

**I** was motivated to revisit a free-verse poem called "The Superintendent" that I penned some 10 years ago after I received an e-mail and photo from superintendent Frank Sbarro of the La Gorce Golf Club in Miami. He said, "Life is stressful as a superintendent, but there are times like this Saturday morning that puts a super's life back in perspective."

Enclosed was a picture of a blazing-red sunrise reminder of the sometimes intangible rewards we often receive as we go about our daily grind. The dawning of a new year is a traditional time of reflection, so I took a fresh look at this homage to our many shared experiences as superintendents.

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## Ode to the Superintendent

BY JOEL JACKSON



OUR JOBS GIVE US A LOT TO BE  
THANKFUL FOR, IF WE JUST ALLOW  
OURSELVES TO NOTICE

*I can recall thousands of sunrises and too many sunsets I fear  
I track the morning dew with flocks of turkeys and herds of deer  
I play hide and seek with the owl and heron so regal  
I watch in fascination the diving osprey and the soaring eagle*



*I surprise sunning alligators and turtles as they splash at my passing  
I move serpents from harm's way or keep them from harassing  
I yield the pathways to the squirrel and rabbit making a dash for cover  
I say to those who complain, "Hush, for I too am a nature lover."*



*I am a student of my craft; on education is my reliance  
I learn from peers and practitioners of agronomic art and science  
I find solutions and ideas at national conference, chapter meeting  
and the Web  
I learn the value of networking and communicating does not ebb*



*I am a manager of resources and to results dedicated  
I am counselor and disciplinarian to the chronically unmotivated  
I am fallible also so I must pause and reflect  
I am friend and mentor to those who earn my respect*



*I am the receiver of the proverbial buck; it always stops here  
I balance demands and expectations with budgets and reality each year  
I am challenged to please golfers from scratch to 36 handicaps on the  
same day  
I am the expert problem solver unless I differ from those who say nay*

*I have seen Mother Nature's random fury and destruction  
I try to reverse her effects during grow-in and construction  
I am held accountable for torrential rains and parching drought  
I am expected to somehow in the end make it all work out*



*I bear red, scaly skin patches from my days in the sun.  
I do not measure the work day in hours but until the job is done  
I may have callused hands and boots that are muddy  
I may lead by example but I am not always your buddy*



*I am a man. I am a woman. I am single and I am married  
I have strengths and weaknesses. Like anyone I get harried  
I have children growing up, and I have parents growing older  
I often remain too silent when I should be bolder*



*I grow grass. It is what I do, but it is not who I am  
I love being outdoors and a steward of the land  
I am an artist creating a landscape with green verdant hues  
I am a person of many colors from which you can choose*



*I love the profession, the people and the seasons  
I do the best I can, with what I have and for all the right reasons  
I am driven toward perfection even when the fickle fates refuse  
I am understood only by those who walk in my shoes*

*I am the Superintendent.*

