

Esposito proves it's a lady's world as well

By MARK LESLIE

HINCKLEY, Ohio — She rejected a career in teaching, now she is teaching young greenkeepers. She didn't do well in public speaking, now she is serving a second term as president of the Northern Ohio Golf Course Superintendents Association. Some may think Hinckley Hills Golf Course superintendent Jean Esposito's life is an enigma.

Here's a woman who entered the business with no knowledge of agronomy, but who now travels each year to local and national conferences, even to England for week-long studies with the British International Golf Greenskeepers Association ... who, despite her gender, does "not feel like I'm in a minority" ... who, with her sister, Sue, operate their family course and employ their husbands.

An enigma? Esposito has quite another opinion.

"I grew up doing this job," she said. "When I graduated [from college in 1971] I returned and just kept going at it. It seemed natural."

Esposito "grew up doing the job" be-



Jean Esposito



The practice range at Hinckley Hills Golf Course cared by the touch of Jean Esposito.

cause her parents (Donald and Bee Krush), an aunt, an uncle and a third couple had turned the family farm into two 18-hole golf courses that opened in 1964, when she was in junior high school. (The neighbors later assumed ownership of the second course.)

"In a family business the family works, or the business doesn't survive. To me, it was like a household chore — only I rarely stayed inside the clubhouse," she said. Instead, as a teen Esposito "dug ditches, laid tile, and picked rocks — my most dreaded job. I also learned how to drive a dump truck and tractor."

Now, with 30 years experience under her belt, she manages five full-time employees — including husband Mark, who is her assistant and mechanic, plus nephews Donald, 23, and Michael, 19. Her staff swells to 10 in the summer.

The first woman in the country to be president of a chapter of golf course superintendents, she is devoted to improving her own education as well as that of the 320-member Northern Ohio chapter.

She was enticed to travel to Great Britain in 1984 when an American group took a tour and attended a program organized by the English and Scottish greenkeepers association, which later merged into BIGGA. She has repeated that trip the past four years.

Why? "We felt they have so much to offer us," Esposito said. "Theirs is a little bit different look at the profession. How do they cope with stringent water and pesticide regulations, and which of their practices might we copy to lessen our usage? When you lessen your usage you lessen your cost and contamination possibilities."

Superintendents' problems are "basically the same" all over the world, she said. And yet, grass types may vary and "because the weather conditions are different, the demands on them are different... Some of their restrictions are unbelievable. An English friend of ours is in Austria and they won't allow him to put a colorant in the lake."

Home in Northern Ohio — where she was first elected chapter president in 1987, and again in 1995 for a term that ends in November — she has championed association involvement and education. Much has changed in those eight intervening years, she said.

"The job has become more demanding all the way across," she said. "It's not just a local thing... There is a great deal going



on with the national association (with the bylaw and affiliation agreements). And because of the legal requirements, more paperwork is involved today."

The Northern Ohio association is "very close," Esposito said. "Northern Ohio members are very good at helping one another, sharing problems, helping to avoid pitfalls... When there was an atrazine contamination problem a few years ago, we had such a networking effort that within two days everybody in our area knew about it."

Of course, nowhere is the association "closer" than at Esposito's own golf course. Whereas many superintendents face the problem of long hours away from home and family, Jean Esposito's husband can relate to her better than most spouses. He works alongside her.

"Mark understands what I'm going through because he's physically here with me," she said. "So many times, unfortunately, the wife is home with the children and doesn't know what her husband's doing. She simply knows he's not home when maybe she needs him. It's always been real important if the spouse can be involved to some degree in their work. Otherwise, it can put a lot of stress on a marriage because we do have long hours. I know a lot of guys who take their children with them to water their course and that gives their wives a break."

Being part of a family-owned operation has other pluses, she said.

"I have [maintenance] options that country clubs do not have. They have more demands from their members, asking for faster greens, etc. Our customers see grass growing, good color and it putts well and they're happy with that. So it's our decision rather than theirs as to how to care for it."

"We also have the option that they don't at a members' club, where, if a member does something wrong out on the course, you have to go through a committee to correct them. On our course we can just tell a golfer, 'We don't do that sort of thing here — no racing a golf cart down a hill.' You can do that very politely, and eliminate some of the people who are detrimental to your course."

Also, when you're the owner and face such killer summers as 1995 or 1991, there is no fear of being fired, as happened to so many superintendents.

Spreads More, Costs Less

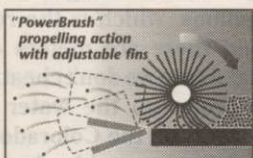
Now you can topdress and spread organic materials with one very affordable machine

The mid-sized Millcreek Topdresser/Spreader is more versatile than greens-only topdressers, 1/3 the price of large-area topdressers. Starting under \$6000,* it's a no-nonsense, non-hydraulic workhorse that's easy to operate, and as reliable as they come.

Now you can topdress, plus spread compost, disperse clippings, fill bunkers, break and disperse aeration plugs, apply lime, wood chips and more - all with one affordable machine. More and more superintendents are finding the smaller Model 50 ideal for tees and greens because it has just 14.6 psi. The spread pattern adjusts from 3' to 10'.

As one delighted superintendent says, "There's nothing else like it." No question. Dollar for dollar, the Millcreek Topdresser/Spreader is your best value for all-around spreading versatility. You'll wonder how you ever got along without it.

Topdresses and spreads all kinds of organic material. Two PTO models, from 1 to 2 cu. yd.



Millcreek's patented "PowerBrush" action and adjustable directional fins enable you to spread almost any flowable material in paths from 3' to 10' wide. A single operator needs no tools for safe, easy adjustments. PTO or engine-drive. 2 cu. yd. capacity.

*Plus freight and set up.

Patented Spreading Action

Call today for the name of the dealer nearest you.



1-800-879-6507
FAX: (717) 355-2879
Bird-in-Hand, PA 17505

YOUR "ONE-STOP" SOURCE FOR AMERICA'S LEADING GOLF SURFACES & SUPPLIES!

PARTAC[®]
GOLF COURSE TOP-DRESSING



HEAT TREATED

FLEXIBLE GOLF COURSE MARKERS
TURF DRAG MATS & BRUSHES
SAFETY FENCING & BALL NETTING

TYPAR[®]

GEOTEXTILES & TURF BLANKETS

Terra-Green[®]

THE POROUS CERAMIC SOIL CONDITIONER

NEW PARTAC[®] **NEW**
COLORED CERAMIC
GREEN SAND
DIVOT REPAIR MIX
PARTAC[®] GREEN SAND BLENDED WITH PARTAC[®] PREMIUM TOP-DRESSING FOR EXCELLENT GERMINATION AND DEEP GREEN COLOR!

THE BEST DIVOT REPAIR MIX AVAILABLE!

AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE

800-247-2326
IN N.J. 908-637-4191

PARTAC PEAT CORPORATION
KELSEY PARK, GREAT MEADOWS, N.J. 07838
ORLANDO (FL) MEMPHIS (TN) RENO (NV)

HIGHLIGHT GOLF HOLES, IMPROVE VISIBILITY, & MAINTAIN CONSISTENCY

U.S. GOLF HOLE

TARGETS[™]



ACCU-TECH[™] PRECISION CUP CUTTERS

TerraFlow[™]
Drainage Systems

AND MANY MORE GOLF SPECIALTY PRODUCTS