

# A VIEW FROM BOTH SIDES

By Dan L. Evavold, Minnesota Toro, Inc.



I have been asked to share with the readers of HOLE NOTES my past experience as a golf course superintendent and my present experience with a golf course supplier. Perhaps what is really being asked is if the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. Before I answer that question directly, I would like to say I have learned appreciation for both positions. Appreciation of the superintendent for knowing the unpredictability of his job, the broad scope of responsibilities, the vast amount and variety of knowledge

and updating of that knowledge needed to be successful, the amount of on-the-job time needed to be on top of things, the relatively small amount of job security, the amount of complaints that often outnumber the compliments, the struggle at budget time to secure what you know is needed but often is blinded to those with the checkbook or that it just isn't there, the long period of off-season time that can potentially tarnish the sheen of a normally well polished superintendent, and at least the search for good employees.

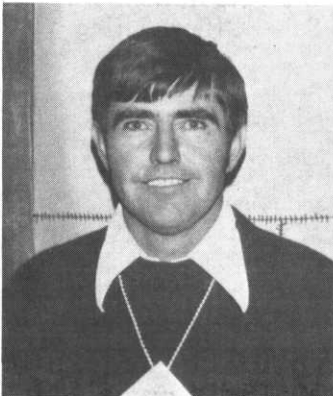
Appreciation of the supplier for knowing the unpredictability of his job, stocking parts equipment which ends up being overstocked or placing a stock order which the manufacturer can't deliver which leads to the two most cursed words in business, "BACK ORDER". Also, expanding to meet customer needs to find out too soon it was too little, the constant struggle to provide to all and still make a profit acceptable to business, having to listen to and do something about complaints that are illegitimate and treat them as legitimate and wanting to satisfy and meet the needs of all customers knowing before you start that you'll fail some where along the way.

To designate the most challenging aspects of each position thus far, I would have to say as a superintendent it's the uncontrollable weather factor and from the suppliers' side, it would have to be product availability from manufacturer and customer awareness to the lead time needed in purchase and delivery.

One might ask, why does he list only disadvantages, are there no advantages? Certainly there are and they have outweighed the disadvantages, but disadvantages have taught me to appreciate. The disadvantages I experienced in the superintendent position became advantages to me in working with the superintendents at my present job.

For me the answer is "Yes", the grass is greener because I am still involved with the golf course people and can relate to their challenges. Also, now I'm working with people and a company that I believed in before I accepted the job. That belief has since been substantiated. I am happy with what I am doing. I am experiencing new challenges, excitements and rewards generated by a market area containing 5.7 million people and their needs.

## Congratulations Carl!



When presented with his plaque at the Annual Meeting of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America in St. Louis last month, Carl Johnston of the Forest Hills Golf Club in Forest Lake, Minnesota became a Certified Golf Course Superintendent. He joins a select group of Minnesota Superintendents who have passed a six hour test on every phase of golf and demonstrated their knowledge to the extent that the National Association has certified their knowledge of turf management. Carl is a former member of the Board of Directors of M.G.C.S.A. and an active participant in all its activities.