

# Aspiring architects learn the ropes at Harvard

BY PETER BLAIS

"Everyone knows the Korean War was won by the infantry, except for Old Bob over there," said golf course architect Geoffrey Cornish, nodding across the room toward his co-lecturer, fellow architect Robert Muir Graves. "Being an old Navy pilot, he still mistakenly believes the Navy won the war."

A little later, Cornish was making an architectural point while trying to find the light switch so Graves could turn on a slide projector.

"That's right, Geoff," sighed Graves after Cornish sought professional support while still fumbling for the switch. "Now just shut up and turn off the lights."

No offense was intended and none taken during either good-natured exchange, or



Geoffrey Cornish

many similar ones that occurred during this year's two-day golf course design seminar at Harvard University.

The two past presidents of the American Society of Golf Course Architects have become fast friends while carrying on similar seminars across the country for the past 10 years. The session at Harvard is the sixth since 1985 and has grown with the game.

"We had 30 registered that first year. We're up to 85 this time," said Cornish.

The Harvard seminar consists of lectures and labs, during which students route an



Robert M. Graves

entire golf course, design a single hole and finish by filling in the residential component.

It is aimed at landscape architects, who are becoming increasingly involved with golf courses as part of their projects. There were many in attendance, like Brent Schulz of EDAA, Inc., a landscape architectural and urban planning firm in Washington, D.C. Schulz has worked on golf course/residential projects in Hawaii and Virginia.

"We're starting to get a lot more demand from our clients who want to mix a course into their residential design," explained Schulz

of his presence on the Cambridge, Mass., campus. "We want to do as much work as we can in-house and get more involved in the routing of courses."

But the class was not limited to landscape architects.

Stanton Abrams, president of Senior Tour Players, Inc., which represents such well-known senior players as Sam Snead, attended the session along with Snead's son, Samuel Jr. Sam Sr. is among the growing list of senior players trying their hands at course design.

"Dad wants to get back to the classic designs, along the Donald Ross mold," said Sam Jr. "I want to hear what Geoff and Bob have to say because I'm going to be working with my father."

Beth Moss Engle is a project manager at Weston Hills Country Club outside Ft. Lauderdale, where Robert Trent Jones Jr.'s first Florida course is scheduled to open early this fall.

"We're here basically to get a better idea of what architects are talking about," said Engle, who attended with associate Edward Hill. She said she found the session useful, but took issue with Cornish's suggestion to always get an option on golf course land contingent on obtaining permits, rather than buying the land outright.

"It's tough to get an option on a large piece of residential property that several companies are trying to buy," she said.

Clubhouse architect Bob Bacon, president of Studio b, Inc. in Phoenix, Ariz., said he would be putting his newfound knowledge to work immediately.

"I'm flying to Hawaii Friday to meet with the developer, planner and Jack Nicklaus on a new course we're doing on the South Kona Coast of the Big Island. The golf course and resort must be in balance if a golf resort is going to work. I need to know the architect's objectives and constraints and he needs to know mine. This (seminar) should help me right away. It's the best way to get what I want," Bacon said.

Nora Berard, a manager at Foxborough (Mass.) Country Club, said she attended "because managers should know a little bit about everything having to do with their course." Cornish designed Foxborough 20 years ago and planned a late-June return to the southeastern Massachusetts course to recommend possible renovations.

"We have the original plans, but it will be nice to know what goes through his head when he designs a course," said Berard.

Graves said he is pleased at the cross-section of professionals and their varying interests in the field. As for those aspiring to careers in golf course architecture, "I just want them to appreciate how difficult it is to do a good job," he said. "Anyone can route a course in 10 minutes. But is it a good job? There's so much to it from start to finish. People come up to us after two days and say they never realized how much work there was in laying out a course."

As for what he gets out of it personally, Graves said: "I just enjoy teaching. I taught architecture for a semester at California State University. But I don't have the time to teach classes twice a week now. This gives me a chance to keep my hand in teaching without doing it full-time."

Graves said several of his fellow architects objected to the seminars at first because they encouraged too many people to enter the field.

"I think we do more to discourage people from becoming architects. When we get through, they have a much better understanding of what we do and how much work it entails. We want to make sure those who are still determined to become architects start off in the right direction," said Graves.

Cornish and Graves plan two more seminars this year. They are Oct. 4-5 on Long Island (N.Y.) and Oct. 22-23 in Little Rock, Ark.

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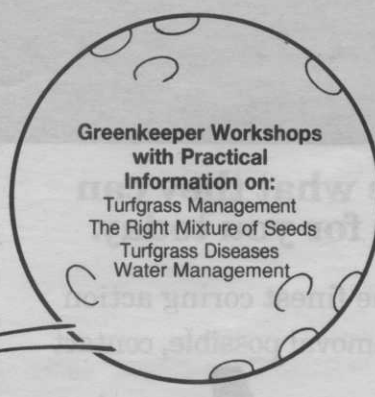
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