

When I first started in the golf business, working on the construction crew at Sugar Mill Country Club way back in 1969, my boss used to tell all us inexperienced teenagers that we “obviously weren’t tractor operators”, or “carpenters”, or “concrete men,” or very good at any of the various tasks associated with building a golf course, clubhouse, and maintenance facility.

Duh! I thought it pretty obvious that 18-year-olds weren’t going to have much practical experience, especially the various skills connected with the construction of a golf course and its attendant buildings. We provided strong backs and quick minds at minimum wage, and by the end of the summer I realized what a

bargain we had been even with our occasional missteps.

Over the years I’ve realized I’m not a lot of things, or at least not very good at a lot of things, though I’ve accepted responsibility and tried to do a credible job with many endeavors. So it is

with my association work - the Palm Beach GCSA, *Golfweek*, the Florida GCSA, *The Florida Green*, and now FTGA... I just plow ahead doing the best I can to improve our profession and our industry, and hope that others will see the value in the effort and help out those of us who can and do serve as officers of our associations.


Which brings me to my point. Damn few of you are helping out, and I find it hard to believe that you don’t believe that the education and research our associations support aren’t of benefit to you. I realize that not everyone can serve on a board, or even a committee, but the percentage of those who do anything on behalf of the profession that sustains them and their families is appalling! We’re not talking about a social club that you join if you meet and like some of the people in it; we’re talking about

your profession, and your obligation to give something back to it and to those that have helped you achieve your status and salary. You joined the day you decided to become a golf course superintendent.

What’s that? You don’t like Mark Jarrell? or Scott Wahlin? or Mike Perham? or Darren Davis? So what - if we all dropped dead tomorrow, the FGCSA and FTGA would still be in existence and working to find ways to make our industry better, and you would still be a golf course superintendent living on the edge. If we’re not doing a good job, then tell us how we can do better.

Don’t like the University of Florida, because their football team beats your alma mater’s football team year in and year out? Get over it! The University of Florida is our state’s land grant institution and is charged with conducting a turfgrass program consisting of teaching, research, and extension. Past weaknesses in the program have been, or are being, addressed. We now have a turfgrass coordinator, Dr. John Cisar. New positions are being filled. Since October, we have a man in charge of UF/IFAS, Dr. Mike Martin, who recognizes the value of golf and turf to the people of this state, and the turfgrass program is poised to become the leading program in the country.

Seventeen research proposals were recently submitted by UF turf scientists to the FTGA Awards Committee, totalling nearly \$511,000. Obviously, we don’t have the funding necessary to support even a fraction of these proposals, but an industry the size of the golf and turf industry in Florida should be able to handle this amount on an annual basis. With over 1400 golf courses in the state, this would amount to about \$350 annually from each club - a drop in the bucket out of the typical club’s budget.

I find it hard to believe that anyone who is reading this would disagree with the need for turfgrass research to help make our jobs easier, more secure, safer, cheaper, and friendlier to the environment. I also find it hard to believe there are so many in this industry who take advantage of the hard work of others without making a contribution themselves. Won’t you please help those of us who are trying to help you? 

Help!

Mark My Words



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