

# She's got 'a ticket to ride'

Jan Beljan, Rachel Therrien and Alice Dye are the only three women among the 200 golf architects in the United States. Beljan and Therrien are profiled here. See page 14 for a story on Dye.

BY VERN PUTNEY

Jan Beljan is high on travel. Golf has been her ticket to faraway places.

However, her role as course architect/senior designer for Tom Fazio of Jupiter, Fla., initially brings puzzlement from counterparts in foreign countries.

The latest example came in April in Japan. She later learned from the translator that the greeting party was surprised that a woman would be representing a golf course design firm.

Once it was demonstrated that Jan was a "lady" as well as a professional person, she was readily accepted.

She viewed five courses and walked a site for 36 holes. Construction techniques and methods in Japan have improved dramatically, she said, and it is small wonder that there is such a desire for courses there.

Beljan has made two junkets to the British Isles, the most recent last October.

"After my first journey," she said, "I decided that it would be easy to be a 'golf vagabond.' I had the good fortune to meet and spend a half-day with the superintendent — excuse me — greenkeeper at Turnberry GC (Ayrshire, Scotland) just as he was preparing for the British Open. And the greenkeepers at Prestwick GC (also in Ayrshire) and Royal Dornoch (Sutherland, Scotland) can teach many things to designers and superintendents.

"Even so, for pure design, the Old Course at Ballybunion, Ireland, is my favorite."



Jan Beljan at St. Ives Country Club in Duluth, Ga

In 1984, Beljan vacationed in the Far East. She visited Royal Hong Kong Golf Course as well as a Nicklaus/Morrish course under construction north of Tokyo and the first course in China done by Palmer/Seay.

"Enlightenment is an understatement," exclaims Beljan. "To see the difference in construction methods from the U.S. to Japan to China — 120 laborers laying sod over the entire golf course in Japan, and as many doing actual physical construction in China.

"It might be considered a massive version of the manual labor days of (Donald J.) Ross, (A.W.) Tillinghast and (Alister) Mackenzie."

Beljan certainly has expanded her vistas

working with Fazio.

Fazio comments, "She's been involved in many projects, from outside field supervision to total planning. In any one week she has done everything, from the initial phone call from a client to delineating fairways on a course."

She's worked on plans for some of the most notable golf courses in the country, including Wild Dunes, Isle of Palms, S.C.; Vintage Club, Indian Wells, Calif.; Golf Club of Oklahoma, near Tulsa; Lake Nona, Orlando, Fla.; and PGA National, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

Responsibilities have ranged from

planning (preliminary routing, final routing, clearing, drainage, earthwork, grassing, circulation, erosion control and presentation drawings) to specifications writing and the interacting with the many disciplines it now takes to design and build a golf course.

Involved in this process are engineers, hydrologists, environmental specialists, landscape architects, land planners, contractors, irrigation specialists, golf course superintendents and agronomists.

Speaking with prospective clients and former clients who seldom wish to make adjustments to their golf courses as time and use dictate needs are important parts of Beljan's days. She considers slide presentations and seminars vital to educating the public to golf course design.

Beljan's early contacts with contractors and laborers in the United States often were a bit tenuous, but she quickly established a good working relationship based on mutual respect.

"Respect," she points out, "can only be earned. That was achieved on daily supervisory jobs by being there as long and working as hard as everyone else — every day, daylight to dusk, on many occasions when weather conditions discouraged."

Long hours on the course weren't new to Beljan. She hails from a golfing family. Father George and his brothers, Carl, Willie and Andy, were widely known golf professionals in the Pittsburgh/Western Pennsylvania area.

Raised on 450 acres of prime golf real estate, 35 miles east of Pittsburgh, Jan grew up on a site planned in the mid-1950s to become a four-season family resort. George designed and supervised the construction of the golf course, as well as the initial phases of development.

*Continued on page 20*

## From boots to drafting, Therrien's learned ropes

BY VERN PUTNEY

In the spring of 1973, Bangor (Maine) High School senior Rachel M. Therrien landed a job in the Bangor Municipal Golf Course pro shop.

Though family and friends were strangers to golf, Therrien sensed almost immediately that golf was her ticket to the future. Her long-range goal was to become a "very good golf course architect."

Sixteen years later, she's comfortably in that role with the firm of Geoffrey S. Cornish and Brian M. Silva of Amherst, Mass.

Her path to that position took several detours, each one providing in-depth background. Therrien literally learned all aspects of the game "from the worm's eye view on up," she says.

Shop association with Bangor pro Austin Kelly was pleasant, but nature lover Therrien wanted to experience golf in the field and behind the scenes. Kelly the next summer arranged her transfer to the maintenance staff.

Work hours were long, but the University of Maine at Orono varsity basketball player learned to play golf in off-duty moments.

"Golf," she noted, "encouraged creativity, encouraged communication with people from all walks of life, and can be practiced anywhere in the world.

"Needless to say, personal sacrifice was necessary. Those who have indicated that I did not meet with too much resistance in pursuit of my chosen profession are in error — but I have met and worked with some wonderful people. This never would have



Rachel Therrien at the drawing table at Cornish and Silva

happened had I not continued on my chosen course.

"My family and close friends deserve a lot of credit for sharing those qualities that make people special."

Kelly introduced her to the basics of course maintenance. After three years at Bangor Muny, she transferred to Penobscot Valley Country Club in Orono, where veteran course superintendent Wally Pearson further refined her skills.

Therrien took time out from "hands-on" work to obtain a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in 1978, and a certificate in turfgrass management in 1979 from UMass' Stockbridge School of

Agriculture in 1979, where she had transferred.

After UMass graduation, Therrien met Ted Horton, then superintendent at Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, N.Y., and joined his staff.

"If ever there is such a place as 'golf heaven,' (course designer A.W.) Tillinghast must be there," says Therrien. "I made the most of this opportunity. I was determined to learn from, listen to, observe all there was to see from this piece of land, this marvelous golf course, and all the people who kept it 'ticking.'"

"I am delighted to have been associated with one of the top 10 layouts in the world, just 45 minutes north of New York City's

Times Square and within the most populated urban setting in the United States.

"Westchester County is an incredible setting for golf courses. I had 40 to study within a 10-mile radius of Winged Foot. I did not keep score while playing Winged Foot because my chief interest was in experiencing, not so much the numbers, but what was required to play either the East or West course. I could reach the greens in regulation if I put my mind to it, but I was more captivated by course subtleties."

After one year at Winged Foot, Therrien moved with Horton to nearby Westchester Country Club in Rye. Her six-year stint there as landscape manager and assistant golf and grounds superintendent for 350 acres of private recreational facilities involved managing 45 golf holes, tennis and related land uses, and preparing the tournament sites for professional golf and tennis.

The long-range task at Westchester was to restore the golf course and club grounds. Holes were rebuilt, reseeded and replanted, fairways contoured and ponds expanded.

"Working with Horton, contributing to and implementing parts of the planning framework for this rehabilitation work was a rare experience. Horton is a most knowledgeable and professional person, and never fears a challenge," says Therrien.

While pursuing a master's degree in landscape architecture at North Carolina State University in 1988, Therrien was from 1986 to early 1989 project manager/designer with Little and Little in Raleigh, N.C.,

*Continued on page 20*



# Beditz

Continued from page 1

"In five years, we hope to improve at least as well as in the past five years when the membership jumped from 1,800 to 3,600," he says. "We think we can beat that goal with our newfound research and bigger staff."

"Five years ago when we really started digging, there was not as much information to go by. Now, we have advanced our technology where we can face problems with a good idea of what causes them and how to fix them."

The board believes Beditz is the man to lead the NGF into the challenging years ahead.

"I personally believe (Beditz) may prove to be one of the most dynamic and far-sighted leaders the NGF has ever had," said board Chairman W. Morris Walton, president of Burton Manufacturing Co., in announcing Beditz's appointment.

"The foundation has grown significantly in both scope of services and stature over the past five years," Walton said. "Dr. Beditz has not only been an integral part of this story but has also demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities during his tenure as a senior staff member."

Beditz, who was promoted to executive vice president in 1987, joined the NGF in 1984 as director of research. Last winter he was named chief operating officer of the National Golf Corporation, a for-profit subsidiary that the NGF formed to stimulate golf course construction through feasibility

studies and other planning and development services.

Beditz says the NGC doesn't have nearly enough resources to carry the whole load, and if it breaks even financially, it will hold up its end.

"The profit was negligible if at all," he said, "although it helped cut into expenses. Mostly, we give free help to members of the foundation, and, unless it's a big problem using 300 or 400 hours, we rarely charge."

Beditz had to carry both workloads when Hueber resigned to join the Ben Hogan company. And over the next three months a committee of six board members interviewed candidates for the post.

"Both the selection committee and full board were unanimous in their belief that Dr. Beditz was indeed the best qualified to lead us into the 1990s," Walton said.

A recognized authority in golf market research and development in the United States, Beditz has been a major force in the NGF's emergence in recent years as a major source of U.S. golf course planning, development and operational information and expertise. Under his direction, the NGF has created a statistical database that is being used by manufacturers, architects, builders and developers and golf course management consulting firms.

"We're searching for some qualified men to help us now as we have our hands full of research and golf course development," Beditz says. "At the Golf Summit (last No-

vember) we explained the industry plan to develop the potential of the golf industry over a decade. We have approximately 1,800 courses now and we expect to have 3,600 courses within five years. And to double that amount in the next five years.

"And, if the membership continues to grow and we get the needed financial support, there is no reason why we cannot lay out the fundamentals to getting a golf course built."

Beditz said an important part of the research "is to make sure the conservationists are satisfied, that we are doing everything in our power to educate golf architects, developers and builders to the need to protect nature."

The NGF figures 400 courses a year will be developed, up from 150. But it has to work closely with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America on environmental issues. The old courses didn't take that into consideration, so it falls on the foundation and other interested parties to correct the old courses as well as direct the new ones, he said.

"When you think about the people who are involved in golf and get many returns out of building a golf course, you expect that the foundation should bulge financially," Beditz says. "There are 1,500 chartered companies with vested interests. There are golf manufacturers, turf producers, publishers, golf associations, golf course architects, builders, consultants, ad infinitum."

"If everyone just does a little bit or more, there will be plenty of funds. The more funds, the more research. The more research, the more golf courses. You can't beat that."

Bob Drum is a longtime golf writer and television commentator.

## Family Golf Week promoted

The National Golf Foundation has designated week of July 3-9 as national Family Golf Week as part of its fourth annual summer-long campaign to encourage golfers to share the experience with family members and friends.

This year's campaign will include advertisements in leading golf magazines; posters that will be distributed to the nation's 13,400 golf courses, and presentation in June of the 1989 Jack Nicklaus Family Golf Award.

NGF President Joseph F. Beditz pointed out that research shows that one of the main reasons today's golfers do not play more often is because it takes them away from their families.

"Therefore," he said, "the goal of our family golf program is two-fold: To introduce more non-golfers to the game and to increase the frequency of play among established golfers."

## Jacobs Management company is sold

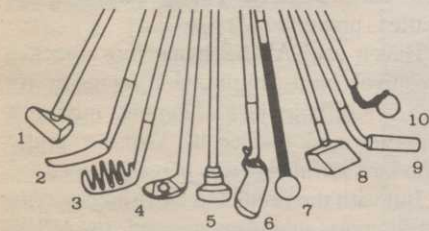
John Jacobs' Golf Management, with offices in Buffalo Grove, Ill., and Scottsdale, Ariz., has been purchased by Ram Thukkaram, a businessman based in Illinois.

Thukkaram will be chairman and CEO.

Tim Miles, a founder of John John Jacobs' Golf Management, will be executive vice president and chief operating officer.

Miles said, "The new association will be looking for a greater involvement in golf facilities for real estate development, both as managers and turnkey developers."

The company has consulted in the construction and management of golf facilities.



All of the devices shown, now in the collection of Mr. Frank Hardison, were patented and manufactured in quantity around the turn of the century.

1. A three-sided putter. Each surface has a different loft for different heights of grass.
2. A combination practice club and grass trimmer developed for caddies to make productive use of their idle time.
3. "The Rake" was used in "getting through" sand traps and water hazards.
4. Not an undersized wood, this is the handle of a cane used by golfers when taking an evening stroll on the links.
5. A "no stoop" ball retriever.
6. The "Urquardt" variable-loft iron from the 1890's.
- 7, 10. Two variations of practice clubs used to develop a slow, smooth swing.
8. A dual purpose club. The flat face was used for putting. The angled face was used to negotiate "stymies," by lofting the ball over the opponent's ball.
9. A roller putter. A tubular roller revolves on a shaft, ensuring a smooth putt even with ground contact... in theory.

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## Designing women

### Beljan gains respect in the industry ...

Continued from page 13

Beljan became a summer and weekend laborer on the golf course under her golf pro-superintendent father. Responsibilities included mowing greens and syringing, fertilizing and other general maintenance practices. "Of course," she underlines, "these were morning duties."

The afternoon saw a change of attire and a move inside to operate the pro shop (guest and cart fees, merchandising, pre-computer handicap calculations, event scheduling, etc.)

"What a wonderful way to learn golf — at such a young age and from the many support facets of golf!" she says.

When the family moved to Kingwood, W. Va., Jan enrolled in landscape architecture at West Virginia University on a scholarship.

She continued her love affair with golf, commuting to the university and working at Preston Country Club, initially as a pro shop attendant.

Beljan was on the course the next year as assistant superintendent. Her younger brothers and sisters worked in the pro shop. Fifteen to 20 years ago it was quite an oddity to see a woman maintaining a golf course, she recalls.

Jan and her sister Pat, five years her junior, were similar in appearance. "Guests often would be startled to see a woman operating equipment. Then they'd wonder how Pat changed clothes and got out on the course on a machine so quickly after taking their money in the pro shop."

Jan learned how a golf course could be maintained on a limited budget — with hard work, long hours and total dedication. Dawn till dark, seven days a

week, was common during the playing/growing season.

Most assistant superintendents do not have the opportunity to see "the other side" of golf, particularly from the women members' point of view, said Beljan. "As at every club, there are players, male and female, good and not-as-good. There was always a conversation about why the low-handicap women should play from the same tees as the high handicappers, because the former generally were young (35ish) and more athletic. So as much as half my life ago, I was introduced to a two-tee system for women."

A cum laude departure from WVU in 1976 and Beljan returned to her native Pittsburgh to work with the lawn care division of the Davey Tree Expert Co., Davey Lawnscapes.

A client was the chairman of the green committee at Oakmont CC, and a friend and Pro-Am playing partner with two of Jan's golf pro uncles. "When I left my card at his business, he knew I had to be related to either Carl or Willie Beljan (a good Slovenian name and quite rare.)"

"He expected to see a nephew and was surprised to find a niece instead. He took an interest in me because of my background, and arranged for me to meet Tom Fazio at the 1978 PGA Championship at Oakmont."

Fazio hired her immediately. The rest has been Beljan's delight.

"I've traveled to some of the finest courses in the U.S. and Great Britain to walk, play, take pictures and to educate myself beyond what has been written," she says. "The best part is that there are so many courses yet to see!"

### ... and Therrien, too, is at ease

landscape architects and land planners.

At N. C. State, she was fortunate to study with coastal ecologist Dr. Ernest Seneca. He and associates are widely known for their research on grasses used in salt marsh restoration and sand dune stabilization. She also studied work Dr. Joseph Diapola had been doing in the area of drought-tolerant turfgrasses, as well as the artistry of course designer Donald Ross at Pinehurst, N. C.

"Through it all, I have expanded my knowledge about the natural settings from which golf courses are born. It has been a complex process and at times very frustrating," she notes, "but I have acquired an ability to function comfortably at various design scales, and feel I know the golf course land-use inside out."

"I have seen golf course management and design work change from much manual effort to skills highly mechanized and technical. More surprisingly, perhaps, I've witnessed a male-focused culture give way to a more cosmopolitan one."

Therrien says she would be remiss if she didn't acknowledge other help along the "trail-blazing" route.

Included were scholarships from the Maine State Golf Association, and Metropolitan New York and National Golf Course Superintendents associations.

These were appreciated stepping stones en route to "The Call" from Cornish and Silva.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine such an opportunity," exclaims Therrien. "I am very pleased to be able to continue the 'design phase' of my career in the region where it all began — New England."