

Cornish and Graves: It's all here

GOLF COURSE DESIGN

GEOFFREY CORNISH AND ROBERT MUIR GRAVES

By MARK LESLIE

Golf Course Design by old friends and colleagues Geoffrey Cornish and Robert Muir Graves is golf's equivalent to those PBS shows — you know, Bruce Springsteen and Friends, or Plug-in-a-Bigtime-Name and Friends.

Two elder statesmen of golf design, Cornish and Graves, have basically taken their traveling road show (presented in the far corners of the continent from Harvard University westward), spiced it up with chapters from various other experts of note, and squeezed it all into 446 highly informative pages.

You want to know about "The Game and the Course"? It's here, explained in seven chapters. You want to know about "Construction and Grow-in"? It's here in seven more chapters. You want to know about "The Business of Golf Course Design"? It's here in four chapters.

"I emphasize," said Cornish, "that this work is not intended to compete with [Dr.] Mike

Hurdzan's magnificent *Golf Course Architecture*. Our book is a mundane textbook and reference work, in part intended to influence future generations."

Many landscape architecture instructors, he said, "find they must devote a few weeks to course design because their graduates will often encounter a golf course in their future master plans. Many of these instructors attend our seminars and have used our notes but apparently needed a textbook."

Cornish and Graves, who between them have designed hundreds of courses in North America, start at the beginning: The history of golf and golf course design. Then they take us through the steps, whether they be broad-based (planning the course; selecting the site and routing the course; designing a golf hole; planning major changes and practice facilities; building the course) or specific (drainage, irrigation, turfgrass

selection). Finally, they cap it off with the business side of the industry (financing, permitting and monitory, even training the golf course architect).

What they are not expert in, they have called on their "Friends" for assistance. Here's Audubon International President Ron Dodson contributing on planning the course; Kenneth DeMay, FAIA, on planning adjacent real estate; architect Bill Amick on short courses and Cayman golf; James McBarrett on irrigation; Dr. Norm Hummel and United States Golf Association (USGA) agronomists John Foy and Jim Moore on grassing the course; USGA Green Section National Director Jim Snow on turfgrass selection; and architects Desmond Muirhead and Thomas Marzolf on design.

Here's W. Gary Paumen, with Richard H. Elyea, Virgil Meier, Dean Mosdell and Christine Faulks contributing on construction methods, equipment and commodities from the builder's viewpoint. And National Golf Foundation Vice President Richard Norton writing on golf course financing; L.A. Group

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The Good Doctor is in

THE GOOD DOCTOR RETURNS

GEOFF SHACKELFORD

By MARK LESLIE

He gave us *The Captain: George C. Thomas Jr. and His Golf Architecture* and *Masters of the Links: Essays on the Art of Golf and Course Design*. Now young Geoff Shackelford has strode into the realm of fiction in a sometimes cutting tale called *The Good Doctor Returns*.

The Good Doctor, for those outside the loop, is Dr. Alister Mackenzie, thought by many to be the greatest golf course designer of all time. And in this whimsical excursion, Shackelford may earn himself a few karate chops rather than kudos.

The book is written in the first person, from the point of view of a young golf course architect who gets hired by Dr. Mackenzie, who (we faint) did not die as we thought on Jan. 6, 1934, and has returned "to show the world again what it means to build a masterpiece."

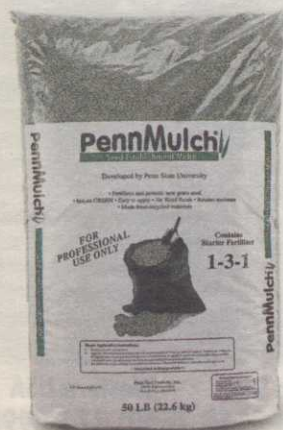
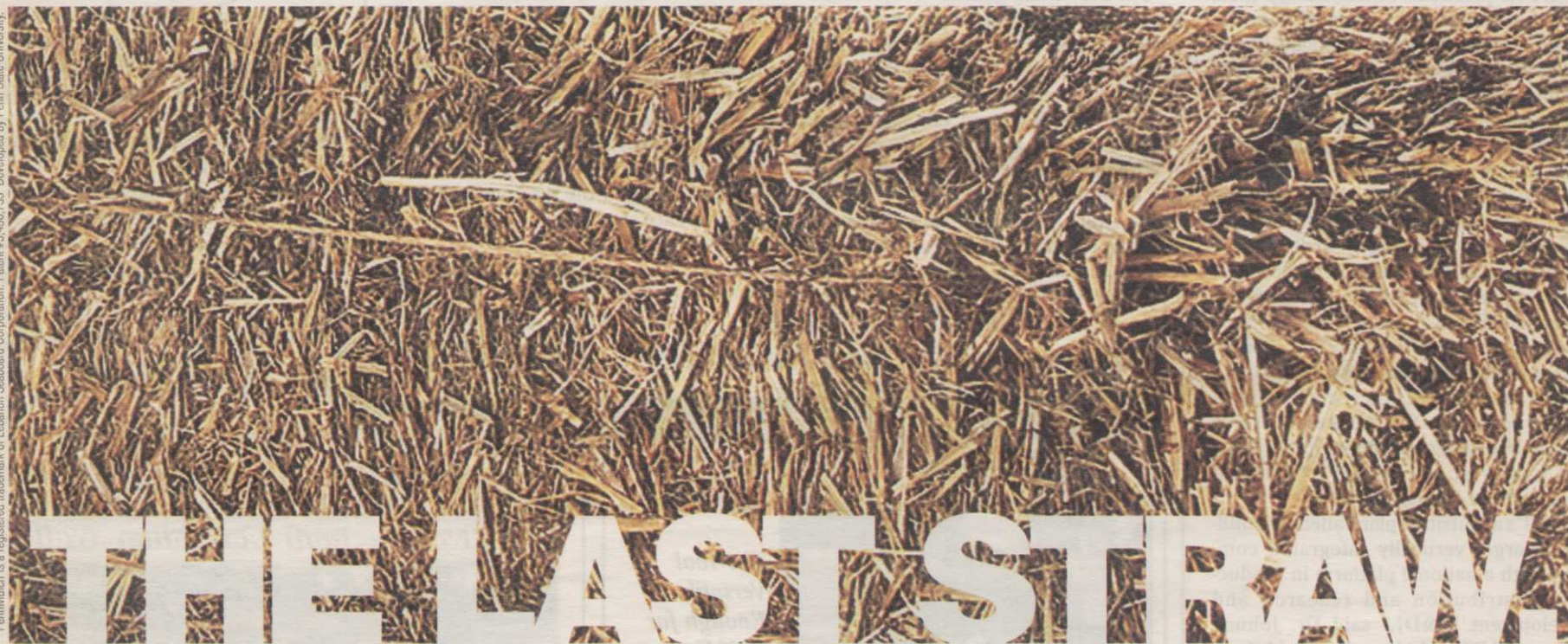
A thorough student of Dr. Mackenzie, his writings and philosophy, Shackelford uses Mackenzie's voice and his own to lambaste current-day designers.

Herewith, a few of those views:

- Regarding bunkers, Mackenzie says, "My experience with today's courses is one of despair and disbelief."
- Regarding hazard placement, "I am even more disturbed by the trend of narrowing fairways and growing five-inch rough just off the sides ... I find that rough grass is of little interest as a hazard."
- Regarding watering, "I never thought I'd see the day

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Past Presidents

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Eugene Baston — 1985 — Superintendent and maintenance director, Anyang Benest Golf Club, Kyonggi-Do, South Korea. Also lives part of the year in Georgia.

Biggest change: "The advent of the new grass varieties and advances in light-weight maintenance equipment over the past 10 years. The breeding programs with the bentgrasses, particularly in the Southeast, have yielded more tolerant bents. It's still not easy to grow bentgrass down here, but it's easier than it was."

Advice for Dave: "Develop a sense of humor and a thick skin. Seriously, the

association is going in the right direction. Most of all, he should encourage everybody to keep up with the advances in the industry, particularly in terms of computer usage."

James Timmerman — 1984 — Golf course superintendent Orchard Lake (Mich.) Country Club.

Biggest change: The advances in technology, which will probably even accelerate. Keeping up with everything is even more difficult than it used to be.

Advice for Dave: Be aware of the whole spectrum of superintendents, not just certain segments like the private club industry. Every superintendent, from the smallest Mom-and-Pop operation up to the most exclusive private club has certain needs. Be aware of them and try to tailor programs to meet those needs.

Robert Osterman — 1983 — Retired. Living in Bethel, Conn.

James Wyllie — 1982 — Retired. Consulting with golf course architect Tom McBroom and living in Brampton, Ontario, Canada.

Biggest change: "The quality of the turf is the biggest change. Fairways today are the same quality as greens were in the 1950s. Bunkers are often manicured to the point where they are no longer hazards."

Advice for Dave: "Continue to build on the excellent educational tools that GC-SAA provides to its members and the public. The superintendent today is an integral part of the management team and needs business skills along with agronomic knowledge. However, this advanced technology must be combined with the basic fundamentals and common sense so necessary for all good keepers of the green."

Michael Bavier — 1981 — Head superintendent, Inverness Golf Club, Palatine, Ill.

Biggest change: "People play and see many more courses than they used to, so we end up being compared to Augusta National and places like that. People are demanding more because they've seen



Michael Bavier

more. They are also playing more. We used to have very few midweek players. Now it's not unusual to get 150 to 200 rounds midweek at what is a very private club. We've doubled our crew

size in the past 25 years to keep up with the demands."

Advice for Dave: "You've got to decide on your priorities. Association, family and club top the list. You have to juggle the traveling and demands of being president of this association, while not forgetting about family and your job. Many guys have found that they've had to move on to a new job shortly after being president. Dave's a sharp guy and should do very well."

Melvin Lucas — 1980 — Retired. Consulting with architects Northeast Golf (Rob McNeil) and G&G Hauser of Vienna, Austria. Living in South Dartmouth, Mass.



Melvin Lucas

Biggest change: "A superintendent's tenure at a course isn't as long as it used to be during my dad's and my time. Make a few mistakes today, and you are out of a job. Job security is not what it used to be. There is a plethora of young, well-educated people out there looking to get head superintendent jobs, but they don't have a lot of experience, and that concerns me."

Advice for Dave: "GCSAA should recognize that we are the international leader in golf greenkeeping. We should embrace and enlarge that community feeling that we (US and Canada) are the leaders."

Charles Tadge — 1979 — District superintendent for the Hamilton County Park District, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Biggest change: Technology, with all the computerized irrigation systems and the Global Positioning Systems. There are things you can do now that you wouldn't ever have thought about doing years ago. So it probably doesn't make for less work, but it does make it easier to accomplish things.

Advice for Dave: Keep on top of membership services and keep providing good things for the members.

George Cleaver — 1978 — Retired from the golf business in 1982. Operating a floor refinishing business in Lewes, Del. 1926-1977 next month in GCN.

Cornish/Graves

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members on using a team approach to permitting and construction monitoring; and architect Mark Mungeam (a Cornish protege) on training an architect.

Loaded with photographs and drawings, this book could be to those interested in designing a golf course today what Cornish and Ron Whitten's *The Architects of Golf* is to people interested in golf course design yesterday.

Golf Course Design, 446 pages, hardcover, \$54.95, published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., distributed through major book stores and through foreign channels in Asia, Australia and Europe.

Good Doctor

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when they would install irrigation on the great links of the British Isles.

• Regarding narrow fairways bordered by long grass, it "makes bad golfers! And narrow fairways destroy the harmony and continuity of the game, causing a stilted and cramped style, destroying all freedom of play and creative shotmaking. And isn't that the real joy of the game? Creating shots and making bold recovery plays?"

• Regarding green committees, "Many have ruined my handiwork by planting trees like rows of soldiers along the borders of the fairways and turning once beautiful properties into jungles."

• Regarding length, "No other game has the diversity of playing fields golf has, yet I have seen many courses ruined in an attempt to extend them to so-called 'championship' standards."

During a diatribe against "the disturbing trend" toward stroke play in competitive events, MacKenzie says: "Many poor and downright dull courses have been made in the last 60 years in a futile attempt to eliminate the element of luck. You can no more eliminate luck in golf than you can in any sport or in life. You can't punish every bad golf shot, and you can't create situations where complete fairness is assured. If you succeeded you would only make the game, and life, uninteresting."

Bemoaning his belief that modern design work is more consumed with the scientific side of construction than artistry, he says: "The result will be a generation of courses that will be seen for what they really are: expanses of green grass, trees and water, merely for socking the ball around and nothing else."

For his part, the narrator declares of Augusta National: "There was virtually nothing left of the Doctor's original design at Augusta other than the routing and a couple of bunkers."

And he tells Mackenzie he can't ask Augusta National's greens committee "if the fool who built the 16th green was drunk and blind."

Well, the Good Doctor gets his site for a final golf course — a property on the ocean in San Diego with grassed-over dunes, sandy soil and undulating land.

The rest is yours to read. Look for folks you know. (For instance, I found Dan Proctor and Dave Axland, identified only as Dan and Dave, two of the world's great shapers.)

There are others, believe me. One in particular I'd like readers to hazard a guess at.

Tell me, who is Bill Mario? Let me know who you believe he is through fax (207-846-0657) or e-mail (mleslie@golfcoursenews.com).

The Good Doctor Returns, 180 pages, hardcover, \$19.95. Available through *Golf Course News* Bookshelf: 207-846-0600, ext. 211.

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