

# TROPICAL FERN AND EXOTIC PLANT SOCIETY, INC. NEWSLETTER

Volume 17, Issue 19

March 2016

## Message from the President

First of all, thanks to all those members who stepped up and brought plants for the Raffle Table at last month's meeting – we had one of our most profitable raffles this year! A special thanks to Dr. Jeff Block for his donation of unusual and beautiful plants which helped so much in this raffle.

Second, congratulations to Victoria Wiltsie who renewed her membership as a life member!

Third, this month's speaker, Pete Kouchalakos, always has some interesting information on new bromeliads and will also be discussing how to keep your garden safe from the insects we can expect to see this spring.

Finally, it is not too early to start thinking about which jobs you would like to volunteer for at our show and sale in May: we will need help with setting up and taking down the display, food for the judges' luncheon, monitoring the display, and manning the Society's sale table and the plant holding area (undoubtedly there are some other jobs I have neglected to mention).

We will have sign-up sheets at the April meeting.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at the March meeting!

P.S. This month, we don't have a raffle table provider (as far as I know) so if you can donate something to the table, it would be greatly appreciated.

Please call Ralph at **786-261-4856** and let him know if you are donating.

**MEETING:** Monday, March 28, 2016

**TIME:** 7:30 pm

**PLACE:** Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, Corbin "A"  
10901 Old Cutler Road. Coral Gables, FL

## **Tropical Fern and Exotic Plant Society meeting notes:**

**Date:** February 22, 2016

**Speaker:** Dr. Larry Noblick, Montgomery Botanical Center Palm Taxonomist, as well as Humorist, Teacher, Plant Discoverer, World Traveler, and Palm Climber

**Topic:** Experiences in the Life of a Palm Biologist

**Treasurer's Report:** Balance - \$14,322.10

**President called meeting to order at:** 7:35 p.m.

**Hospitality:** Emaly and her gang of culinary specialists

**Raffle provided by:** Dr. Jeff Block, Block Botanical Garden, who saved the day by bringing the entire raffle table, full of some highly exotic species, perfectly grown.

**Meeting ended at:** 9:40 p.m.

Dr. Noblick is well known amongst the palm cognoscenti as a true expert in palm taxonomy, but this was the first time we had a chance to hear him speak at TFEPS, slightly outside of the occasionally insular world of palms. The crowd filled the room to capacity, and we ended up hearing one of the most comprehensive programs we've seen in a long time, covering the spectrum of topics from his youth, his experiences as a teacher, park ranger, Peace Corps volunteer, and eventual fame as palm taxonomist in residence at the Montgomery Botanical Center, a few miles down the road. We are honored and blessed by both the scientist and the center he works with in such close proximity.

Among his many talents -- other than taxonomist -- is that of getting to remote areas to study palms, and in the course of the last 20 years or more, has covered the wide range of palm habitats, from Texas to Chile; from California to New Caledonia; and, from Madagascar to the Florida Keys. Of special interest to him was Brazil, a country full of diversity, where hidden in knee-high grass, were some REALLY small palms, which Dr. Noblick was kind enough to discover and name. There are plant species ( *Ayenia noblickii*, *Tibouchina noblickii*,) and even a palm species named after him, *Butia noblickii*.

It was in Brazil that Dr. Noblick made his greatest discovery -- his wife....

The country has amazing geography, from flatlands and savannahs and forests to some of the harshest scrub conditions imaginable. One of the most striking palm groups in Brazil is the American Oil Palm group, mostly comprised and lumped into the genus *Attalea*, but I am old enough to remember when the group comprised four genera ( *Scheelea*, *Orbignya*, *Attalea*, and *Maximiliana*.)

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The travails of collecting in field conditions, including the challenge of trying to climb tall palms without using climber's spikes, were all detailed in a grand and well-photographed travelogue. One memorable photo was of Dr. Noblick standing UNDER the base of a trunk of a giant stilt-root palm in Colombia, with the roots forming a giant tent over his head, the canopy several dozen meters overhead, lost in the mist.

Through all the travel, injuries, flat tires (12 in one day), muzzle-to-face encounters with armed policia, and the endless air miles needed to get to so many unusual countries, we were educated, entertained and enlivened by the time the program ended.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Craig Morell, C.P.A.  
Certified Plant Addict*



Larry Noblick

## New Species

By John Banta

We often think of the great plant collectors like Joseph Banks, Hooker, Fortune, Wallace, Bates, and so many others as having lived in a golden age of plant discovery. For those of us too old to do field work anymore there is a great deal of pleasure derived from reading of their adventures. A good place to start is with Tyler Whittle's book, *"The Plant Hunters."* It would seem that the golden years of plant hunting are long over. The reality is that over 2,000 new species are described every year, according to Kew's Director, Stephen Hopper. It isn't uncommon to know someone who has a plant named in their honor because they found the first plant recognized as new to science. For example, Reggie Whitehead has a fern that he collected in Sumatra named for him (*Microsorium whiteheadii*.) Mary Sizemore has several plants named for her (*Xanthosoma sizemore* and *Begonia sizemoreae*.) Another interesting book for plant enthusiasts to read is Joseph Kastner's *"A Species of Eternity."*

Our contribution to these adventures is to appreciate and grow their discoveries in our collections and enjoy the friendship of other plant collectors.

## Save-the-Date!

**Don't forget to calendar the Exotic Plant Show and Sale scheduled for**

**Saturday, May 21, 2016 through Sunday, May 22, 2016,**

**9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden.**

There will be further information at a later date.



### Mounting Plaques

Made of 1" x 3" Pressure Treated Lumber

12" x 12" - \$ 8.00

15" x 15" - \$ 11.00

18" x 18" - \$ 15.00

24" x 24" - \$ 20.00

Contact – Bob Benaim

305-793-9755 or

bobbenaim@gmail.com

### **2016 OFFICERS:**

President: **Lise Dowd** (305) 662-2368

Vice President: **Georgia Tasker** (305) 661-1039

Secretary: **Craig Morell** (305) 667-1173

Treasurer: **Bob Benaim** (305) 793-9755

### **DIRECTORS at LARGE:**

**Vivian Waddell** (305) 665-5168 [2015-2016]

**Leonard Goldstein** (305) 667-4609 [2015-2016]

**Ellis Brown** (305) 484-7997 [2016-2017]

**Linda Bell** (305) 484-7997 [2016-2017]

### **IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT:**

**Marnie Valent:** (305) 233-5929

### **2016 DIRECTORS:**

The board consists of TFEPS officers, the immediate past president, and elected directors at large.

### **2016 COMMITTEES:**

#### **Hospitality:**

**Emaly Israel** (305) 235-0886

**Martha Bogaard** (305) 661-2305

#### **Membership:**

**Sherrin Smith** (305) 213-2598

**Sheila & Michael O'Dea** (305) 253-4907

#### **Raffle Table:**

**Ralph Hernandez** (786) 261-4856

#### **Special Sales:**

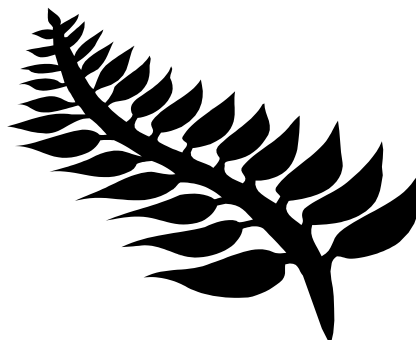
**Marie Nock** (305) 232-2257

#### **Show & Sales:**

**Vivian Waddell** (305) 665-5168

#### **Webmaster:**

**Bob Benaim** (305) 793-9755



## Membership Application - 2016



We offer four different memberships options:

Yearly: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 15.00 for individual \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 17.00 for two members at the  
same address

Lifetime: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 125.00 for individual \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 150.00 for two members at the  
same address

Yearly dues are for calendar year - January - December

This is for a New Membership: \_\_\_\_\_ or, for Renewals: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Print**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: H or C: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: H or C: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code + 4: \_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_

H – Home Phone    C – Cell Phone

**Enclose check payable to: TFEPS**

Please mail to: TFEPS – Membership  
P.O. Box 902094  
Homestead, Florida 33090-2094