

A Few minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

How Stimulating!

So, a couple of months into the agenda of our new political leaders across the land, begs the questions “How ya’ doing?” Has the stimulus “stimulated” you?

Has the time for change turned into just looking for loose change? Has your law enforcement agency located some bail-out money so your chiefs can stop warning you of lay-offs if you don’t make concessions in your contract?

Are you trembling over failed banks, the falling wall of Wall Street, and the inevitable bankruptcy of GM, Chrysler, and a plethora of businesses who say they are doomed to the reaper if they don’t get some of your hard-earned cash?

After all, one must ask what life would be like if there were no more Chevy commercials during Sunday afternoon football games. And how do you feel about the concept of forced giving? That your government is going to dictate what your new charity may be.

Go ahead, work two jobs, scarf up some details and watch your extra cash possibly go bye-bye. Not for just forced giving, mind you, but for the suitcase full of taxes that our beloved representatives are waiting to spring on you. Y’all okay with that?

Maybe it’s not all doom and gloom just yet, but I do see the specter of diminished gains in pension funds, personal 401k’s, the market, and your general savings. But maybe the long term effect will be favorable after all of us are properly stimulated.

What you’re going to see, especially here in the most honest state in the union, Illinois, er, uh, wishful thinking my friends, is that suitcase full of taxes opened.

Some Senate leaders here in Illinois have proposed a 16-cent increase in the state gas tax. One has been quoted as stating something to the effect that most of the people won’t even know it’s there. A newspaper talks of potholes being left unfilled unless money for road repairs appears from the government, or is it the Blue Fairy? If she doesn’t show, it will be a gas tax.

Politicians have discussed road user fees for trucks and autos. You know, the government forces you to put a GPS in your vehicle and you get taxed more heavily the more miles you drive. No invasion of privacy issues here, I’m sure, but if the pols can get you to buy this one, the slogan will be “drive it and the tax will come!” And just think of the massive contract for some GPS and installation companies will receive. Can you say earmark?

Here again, members of the GOP who may not go for the gas tax have floated the idea of expanded gaming, particularly video poker machines. I’m all for that one. The only loser

eventually will be those who play as the casinos will be sure to reduce the number of payouts to absorb the tax involved to ensure a steady profit.

Of course, there is consideration for an increased property tax, income tax, leisure tax, amusement tax, food and beverage tax, and of course, vast increases of sin or user taxes. Time I guess to go back to having Boone's Farm Apple wine with my dog food.

Government is looking for that loose change that will come from "change." For those of us in law enforcement it becomes important when your employer comes to you seeking monetary concessions in your contract. If you don't have a contract, they will just force you to "give" back to the town to keep up city service. Best to look for a union to help you on what could be a very unlevel playing field. If you don't have a union, better find one quick.

For those of you threatened with layoffs and have a union, think twice about opening the one document that guarantees you fair wages and benefits. What you negotiate after a contract expires is the way you should go if you really want to concede something. Cutting up an existing document regardless of the pain that a few layoffs will cause could be folly. You, in most likelihood, will never recoup anything you give up. Never.

In the essence of Hope and Change, however, if you want to give back to politicians that which you fought so hard to obtain, at least make them prove that layoffs are their only option. I'm sure the concept of "governmental waste" is something you all know and see on a daily basis and you can make some suggestions in the spirit of bi-partisanship.

And believe me, it matters not one whit whether you're a Democrat or Republican, Whig or Tory, a Green, Libertarian, or Socialist; taxes are taxes are taxes.

Maybe at this time in the 21st Century, taxes to save jobs, especially in law enforcement, is the only way to go. You can get by without a lot of services—law enforcement is really not one of them.

Get yourself informed as to what is happening in your town as relates to these matters. Be prepared and be ready to rumble. I'll leave you with one quote that illustrates my never-ending cynicism on politics:

The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary.

- H.L. Menchen

Stay safe.

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