

Two minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

What I like about Springfield

Actually, not much, but it has nothing to do with the city itself. It's a nice city. Still very agricultural, nice lake, great Abe Lincoln Memorial Museum, and an easily maneuverable downtown.

The Capitol Building is kind of cool. So is the Illinois Supreme Court Building. But I go there not for the sights, but to meet, greet, and speak with politicians. It would be nice if I did go there only for history. To pass legislative items with a labor flavor and support similar type bills and others of a law enforcement ilk.

So you would think that I would like Springfield. Well actually, Springfield, like I said, is a nice city, albeit a windy one; probably because of all the flatland used for agriculture. So your hair gets real messy when you're walking to the State Capitol and other governmental edifices. For an old guy like me, that's not a pretty sight. Hairspray helps. No steroids for me, but I will admit to a little hairspray. Anyway, I digress.

It's the bs that pervades the city capitol—the wheeling and dealing, the Dems against the Republicans and vice versa. Everyone against the Governor...and vice versa.

Lobbyists roaming the corridor, whispering in hushed tones on votes, deals, special agendas, and of course, whom the US Attorney is looking at next to send to prison as a possible bunkmate to George Ryan. Special interest groups galore frequent the rotunda. The lobbyists, politicians, and other governmental types on the second and third floor rails look down upon these groups, the high school bands, the senior citizens, school groups, the bewildered tourists, and this MAP president.

Why is it so hard to get anything done?

The Illinois Municipal League opposes everything we do and we fight back in turn. Senators and Representatives pull bills out of Rules and Labor Committees and send them to each other's chambers after a successful vote, or they let them die in Rules without an effort to bring them to the floor.

But whichever chamber, House or Senate, gets the initial bill and if it passes the first phase, the bill must now go to the other chamber for passage. Here we go again with more never ending dialogues and deals.

Some Reps are afraid to bring bills out to the Speaker. Some don't care and the bills fail. Everybody finds something wrong with everything. It seems that every bill is hurtful to someone's pocketbook or special interests. Or their egos—one thing for sure, you can see in Springfield is a lot of political types with big egos, bad hair, and bad fashion.

It's exasperating. Sit around and wait. Or stand around and wait. Where is that cafeteria in the basement, anyway? I'll just walk around the Capitol and wait for my bill to be called or to be discussed, vetoed, or thrown to the hogs. Or for somebody who cares. Who wants to do something positive for labor, or cops, or dispatchers, or correctional officers. The unions can't even agree. The politicians certainly won't. Reform, reform, reform is heard on pensions, but no real solutions because that has become a special interest, too—to mayors and their kind who just want to kill your pensions in the future.

It's more of the same. Or is it same time, next year? Or maybe wait until the Fall Veto Session if your bills don't make it out of both chambers but stays alive for summer discussion. Will the governor sign them? Don't know, all you can do is hope your bill actually gets that far.

Can't anyone just get along?

Is anyone listening?

Is that all there is?

Yeah, Springfield is a nice city, but I really don't like it there. But I'm there for all the wrong reasons. If you go, don't miss the Abe Lincoln Museum. Every time I go there, it is the highlight of my trip. Makes you proud of our 16th president and our great state and country, regardless of those who reside at the Capitol.

Maybe I can like Springfield if I stay away from the politicians, the governmental office types, and the wheelers and dealers. I'll have to try that sometime.

Stay safe.