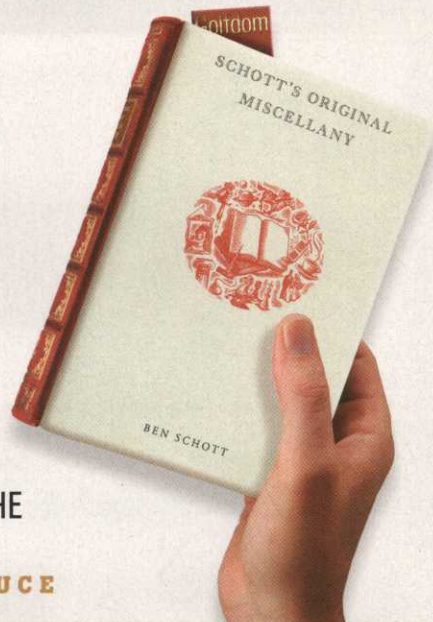
Burmese Kings have a history of rotten luck. In the 10th century, King Theinhko ate some cucumbers from a farmer without permission. The farmer killed the king and ascended the throne.

King Uzana was trampled to death by an elephant in 1254, while King Razadarit died in 1423 after getting tangled up in ropes while trying to lasso an elephant.

Such information will not help you shed the spare tire around your middle nor magically make your hair grow back, but these nuggets are historical curiosities that fit nicely into your back pocket. And the "Strange Deaths of Burmese Kings" is only one entry of the hundreds in *Schott's Original Miscellany* (Bloomsbury, \$14.95), a highly addictive, bizarre, educational and hilarious romp through all types of oddities and "unconsidered trifles." A No. 1 best-seller in England, Ben Schott's cheeky collection has finally been published for those of us across the pond.

Although the jacket flap claims the book can't be read in one sitting, it took me but a couple of hours. Afterward, I performed *fouettés* and *entrechats* (page 93, "Some Ballet Terms") through my backyard, singing the joys of knowing "aurophobia" is the fear of breezes (page 57), sharing my knowledge of "The Social Etiquette of Washington" (page 142) with squirrels, and pointing out

THIS BOOK WON'T HELP YOU
LOSE WEIGHT OR GROW HAIR –
BUT IT WILL HELP YOU EXPLORE THE
ODDITIES OF LIFE **BY MARK LUCE**



that cumulonimbus clouds (page 101) were gathering in the distance. In short, the book throws readers a state of animated giddiness that can be neither stopped nor contained.

The last time I had such a response to a compendium was as a fifth-grader, when a 1980 edition of *The Guinness Book of World Records* landed in my curious hands. It transformed a restrained kid into a first-class pain-in-the-butt who hassled teachers, parents and fellow students with outlandish facts, human oddities and annoying queries.

But where *Guinness* offers the biggest and best, Schott chooses the slyly sophisticated ("Some Shakespearean Insults"); the cultured ("Orchestra Schematic"); the sporting ("Two Dice Odds"); the colloquial ("American Diner Slang" and "Public School Slang"); the charmingly morbid ("Famous Last Words"); and the downright goofy ("Pig Latin Hamlet").

The book contains no logical arrangement, with entries running from a few words ("Declared Nuclear Powers"

or "OPEC Members") to two pages ("Presidents of the United States" and "The States"). Schott continually aims for the peculiar. So if it's not enough to know the inauguration date and political parties of the presidents, Schott tells us whether the president wed in office, was red-headed, died on July 4, sported facial hair (sideburns count), owned slaves or was left-handed — to name but a few of the fascinating facts he uncovered.

Whether using the book as a debate-settler or conversation starter, it provides whatever you need, want or are curious to know. It's perfect to have beside your favorite chair to pass commercials during the ball game. As Schott claims in his introduction, "It is, perhaps, possible to live one's life without *Schott's Original Miscellany*, but it seems a curious and brave thing to attempt." ■

Mark Luce, a free-lance writer who's brain is now even more filled with irrelevant facts, lives in Lawrence, Kan., and can be reached at mluce@earthlink.net.

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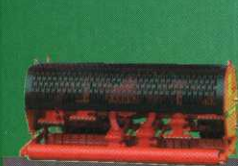
Of course, we know that life isn't always fair. But sometimes if you do one thing right you gain great rewards. Sometimes more than you deserve. We like that when it happens to us. The converse, unfortunately, isn't so much fun. And so it is with those who aerate only once a year. That one little oversight can cost them, especially when turf conditions get tough.

Aerating with a Verti-Drain 2, 3 or 4 times a year using various methods works a little like insurance for your turf. You know, you don't always have to pull plugs and fill every time you aerate. There are lots of options -

solid tining, hollow coring, needle tining - to name a few.

It's all based on releasing the soil and getting more air and water to the roots. That's how you get root growth past 6" deep. As far as compaction is concerned, it's an ongoing effort. The more you break it up, the better off you are 'cause you know it's coming back if you have any traffic at all.

So give yourself a chance, enjoy the rewards. Give your soil a chance - the paybacks are great. Get a Verti-Drain. Take control.



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