

# Severed finger found in her thigh

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DISCOVERY BAY — As she was easing out of the anesthesia, doctors told Anne Knorr they had found the tip of her finger.

Not on the golf course where she was injured, but embedded in her right thigh near the bone.

"It's a golf story that beats all golf stories," Knorr said.

It started as a pleasant afternoon golf-cart ride on a course in Oakhurst, near Yosemite National Park on Jan. 18, and ended in a hospital emergency room and hours of surgery.

She still can't believe the way this all happened.

Knorr and her husband, Thomas Knorr Sr., had played on the scenic Ahwahnee Golf Course earlier that Saturday. Afterwards, Thomas drove the cart on a sight-seeing tour to an area where recent rains had created a deep stream and washed out part of the paved cart path.

The Knorrs and their 4-year-old grandson, Jerrod Alonso, rode over a bridge, and on the other side ran into catastrophe. It was about 4 p.m. then, and the sun was low and shone in their eyes, making it difficult to see through the glare from the plastic windshield of the cart.

There was a rope set up across the path, but they didn't see it until it was too late. The cart ran right through the yellow cord held up by stakes. The rope was pulled taut and one of the sharp metal poles snapped free from the ground.

The pole hurtled through the air, snipping off the tip of her right middle finger and injuring her ring finger, stopping only after it impaled her in her thigh.

It happened so quickly that the

couple isn't exactly sure if all of the injury was caused by the stake, or if the rope also harmed Knorr's hand.

Later that day, at University Medical Center in Fresno, Dr. Dave Bina was cleaning out the deep wound in Knorr's leg when he felt something. "What's this?" he thought.

It was the rest of Knorr's finger.

He put it in a glass vial and showed it to Knorr when she woke up.

"I had kind of gotten to know these doctors from the emergency room, and they knew I wasn't squeamish," Knorr explained.

This was a first.

"It's a story I will probably tell my future residents," Bina said. "It takes a lot to excite me."

Knorr had looked for the tip of her finger back at the green, hoping it could be reattached. Unfortunately, the newly found fingertip was too shattered to be of use.

Doctors had to trim off a bit more of the finger bone before they stitched shut the remaining two-thirds.

Her ring finger has a long pin running through it. It is supposed to come out this week.

Unfortunately, golf-cart injuries are not uncommon. A few cases have come through the medical center in recent years, said resident Bruno Bucci.

"We've heard much worse stories with carts," Bucci said. "They flip upside down. People die. ... Mostly because people think they aren't dangerous, and when something happens they are unprotected."

The Knorrs say managers at Ahwahnee Golf Course and Resort should have done a better job of blocking off the creek. There were no signs or flags to announce that the road was shut off, just a sudden rope.

The barricade could have just as easily, and more safely, been

placed along the creek next to the path, instead of across the small road, said Thomas Knorr. And it should have been easier to see with several flags attached to it.

The tips of the sharp metal poles should have been covered with plastic, he said.

Resort manager David Englert declined to comment on the safety of his course.

"We're glad to have them as members," he said of the Knorrs.

Anne Knorr is worried about doctor bills, which will cost at least \$10,000, she said. She also worries if she'll be able to do her job at Herning Underground Supply Co., where she works as a claims adjuster, typing long legal documents to delinquent customers.

Doctors say it could take a year of physical therapy to find out if the damage to her other finger is permanent, she said. Injuries to her fingers could affect movement in other parts of her hand, she said.

Anne Knorr tries to relax in a stuffed chair at home. A right-hander, she is trying to get used to being a lefty. Occasionally, her face tightens when the pain from her wound sharpens.

"I'll still be able to flip people off, just not as well," Knorr said.



Staff photo/Carlos Avila Gonzalez

Discovery Bay resident Thomas Knorr holds wife Anne Knorr, who suffered a freak injury while playing golf near Yosemite.