

## **BustinBalls, Golf Balls – November 19, 2010**

### **By Orlando Salinas, Fox News Writer**

I knew it would be interesting meeting someone who dives for golf balls. Glenn Berger started his business, Bustinballs.com, about nine years ago.

Five times a week, Berger puts on scuba gear, an oxygen tank, and a healthy dose of bravado. It's time to dive. His routine includes a steady circuit of golf course lakes around Florida. The 6'8 Berger really does look like one tall ninja, spending up to 60 hours a week groping in the soft, deep mud, scouring for little white golf balls.

It may sound silly. A grown man, ex-military, making his money by retrieving wayward golf balls.

On this day, we followed him to the Pelican Preserve Golf Club in Fort Myers. It didn't take long before Berger disappeared under a cloud of bubbles, his employee working as a spotter, walking around the lakes edge looking for any gators or snakes. Greg Villanueva tells me gators have gotten close to his boss. The smaller ones are the most curious, bumping and nudging Berger as he crawls on his knees, scooping up as many balls as he can.

I noticed that golfers on the course don't quite know what to make of a man with a scuba tank on his back, wading into that nasty, murky lake that they just hit their ball into.

The golf pro tells me he gets calls from people who think they've seen some sort of monster walking near the green. Berger says he gets a lot of that.

After several hours of diving, we head back to the 'bustinballs.com' warehouse. The rolling door slides up, and inside I see what turns out to be an efficient use of space. Several dozen heavy duty plastic bags, jam packed with golf balls stacked as high as the ceiling. Berger and Villanueva start unloading their days haul from the back of an old pickup. Bags are opened, and nearly 4,000 golf balls roll out onto a skinny wooden shaft, sounding like 4,000 small claps of white thunder.

The getup looks like a hodge-podge of pinball-machine size stations. One is used for sorting, one for washing. Another uses a pulley system to lift the golf balls up and over into another wash station. At the last table, I see Berger dumping a milk crate size box of mostly white balls, and then he begins sorting the day's booty by hand. Some are too discolored or sliced and are worth only 2 cents. Others are in near mint condition and Berger says he'll get \$2 for those.

Last year, Bustinballs.com retrieved nearly 2 million balls from many different golf course lakes around the state.