THE SHOW MUST GO ON!

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:
2018 FTGA Regional Turf Seminars
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President’s Message

By Andrew J. Jorgensen, FTGA President

Our Success Depends on Your Success

The 65th Annual Conference & Show was a big hit this year at Innisbrook Golf & Spa Resort near Tampa. I personally made some great connections, and it was a delight hearing from all our speakers. My personal highlights include meeting Nathan Whitaker and seeing his Super Bowl championship ring as well as learning a lot of new information from Dr. Jim Brosnan from the University of Tennessee. Another highlight was raising more than $3,000 for the Florida Turfgrass Research Foundation.

Now that the C&S is over, the FTGA board and staff are already planning and looking for ways to improve the experience for our attendees and sponsors. We have received some great feedback so far and are looking forward to implementing many of these ideas in the coming year. Likewise, we would love to hear from you if we haven’t already. If you have an idea for education, speakers, or even something to improve the overall conference, please give Heather a call in the office or send her an email at heather@ftga.org. We hope to see all of you next year at the 66th Annual Conference & Show at the World Golf Village in St. Augustine.

Speaking of education, the annual Regional Turf Seminars are right around the corner. With 12 locations available throughout the state, these seminars provide a great opportunity to pick up necessary CEUs or to polish your existing skillset. The Regional Turf Seminars have always been an affordable way for the “boots on the ground” applicators to stay current with continuing education, legislation, research and information during the slowest part of the year. An added benefit is, it also allows one-on-one interaction with manufacturing and sales representatives who attend. These seminars kick off January 9, starting in Plantation, and run through March 1, ending in Plant City. Regional Turf Seminar Chair Tim Allen and his committee members have promised some excellent speakers and topics. Head over to www.ftga.org to find a date and location that works for you.

With the busy growing season coming to a close, I would like to wish everyone a happy holiday season. I hope each of you enjoys some rest and relaxation, and quality family time before 2018 rolls in. I would also like to say “thank you” for your support of FTGA throughout the years. Our success depends on your success—and we wish you a very successful 2018! 😊

Welcome New Members!

We extend a hearty welcome to our new members, and we look forward to seeing you at one the FTGA events. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy the Florida Turf Digest and other member benefits.

Joseph Creed
City of Panama City Beach

Laura Mataluni
City of Oldsmar

Lisa Shirey
Golden Golf Services

David Gerken
Johnston Seed Company

Jay McCord
Harsco Metals & Minerals

Stephen Strickland
City of Leesburg

Larry Hanks
Landscapes Unlimited

Mike Mosquera
Marion County BOCC

Benjamin Trapani
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City of Fort Myers

Tania Raugeiwitz
Harsco Metals & Minerals

Nick Willis
Turf Labor

(Continued on page 6)
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Florida Turfgrass Association provides strong leadership as an umbrella organization to make available funding for research; promote research and education; create legislative power; sponsor an annual conference and trade show; and provide services, communications and networking opportunities for professionals in and associated with the turfgrass industry.

Go to www.FTGA.org and renew today!

It’s time to RENEW your FTGA membership!
Hurricane Irma caused a lot of devastation to our state. Mother Nature doesn’t care about human schedules and doesn’t plan her wrath around them. FTGA members experienced her rage right before the annual Conference & Show. For me, it was the most stressful conference I have planned in 11 years. Just two weeks before the conference, Irma was barreling toward Florida.

We all waited impatiently to see which side of the state Irma would strike. She decided the west coast was where she would make landfall. The Naples and Fort Myers areas really took the hardest hit as well as Highlands County. In this issue, you can view photos of Hurricane Irma’s damage as well as before and after photos submitted by members in the Naples and Fort Myers areas in upcoming issues of the Florida Turf Digest e-news.

Luckily, we are inland, and the wind forces were not as strong in Lakeland as they were in other areas. However, we were still hit pretty hard with high gusts of wind and rain. I consider the Central Florida area to be lucky after what we all went through a decade ago with Hurricane Charlie. As predicted, we did lose power. The panic began, since we have become utterly dependent on our electronic devices. Then, the reality set in: no luxuries, such as lights, air conditioning, stove, coffee maker or refrigerator. I prepped for everything except having cups of coffee on hand, and I quickly realized my morning habit was an addiction. Everyone wanted to call or text to see if family members, friends and neighbors were OK, but we were limited because we had to save our cellphone batteries.

Mother Nature did a lot of tree pruning as the streets, yards and recreational areas filled and overflowed with debris. It was reassuring to see the community come together to help neighbors try to get their lives back to normal. I was amused at the sight of kids outside doing yardwork and using rakes. That’s so uncommon these days.

A few days later when I could get back to the office, I sat at my desk saddened and tearful by all the photos and stories that poured into the office. I thought about how the FTGA could give back to the industry and help others in need during a crisis. I talked to the executive committee, and during the September board meeting, we discussed how we could help our fellow members. I have been tasked with looking into starting a disaster relief fund for the green industries through the FTGA’s philanthropic arm, the Florida Turfgrass Research Foundation (FTRF). The board voted to have the FTRF donate $1,000 to the GCSAA disaster relief fund.

Despite Hurricane Irma, the conference spirit of the attendees and vendors was positive, enlightening and caring. It was nice to see familiar faces when you have the chance to visit only a few times a year. It was encouraging that considering the ordeal everyone had faced, many came to the conference to take a break from the devastation. Through the 50/50 cash raffle tickets, golf skins and mulligans, and silent auction, we raised more than $3,000 for the FTRF. The funds will allow the foundation to give back to students through scholarships and to the industry for research projects. Thank you to all the people who participated in the FTRF fundraising events.
The Florida Turfgrass Association works as an umbrella association for the green industry. One of the primary ways the FTGA works to further the interests of its membership and other industry participants is through continuing education. A well-educated group of turfgrass professionals is better equipped to keep pace with the changing landscape, take advantage of new opportunities and provide leadership in battles that attempt to dismantle the industry.

Each winter, the FTGA offers a series of one-day, intensive Turf Seminars. Members and industry representatives have the opportunity to learn about the latest research and practical applications from University of Florida faculty and extension agents, and industry experts as well as network with colleagues. In addition, attendees can earn CEUs from FDACS, GCSAA, CCA and FNGLA.

Seminar Presentations and Speakers
As soon as speaker and presentation information is complete, it will be posted at www.ftga.org under "Events."

Pricing Information
Register now to take advantage of early-registration rates.

**FTGA Members**
- $45 per person for groups of 10+
- $50 early registration
- $65 on-site registration

**Non-Members**
- $50 per person for groups of 10+
- $55 early registration
- $65 on-site registration

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**Turf Seminar Locations**
The 2018 FTGA Turf Seminars will be held in 12 locations across the state, with four new locations added to the 2018 schedule. Lunch is provided.

**JANUARY**
- **Plantation**—Tuesday, January 9 **NEW LOCATION**
  Plantation Central Park Multi-Purpose Center | 9151 NW 2nd St. | Plantation, FL 33324
- **Lake Worth**—Wednesday, January 10
  Polish American Club | 4725 Lake Worth Rd. | Lake Worth, FL 33463
- **Port St. Lucie**—Thursday, January 11
  2195 SE Airoso Blvd. | Port St. Lucie, FL 34984
- **Ocala**—Tuesday, January 23
  Marion County Extension Office | 2232 NE Jacksonville Rd. | Ocala, FL 34470
- **Orlando**—Wednesday, January 24
  Orange County Extension Education Center | 6021 South Conway Rd. | Orlando, FL 32812
- **Cocoa**—Thursday, January 25
  Brevard County Extension Office | 3695 Lake Dr. | Cocoa, FL 32926

**FEBRUARY**
- **Milton**—Tuesday, February 13
  Guy Thompson Community Center | 5629 Byrom St. | Milton, FL 32570
- **Tallahassee**—Wednesday, February 14 **NEW LOCATION**
  Tallahassee Elks Lodge | 276 North Magnolia Dr. | Tallahassee, FL 32301
- **Jacksonville**—Thursday, February 15 **NEW LOCATION**
  San Jose Country Club | 7529 San Jose Blvd. | Jacksonville, FL 32217
- **Ft. Myers**—Tuesday, February 27
  Florida Gulf Coast University | Cohen Building | 10501 FGCU Blvd. South | Fort Myers, FL 33965
- **Manatee**—Wednesday, February 28 **NEW LOCATION**
  Manatee County Extension Office | 1303 17th St. West | Manatee, FL 34221

**MARCH**
- **Plant City**—Thursday, March 1
  Hillsborough Community College | Trinkle Center | 1206 North Park Rd. | Plant City, FL 33563
As many left Florida, this was the scene on northbound I-75 in South Georgia. Photo submitted by Brad Holler.

Above: Mysore Fig tree at the Thomas Edison estate. Right: Magnolia falls on Brad’s bathroom. Photos submitted by Brad Holler.


THE SHOW MUST GO ON!
Two weeks before the FTGA Annual Conference & Show, the question of the hour was, “Would the show go on?” As Hurricane Irma barreled its way through the state, it caught Florida residents off guard as it took a last-minute, left turn and headed toward C&S land—the West Coast of Florida—where it made a direct hit in the Naples and Fort Myers areas. Members in the hit zone suffered flooding and extensive damage from downed trees. The show did go on, but members from the hardest-hit areas were unable to attend the C&S due to hurricane cleanup. They were sorely missed.

For those who escaped Irma’s wrath, we present a montage of the destruction from photos submitted by FTGA members. All was not lost, as the bottom photo illustrates the spirit of community. When the going gets tough, the tough pitch in and rally ‘round their neighbors.

Above: Downed tree at Olde Florida Golf Club, submitted by Darren J. Davis, CGCS, Olde Florida Golf Club.


A true team effort for clean up after Hurricane Irma. Included in the photo are Pelican’s Nest maintenance staff, Pelican’s Nest golf staff, outside contractors, local fertilizer representative, past club president and a community volunteer. Photo and inset photo submitted by Jason Zimmerman, CGCS, Director of greens & grounds, Pelican’s Nest Golf Club.
Awards

2017 Wreath of Grass Winner
The Florida Turfgrass Association awarded John Piersol the 2017 FTGA Wreath of Grass Award. This award is the FTGA’s highest honor and pays tribute to individuals who have shown outstanding service to the FTGA and to the turfgrass industry. The award was presented during the Conference & Show Awards Luncheon.

In 1974, John joined the faculty of Lake City Community College, now Florida Gateway College. During his tenure, the name “John Piersol” became synonymous with the Golf and Landscape Programs and later with the Online Horticulture Certificate when the college transitioned its program to six, three-credit plant science courses. As part of the reorganization, he was promoted to executive director of Industrial & Agricultural Programs. Even after his promotion, John remained involved with the program on a daily basis.

John received a Bachelor of Science degree in Plant Science from the University of Delaware and a Master of Science degree in Horticulture from Colorado State University.

In December 2016, John retired from Florida Gateway College. In all, he spent 43 years in tireless service to the college, his students, the industry and the FTGA. Through his contributions to the industry, he has helped to turn countless industry professionals not only across the state of Florida but throughout the world.

Meet the 2017 Scholarship Winners
Each year, the Florida Turfgrass Research Foundation, the research arm of the Florida Turfgrass Association, awards scholarships to turf sciences students who plan to make a career in the industry or who are already working in the field. The following awards were made during the Conference & Show.

Cory Ketchum, Santa Fe College
Cory Ketchum was awarded the Ralph White Scholarship for $1,000. He currently attends Santa Fe College in Gainesville and has decided on a career in turfgrass research. He will use the money from the scholarship to attend the University of Florida. Cory looks forward to applying the skills he learns to his career after graduation. He is also interested in the teaching new generations of turfgrass students at a university while conducting research. Eventually, Cory looks forward to the possibility of managing his own research facility.

Brooke Bedford, University of Florida
Brooke Bedford was awarded the Bill Entwistle Sr. Scholarship for $1,000. Currently working with the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Extension in Sarasota County, Florida, Brooke enjoys educating and interacting with groups of children, adults and students.

Brooke’s experiences at the extension service have caused her to look forward to studying horticulture or agronomy in a graduate program. After receiving an advanced degree, she would be able to work for an extension or as a United States Golf Association agronomist. These two positions would allow her to educate the public as well as private industry.

Mark Kann, University of Florida
Mark Kann was awarded the Col. Frank Ward Memorial Scholarship for $1,500. Since 2006, Mark has been the research programs coordinator at the University of Florida Plant Science Research & Education Unit. He began his turfgrass career in 1995 as a crew foreman and spray technician at Beacon Woods Golf Club.

“I love this industry. It has been a large part of my life. I have been involved and served on many boards and committees for numerous allied associations,” says Mark. “I would like to continue to promote the environmental stewardship of the golf industry.”

Mark has waited more than 15 years to go back to school to earn his master’s degree. The research he will conduct is a comprehensive examination of Best Management Practices Programs and their validations, which will help to promote their value. He says, “The recent increased interest of superintendents, allied associations, state agencies and government officials to promote BMPs makes the area even more important today.”
Showtime!

Every year, we say it was the best C&S ever—the presentations, keynote speakers, networking events, food and comradery. This year was no exception and no exaggeration. The conference flowed with Swiss precision thanks to Heather Russo and her team, Emily Cox, Eileen Schechner and Deborah Briley.

The conference presentations by the University of Florida faculty, visiting speaker Dr. Jim Brosnan from the University of Tennessee and industry experts offered a glimpse into the future as well as practical advice that members can use now. Our three keynote speakers, Dr. Curt Hannah from the University of Florida at the Annual Meeting Breakfast, Dr. Jim Brosnan at the Awards Luncheon, and Nathan Whitaker at the Prayer Breakfast, held everyone’s attention. It’s a fine art to infuse humor into serious topics, and all three speakers proved adept.

The new happy-hour networking event was a smash hit. Attendees and exhibitors came together in an informal atmosphere. We look forward to your comments and suggestions to refine it for future Conference & Shows.

A very special thanks to Dr. Laurie Trenholm for the exceptional lineup of presentations at this year’s C&S. Those who were unable to attend are in for a treat. Future issues of the Florida Turf Digest will include articles based on some of the sessions.
Meet FTGA's New Board Members

**Jason Horn**

Jason Horn was born and raised in a farming community in Ida, Michigan. He attended Owens Community College in Perrysburg, Ohio, where he earned an associate degree in Landscape and Turfgrass Management. After several years of working at golf courses and landscape companies in Michigan, he moved to South Florida to continue his career in the industry, finding a passion for sports turf management. Jason has worked for The City of Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation and is currently the account manager in the City of Weston. With more than 20 years in the industry, he currently oversees 16 natural-grass sports fields in two of the cities beautiful parks. Jason and his family reside in Coconut Creek, and he spends most of his free time coaching Little League Baseball.

**Jason Frank**

Jason Frank was born and grew up in Deland, Florida, where he began his turf career in high school running his own lawn service with a friend. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Turfgrass Science with a minor in Business Administration from the University of Florida (UF) in 2005. He received a Master of Science degree in Horticulture Sciences with a minor in Agricultural and Biological Engineering from UF under the direction of Dr. J. Bryan Unruh. His thesis was titled “Detection of Turfgrass Stress Using Ground Based Remote Sensing.” In 2007, Jason received the Max McQuade Memorial Scholarship.

After receiving his master's degree, he accepted a position as an assistant superintendent at Royal Poinciana Golf Club in Naples and earned his Master of Business Administration degree from Florida Gulf Coast University in 2011. He transitioned to a career as area sales manager in southwest Florida with Bayer Crop Science, and in 2013, he was promoted to key account manager. During this time, he received a third master's degree in Soil and Water Science from UF. Currently, he is the Florida regional director in Turf and Landscape at Harrell's LLC.

Jason is a member of the Florida Turfgrass Association, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, Florida Nursery Growers and Landscape Association and Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association. He is also a Certified Professional Agronomist and Certified Crop Advisor through the American Society of Agronomy, as well as a Certified Horticultural Professional through the Florida Nursery Growers and Landscape Association.

He lives in Parrish, Florida, with his wife Brielle and son Boden, and in his spare time he enjoys golfing, hunting and fishing.

**Andy Neiswender**

Dennis Andrew Neiswender has worked at golf courses in various
positions including cart barn attendant, driving range attendant, pro shop attendant all the way to superintendent dating back to junior high school. His first golf course superintendent position was at a small course in Pasco County at 19 years old. Then he trained under Tony Disano at Lake Jovita Golf & Country Club for four years through the construction of 27 holes. He also worked as an assistant superintendent for the legendary Buddy Carmouche at Palma Ceia Golf & Country Club before returning to Lake Jovita Golf & Country Club as the golf course superintendent of 36-holes. He has been at Belleair Country Club in charge of the 36-hole operation for almost 10 years.

Andy attended Saint Petersburg Junior College (SPJC), Pasco-Hernando Community College and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of South Florida. He played golf on the SPJC team for one year and completed most of the PGA Apprentice Program in the early ‘90s while working as a superintendent. Andy serves on the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association Government Relations Board and as chairman of the Education Committee. He and his wife are both native Floridians with three beautiful daughters.
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WILDLIFE FEATURE PHOTO

Photo of a glass “snake” crawling from the base of a palm tree through the grass in Fort Myers. The glass snake is actually a legless lizard belonging to the genus *Ophisaurus*.

Photo courtesy of Bob Cook, FCHP, Southern Agricultural Insecticides Inc.

If you would like to submit a wildlife photograph for this feature, please email a high-resolution image in .jpg format as an attachment to FTGA Media Operations Manager Emily Cox at emily@ftga.org. We are specifically interested in highlighting wildlife in turfgrass habitats.
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