



# THAT GIRL

By Monroe S. Miller

He hung the phone up, propped his feet comfortably on the corner of his desk, leaned back in his oversized office chair, and smiled.

The president of the Liberty Prairie Country Club had just called to tell him the club's choice for a new superintendent was the individual he had recommended to them. "You have chosen an excellent person," he told him.

"I know we have. Thanks for your help," the club official offered.

And Jean Brodie was an excellent choice for Liberty Prairie CC. He was glad the club had the wisdom to look past convention and hire a woman as their course manager. She won't be the first female to run a Wisconsin golf course, but she will be one of the very few.

Only a couple of times before had he given a former employee a "without reservation" recommendation. That required a lot of confidence in the candidate, and he had no doubt about Jean's success potential. "A sure bet," he said.

She may not be a pioneer in her new position, but she sure was when she had joined his staff several years ago. She was the first girl on his crew, the first after many seasons of an all male staff. No matter how you view it, she was breaking new ground when she started.

He smiled as he thought back to those first days after her arrival. He still was amazed at how the presence of a thoroughly pleasant, petite and good natured individual affected the

atmosphere in his shop. She inspired a sort of civility that wasn't always present when it was an all guys scene.

From the very start, he had liked her. She had a really good work ethic, probably the most important requirement for him. No one else had noticed, but within days he had figured out her secret for getting so much work done in a day, more than almost any other staff person. From daylight to quitting time, she worked at exactly the same speed. It was a reminder of how the older retired farmers he'd had over the years worked. Not fast. Not slow. Persistently. Many times, in those first days, he thought to himself "that girl is going to be alright."

The file folder with his letter of recommendation to Liberty Prairie about

## **COLUMBIA ParCar**

of WISCONSIN



"Eagle Sponsor  
of the Golf  
Course Owners  
of Wisconsin."

- Gas & Electric Golf Cars & Utility Vehicles
- New, Used and Reconditioned
- Full Sales and Service
- Additional Cars for Special Events
- Lease Financing Available

**(608) 764-5474**

Jean was in front of him. It was one of the easiest he had ever written. There were so many good things about her that the problem in writing it was keeping it short enough. He hadn't wanted to appear to be exaggerating.

There was no need for puffery. He had told them of her great sense of humor and how well she handled teasing. "Jean, Jean the mowing machine" was heard in the early hours of the day when she was always happy to walk behind a Toro Greensmaster 1000. There was "Blue Jean" and "Jean Harlow" and "Senorita" and how many others he had forgotten. She always smiled.

He was worried at first, fearing some thoughtless remark would send her away. But the guys respected her enough that seldom was anything said that was embarrassing. When it did happen, she politely rebuked the offender and let it go at that.

The LPCC president was interested in how she managed staff members, since most were males. "Call Scott Fennimore at Mt. Hope Country Club about that," he suggested. She was Scottie's assistant. But he told of the times she was assigned project leader. There would be big, hulking Mike Hammer, a starting lineman for the Badgers, and wise guy Nick Blake, listening carefully to what she was telling them and then following her instructions exactly. She couldn't have been over 5'1" or 5'2" and he doubted she tipped the scale at 105 pounds. Her size was immaterial to Mike or Nick or any of the others who'd worked for her. She commanded respect because she knew what she was doing.

On rainy days, the guys would work in the shop in wet clothes. Jean always had a change with her. Or, if it rained, half the crew would have forgotten their rain gear. But never Jean.

That girl was organized. Her clothes were always clean. Her car was clean. Her locker was organized. It wasn't surprising that whatever she did on the course, it was neat and organized and finished with efficiency.

She was friendly and chipper and upbeat. The staff all liked her, just as he did. So did the members.

But beyond that, it was appealing to observe her touch of indifference. Or was it independence? He couldn't put his finger on it. But he knew this: she got whatever she had by earning it. Not by polishing the apple. Not by whining. Not from favoritism. That girl

would have died first. And as her boss, he had never once cut her any slack. She wouldn't have taken it, anyway.

Jean was going to be a successful golf course superintendent. She loved the business, and she had lots of experience. She had done very well in Professor Kussow's turfgrass management program at the UW-Madison. Her personality was a big plus.

It was an easy call. Liberty Prairie

was lucky to have her. As he pushed away from his desk, getting ready to leave and go home, he thought about how lucky he had been to have worked with that girl. She confirmed what he knew to be true—all that matters is the person. Stereotypes, whatever they might be, were wrong most of the time. Jean had proven that over and over.

And he was sure the next gal to grace his staff would, too. ♣

*When It Comes to Turf Management ...*

NOBODY KNOWS  
LIKE YOUR  
WILBUR-ELLIS PRO



*Your one-stop shop for all turf management needs. Ask about our complete line of chemicals, fertilizers and seed.*

*Wilbur-Ellis...dedicated to quality, customer service and environmental stewardship.*

Contact Ed Witkowski at

(414) 534-3334 or the 800 number nearest you:

IL 800-747-7400

WI 800-728-1090



®,™ registered or applied for Wilbur-Ellis Company. ©1993 WECO