

A Few minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

As the World moans

Mid-April: The days are longer, the sun is brighter, and my beloved Blackhawks are in the playoffs. What could be better?

Well, the state of our careers, for one. We still are being attacked, ridiculed, and beat up by a press dominated by the innuendo spewed out by ungrateful politicians. I think y'all see it now. A never ending barrage of beat down lies by government. There's a parade of *Letters to the Editor* from an unknowing public wanting to take away our pensions and make the public sector into the private sector.

Doesn't anyone get this? Are people blinded by the empty promises of politicians that now that they have beaten down the middle class in the private arena that their goal seemingly is to do the same in the private sector?

Is it not obvious that they have taxed, taxed, and taxed the citizenry, and have now found a way to make public employees the scapegoat for this taxation?

In DuPage County, they have lost millions in the water commission due to , they say, to unwitting spending—whatever that might be. Recent headlines on the DuPage Housing Authority have shown almost 5 million misspent there, also. Cannot the press and the public see a connection here? Can't they connect the dots to our pension and wages, and the attempt to take our benefits, too?

Is it wrong to surmise that due to the missteps of some of our elected leaders that the only way to "cover up" these errors is to replace that which they lost, misspent, or diverted—by getting ours?

So the assault on our pensions and collective bargaining rights continues. Legislation passed on the House of Representatives and Senate designed to diminish both are pending. There are other bills to weaken our pensions and to join them in one fund that the politicians recommend.

Bills to diminish your binding arbitration rights have been introduced and are pending. A House representative who thinks the constitution and its mandate to preserve our pensions should be possibly litigated. It is thought that some on the right and the left would like to re-write the Illinois Constitution which is all that stands in the way of keeping our pensions.

Article XIII Section 5 of the State constitution states that membership in any public pension retirement system...shall be an enforceable contractual relationship. It goes on to include that the benefit shall not be diminished or impaired.

That's why some politicians want to see a lawsuit—to see if they can loophole around it. Other politicians, including our Illinois Senate leader, want the constitution to stand, and support its thesis. We need more like him, that's for sure. But will he hold out for us in the long run?

Remember, many want this re-write because they know that they alone are at fault for the underfunded liability to our pensions. They did it—not us. They can't come out and say that or admit to their stupidity, ineptness, and greed, or that they can't understand the simple language in the constitution.

The liability now, without question, is enormous. So instead of working together, they rely on what they see as an easy fix. Take the money from you. That will make it all better in 30 years, but not today. They don't care; just save them now and throw us away with the bathwater.

So the backdrop to the pension problem is to curtail unions. It is on their battle plans. With no unions, the money to fight dries up, the support of those favorable to labor is reduced and **your** singular and most important voice is silenced or ignored.

But you can literally throw a wrench in the works and stop the Republican (and some Democrats) efforts to demonize us and take away what we work so hard for—a pension and union wages so that America's dream is still a viable one for all government workers.

Our world is moaning in woes, flybys, natural disasters, with some added fear and loathing.

The assault on our livelihoods is now mixed in with the world pains we see day in and day out.

The election in 2012 is a big year for labor. It better be. Do your homework; you have time to make that singular voice of yours known before we actually vote the ballot next year.

Stay safe. Vita é Bella

Make your opinions and feelings known on these issues:

<http://www.elections.il.gov/DistrictLocator/DistrictOfficialSearchByAddress.aspx>