

My tenure as president of the Florida Turfgrass Association came to an end Aug. 15 at the annual Conference and Show. I want to personally thank Darren Davis and the entire Florida GCSA Board for their ardent support over the past year, and new FGCSA President Cary Lewis for offering me the post of FTGA Committee chairman to continue strengthening the cooperative bonds between the two associations. I am very proud that golf course superintendents

are the largest and most active segment of the FTGA, and I hope it always stays that way.

Though I've said it before in this column many times, it bears repeating that it is in the best interests of all superintendents to align ourselves with other turfgrass professionals for the increased political clout we can muster together, and for the talent and energy that these other

professionals can bring to bear on our mutual problems. One only needs to see new FTGA President Erica Santella of TruGreen-ChemLawn in action at a regulatory meeting about fertilizer or pesticide applications for irrefutable proof. I think it fair to say that neither the FGCSA nor the FTGA has had a significant accomplishment based solely on the associations' strength and reputation — strong individuals have made things happen, but neither association has yet really come of age.

If these comments seem unimportant to you, then I don't think you've been paying attention to what's going on in the golf and turf industry. Why is it that management companies are proliferating? Why are there no increases in the number of rounds played in the U.S. since 1988 despite the fact that about 5,000 new golf courses have opened for play? Why does the public still think that golf courses are bad for the environment? Why does the EPA interpret risk analysis data differently from the manufacturers? Why are there anti-golf and anti-science groups

destroying turfgrass research plots? Why did the National Audubon Society *censure* and *sue* Ron Dodson's Audubon International for trying to work with golf courses through the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program?

We are still a weak and fragmented group of professionals who are more reactive than proactive because the vast majority of our peers choose not to help those of us who are trying to help shape and secure our futures as golf and turf professionals. Perhaps the time has come to consider following the lead of the Seven Rivers GCSA and make membership in FTGA mandatory for membership in one of the chapters of the FGCSA, just as chapter membership is necessary for membership in the GCSAA. You are helping yourself, your peers, and your industry just by joining, even if you have little time to participate.

Our cooperative efforts have helped move the University of Florida turfgrass program toward preeminence in the country. We are cooperating with other professional turfgrass-related associations on advisory boards and future cooperative trade shows. We have just begun an ambitious fund-raising program targeting golfers spearheaded by Don Benham and UF's Dr. Terril Nell. We recently created a Best Management Practices committee to clear up ambiguous and/or conflicting BMPs for turf, but even more significantly, to engage regulatory agencies in the creation of BMPs so that a united front can be maintained against the local and regional Napoleon and Hitler politicians who pop up on a regular basis.

I am especially encouraged about the potential benefits to our industry by working with regulatory agency representatives on this new BMP committee. I have always espoused the opinion that we need to educate the general public about our industry to reverse our generally poor environmental image, but the costs to do so have always been prohibitive. I now feel that we may be able to accomplish as much by educating and working with the regulatory agencies, a task within our abilities and budget.

There is no "us" and "them" in regards to the FGCSA and the FTGA — each association has its own mission, but both associations share the same goals. More superintendents need to realize this. 🦋

*Time to
come
together*

**Mark
My Words**



Mark Jarrell, CGCS