

2019 FFGC Convention Chair

September 10-11, 2018

Helen Purvis, Chairman

If you have ever been convention chair or co-chair, please raise your hand. If you have ever done it without Sissy Richardson, please raise your hand. We would be looking like fools right now if it wasn't for her guidance, as well as our President, Claudia Bates, and I thank them.

One of my jobs is to listen to the membership and respond. I heard you say we spend all this money on a cool destination and never get to leave the hotel. Well, this year, if you choose to arrive on Sunday, April 6, we will have a tour depart the hotel at 1:00 by bus to Washington Oaks State Park. The \$25 fee will cover the cost of the bus, as well as park entry. It is about 2 exits down on 95. This chair has visited the vintage gardens and strolled along the Matanza River and I think you will find this is a lovely relaxing start to our trip. Light refreshments will be available there. We will return to the hotel by 4:30 so you can get ready for an early dinner. After dinner one of our vendors, Designs by Janet, will provide a fashion show for us, with the models being your lovely district directors. She will be selling her designs that evening, as well.

I've also heard I went to all this trouble to work on an educational exhibit and nobody saw it and it was stuck in a room nobody could find. Valerie Seinfeld and Judy Judoin are working on a way to combine educational exhibits and awards and make you want to attend.

Inger Jones has already started selling ad for the convention guide, so I'm sure you have been contacted by her.

You will not have to bring a raffle basket which you probably bought the items to fill it, and sit at a table and sell tickets. Jana and I are working on securing corporate sponsors. We have had good luck so far on contacting a few businesses that seem to be willing to contribute. We're not asking you to contact anyone, but if you have leads on contacts, at Lowes, Home Depot, CVS, Walgreens, BlueCross/Blue Shield, AARP, statewide business like SunTrust, we are a great target audience for them. See me or Jana if you have any contact names, or suggestions.

Now the most exciting part and where I really need your help – the Opportunity Tickets. The prizes are pretty fabulous. You have tickets that have been handed out, along with a flyer. Three Designer containers, donated by Lorraine Gabler's Estate, an Apple mini-Pad and an opera length string of cultured pearls donated by our President, a week's stay at a beachfront home on St. George Island, donated by an angel; and are you ready for this? A Mega 50/50 Drawing. You probably know how this works. 15,000 tickets have been printed and distributed. According to IRS regulations, we are not allowed to SELL these tickets, but a suggested donation is \$2 per ticket. Now, help me do the math – if we printed 15,000 tickets at \$2 each, possible proceeds are \$30,000, split between the lucky ticket holder and FFGC. If my calculations are correct, if your name is drawn, you could win \$15,000, BUT only if you distribute these tickets. If you tell your friends about this, I think they will sell themselves. My neighbor, who is not a garden club member, asked if she could buy one. The possibility of a \$15,000 payout enticed her. As committee chairs, you have been given 20 tickets. The district directors have been given tickets for their districts. It's up to you how big the jackpot will get. Closer to the time, we will be posting the amount of the jackpot and throw some teasers out there.

The registration form is being tweaked and I'm not handing that out today, but it will be available in the next Florida Gardener and also on FFGC website.

I did forget to mention the place – same as last year, World Golf Village Renaissance Resort. I think we were very happy with the facilities, as a whole. We heard about the lack of coffee in the morning. We're working on a corporate sponsor to provide coffee and light pastries for those of you who come for the business meeting. We heard about the slow service of coffee at meals- we're working with the hotel on getting carafes on every table – but think of the logistics – I want regular, I want decaf, I want hot water and a teabag. Really, they do the best they can.

We know that the banquet room was crowded. We have a little more room this year – we're going to move the cash bar so it's not so crowded at the doors to the banquet room. A separate door for those with walkers and wheelchairs.

We've got a lot of ideas to try and make you happy. Lining up interesting speakers – I'll take some suggestions from you. If we do anything with horticulture, it will include all of Florida; North, South, East, West – and that is a challenge we're trying to meet.

Really, we're listening and trying to make this fun, educational, and a good time for all. I'd be glad to talk to anyone with suggestions.