

## ROCKIN' GOOD TIME...



### Belgrade's boulders: From pain to pleasing

By MARK LESLIE

**B**ELGRADE LAKES, Maine — The glacier taketh away and the glacier giveth... That could be the motto at Belgrade Lakes Golf Course here, where boulders as large as a truck have turned construction from mundane to sometimes nightmarish but where, nevertheless, the pain has been transformed into a gain.

"The actual site, with its vast views, and particularly the addition of the rock, I think, has been a major thrust of the interest of the golf course," said British golf course architect Clive Clark.

"I prefer the traditional look but with features," Clark said. And he got those "features" in spades — and backhoes full, for that matter — at Belgrade Lakes.

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Boulders, like those at Belgrade Lakes Golf Club (above), or ledges, like those at The Ledges Golf Club (below), offer great challenges — and rewards for builders and designers.



### Bedrock: A foundational element at The Ledges

By MARK LESLIE

**Y**ORK, Maine — "We've got it, let's flaunt it," was Brad Booth's attitude when he tackled his design of The Ledges — a course with stunning 200-foot elevation changes built on a foundation of bedrock.

"We've used lots of dynamite," Booth said from his Ogunquit office, "and lots of big equipment. There is one 35-yard rock truck, three 25-yarders, four or five excavators, six or seven bulldozers, some as big as the biggest D-8."

Unlike the round boulders of Belgrade Lakes Golf Club, Horizon Golf Construction's crews at The Ledges are dealing with the squarish ledge left by dynamiting cuts as deep as 20 feet.

"We're incorporating the ledge into the design in many different ways in multiple places," Booth

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## BRIEFS



### HARBORSIDE HONORED

**CHICAGO** — The American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) has presented the Illinois International Port District a 1997 Environmental Improvement Award for its Harborside International Golf Complex. "The Port of Chicago demonstrated superior leadership in developing a reuse plan for an old landfill that balanced the port's role in providing economic development, environmental stewardship and recreational opportunities — and ultimately developed a world-class golf course," said AAPA's Tom Chase. The course was designed by Dick Nugent Associates.

### AURORA TABS KAVANAUGH

**AURORA, Colo.** — The city of Aurora, Colorado/Golf Division has retained Kenneth M. Kavanaugh Golf Design, of Tucson, Ariz. for a new, 18-hole project called The Homestead at Murphy Creek.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

## Mungeam hits stride in design

*Like many young architects today, Mark Mungeam started his career in construction with Moore Golf, Inc. and Prince Contracting Co. before joining the Uxbridge, Mass.-based design firm of Cornish and Silva in 1987. Eight years later, he was made a full partner. A member of the ASGCA, Mungeam's design credits include the acclaimed Links at Hiawatha Landing near Cooperstown, N.Y., and Shaker Hills Golf Club in Harvard, Mass., named by Golf Digest as the second best public course to open in 1991. He also directed the Cornish, Silva and Mungeam renovation at Olympia Fields in preparation for this year's U.S. Senior Open.*

QA  
&A

**Golf Course News:** You recently finished a high-profile renovation job at Olympia Fields. How extensive was the make-over?

**Mark Mungeam:** I would say that, as make-overs go, it was fairly extensive. We revaluated and recut all the bunkers on the North Course. In the process of recutting, we also revised the fairway contours. We rebuilt many tees, on some holes redoing the entire tee complex. On others we added back tees. All the greens



The 18th hole at Shaker Hills Golf Club in Harvard, Mass., which made an indelible mark for its designer, Mark Mungeam, before he became a partner in Cornish, Silva and Mungeam.

were restored and we completely rebuilt the 6th hole, moving the green back some 30 yards.

**GCN:** Was there added pressure knowing a Senior Open would be played there, on national television?

**MM:** Well, there wasn't when we started in the early 1990s. We were retained to renovate the North and South courses at Olympia Fields, and we didn't know there was a Senior Open in the offing. After it was named the 1997 Open site, there was a little added pressure. Not much. Obviously, we would try to do as good a job as possible, regardless of the tournament

prospects. It added another level of interest but it didn't change how we went about our work. First and foremost, we wanted to make it a more playable, attractive course for the membership.

**GCN:** How did it look on television?

**MM:** As far as I was concerned, it looked great! Maybe I shouldn't say this, but it looked better on TV — the alignment of the bunkers, how the fairways related to them, made for a great TV picture, especially from the blimp. We moved or added bunkers further out to account for modern length; the first hole is an example of that.

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## Q&A: Mungeam

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But we also angled them to make the landing areas appear smaller, while, for the most part, keeping the fairways a consistent width.

**GCN:** Arnold Palmer and Graham Marsh, the eventual winner, both made points of saying how much they liked the course. What do you make of that?

**MM:** Well, that makes me very

happy. There were several comments from the Open that were very gratifying. Palmer said he'd like to come back and play it again, which is nice to hear. I believe Marsh said he enjoyed playing an old-style golf course, apparently not knowing that we did major work there. That's perfect. That means we've done our job well.

**GCN:** What's the original work you feel most proud of?

**MM:** I have many favorites —

there are different aspects of several projects that I like very much: The Links at Hiawatha, Shaker Hills, Crooked Creek in London, Ken., and Villa Cardinal in Italy. And a new course, Cyprian Keyes [which opened for play Aug. 11, in Boylston, Mass.]. I really like the way Cyprian sits on a very rocky, up-and-down site. We tried to keep it as natural looking as possible, to do as little to change the natu-

ral landscape while still making the site receptive to golf.

It's my goal to walk away proud of all my projects. In the end, there are aspects of each finished project that I try to carry with me to each new project.

**GCN:** You've dealt with some difficult sites in New England. What have they taught you?

**MM:** That you shouldn't "force" it and that the proper routing of holes is extremely

important. You can "force" a site, but you have to have a lot of money to do so. Consequently, it's better design and ultimately easier to build one that fits the site... We certainly have worked on some very severe sites, with good results. In fact, we've advised other architects on how to deal with particularly rocky sites and wetlands — and how to spend so little money! I don't know if we have it down to a science or if it's the Yankee conservatism we utilize here.

**GCN:** You got your start in construction. How important has that been to your effectiveness as an architect?

**MM:** It's been very important to me. I don't think I would be in the position I'm in today if I hadn't worked in construction. I learned an awful lot being in the field: communicating with contractors, explaining to owners the process before it happens, operating equipment, etc.

**GCN:** Does this sort of background allow you to "wing it" in the field?

**MM:** My background has allowed me to visualize it better for paper, for designing in the office. I feel I have to wing it less in the field because of an ability to plan better. That's not to say things don't get shifted and moved around a little bit. But when it comes to grading, I feel it's been a great help.

**GCN:** You were made a full partner in the firm in 1995. How do you divide up the work?

**MM:** Whoever answers the phone gets the job! [laughter]... Actually, that's not that far from the truth. Frequently someone will call and ask for one of us. If they do, that person spearheads the job. If they ask for no one in particular, the person who answers the phone runs with it.

**GCN:** How does your style differ from Brian Silva's?

**MM:** I don't think our styles differ so much with regard to what's the right thing to do, or what makes a good course, or what it should look like when it's done. We go about things quite differently but the finished products are similar. When I see his finished work, I usually say, "That's looks great; that's what I would've done." One area where we differ — and he's always after me for it — is clearing. I have trouble clearing trees. I'm an environmentalist at heart, always have been, and removing trees can be painful for me.

**GCN:** You're also very committed to public-access golf.

**MM:** Yes. I feel it's important we don't forget some of the origins of play for young people — they're not playing the high-end daily fee courses, I can tell you that. I got my start in golf on a 9-hole owner-designed, -built and -

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## Cyprian Keyes another Mungeam creation for Bay State

BOYLSTON, Mass. — Mark Mungeam, a partner with Uxbridge, Mass.-based Cornish, Silva and Mungeam (CSM), has taken a typically ornery site and carved another stunning golf course from the rock-strewn New England landscape.

Cyprian Keyes Golf Club, an upscale daily-fee course here in the heart of Central Massachusetts, opened for play Aug. 11. Named for the gentleman who settled the land some 250 years ago, Cyprian Keyes offers 18 holes of first-rate, often-spectacular golf in addition to a 9-hole, par-3 course.

CSM is certainly no stranger to New England and its difficult terrain. With partner Brian Silva, Mungeam designed Shaker Hills Golf Club in Harvard, Mass., an extremely tough routing and construction project—but worth the trouble. Rated the 4th best course in Massachusetts by Golfweek, Shaker Hills was also named by Golf Digest as the second best public course to open in 1991.

Here at Cyprian Keyes, a full 50 acres on the 230-acre site were classified as wetlands, meaning they were off limits to Mungeam and his construction team. Mungeam's inventive routing also set aside 11 acres for the

marbled salamander, a rare and endangered species that maintains a breeding ground on the course.

Yet the soil conditions here in Boylston proved most difficult of all. "The site was really deficient in soils," said Mungeam. "We conducted quite a bit of blasting and moved 35,000 cubic yards of rock. We were dig-

ging holes everywhere, trying to find soil to cover [the rock]. Cyprian is certainly a rugged piece of land, with a course to match. But it's also a very peaceful setting. You won't find a more beautiful environment for golf."

The par-3 course, Mungeam's first, occupies an even rockier piece of land. Yet this terrain lent itself well to a short course,

he explained: "Because of the rock and the interesting contour, the par-3 course can be played on the ground or through the air. There are lots of opportunities to play angles and slopes, bump and run. It's really a fun nine holes of golf."

There are four sets of tees at Cyprian Keyes. The signature 11th, for example, plays 210 yards from the tips and 156 from the forward tee box.

"The wind really blows up there," explained Mungeam.

Further afield, Mungeam recently finished a major redesign of the North Course at Olympia Fields (Ill.) Country Club, site of this summer's USGA Senior Open. He currently directs CSM projects in Monmouth County, N.J. (36 holes plus a six-hole teaching facility) and Waterville Valley, N.H., where 18 holes are under construction.

## Q&A: Mungeam

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operated course on a former pasture. We need inexpensive, public golf courses like that. Some of those places are being lost and not replaced. As designers and developers of golf courses, it's important we work to make those places available. For example, we're doing a not-for-profit junior golf academy at the Links at Hiawatha. We donated our services for the 3-hole course because we feel strongly about this issue.

**GCN.** Whose design work do you admire?

**MM:** Of the older designers, Tillinghast, Mackenzie and Ross—the usual suspects—but also some lesser-known architects like [Wayne] Stiles and [William] Flynn... Of those working today, I admire Pete Dye. He changed the direction of design and continues to influence it. As for the other designers, I really don't get out and play other courses. And I refuse to evaluate work from pictures. Architects don't necessarily do this, but clients will ooh and ahh at pictures and say, "I kinda like how that looks." That's dangerous because a picture doesn't speak to playability and strategy. Aesthetics are important and it may be more important in terms of marketing these days. But it's not the end-all, or shouldn't be.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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