

# President's Message

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## Reminded of my ignorance

**W**HAT I LIKE BEST about being an educator is that the learning never stops, especially for the teacher. I recently completed an intensive training and testing program on nutrient management with a group of generally well educated, mid-to-late career professionals with varying turfgrass science backgrounds. One of the participants I visited with over dinner was 3 years from retirement and had recently been transferred into a new job. I learned that he had served in the military, then with the state police, and finally in a job at the state engineering office. Due to budget cuts, he was reassigned into a different branch of the agency for which he had no training at all. Out of our conversation, he proceeded to give me a very different take on the word "ignorant," a word I typically think of with a negative connotation.

"Doc, I used to think I should know everything, but I finally came to the realization that no matter how hard I tried, I remained ignorant about most things. And, no disrespect intended, but you are ignorant about most things, too. That's just the way it is. But I want you to know that while I am ignorant about all of this turfgrass stuff, I am not dumb...one just doesn't know what one doesn't know. And one more thing, whoever said ignorance is bliss definitely did not have his tail on the line trying to pass your test tomorrow."

I very much appreciated his candor, his attitude, and, yes, even for reminding me just how ignorant I am about many things!

A key to combating ignorance is education. You will find an educational theme throughout this month's *SportsTurf* with a special emphasis on the 2014 Conference Educational program. Education Committee Chairman Jeff Fowler and his committee have developed a really well-balanced educational program that offers something for everyone. The program contains a great mix of sports turf managers, academics, and commercial vendors, all ready to share their expertise and experience with their colleagues. Do you learn by listening or by doing? Do you learn in a classroom setting or through face-to-face contact? All of these interactions are part of what makes our annual conference and trade show the success that it is. Please plan on joining your peers next January in San Antonio to interact, attend the myriad of educational sessions, and visit with our trade show vendors.

By the way, when my new friend turned in his test he told me "I don't know if I passed, but I can assure you I am not as ignorant about turfgrass as I was yesterday." I shook his hand, thanked him for coming, and said "I've never appreciated so much being reminded just how ignorant I am. You got me to looking for this quote from Confucius that applies to both of us: 'Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance.'" I am proud to report that my friend passed with flying colors. ■

