

A Few minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

A New Year and “sister” too!

Greeting the New Year, I looked out my kitchen window and everything looked pretty normal. Not much changed in my backyard.

And I hope to see in the new year, as we march inexorably towards our doom in December 2012, positive changes in our fellow man and even a politician or two. Maybe a kinder nation or a friendlier press towards cops and politico types who saw the error of their ways while they attempt to trash our pensions and collective bargaining rights.

Well, those hopeful feelings were dashed when I perused my morning newspaper. I saw that a 19-year old became Chicago’s first homicide. People were still raping, robbing, and plundering and the world is still arguing with each other over everything. Politicians have not given up their desire to blame us for everything wrong with their budgets.

But most disappointing is the press and their constant editorializing to banish your pensions and retirement. What is with them, anyway? They have really drunk the Kool-Aid on this topic, haven’t they?

They are still pushing the button to force pension reform in our Land of Lincoln for government workers. And just as I predicted and wrote many years ago, the press would not be satisfied with reform for “new” employees. No, now that they have that, they want more. They want to change the pensions that you have now. Twenty years on and ready to pull the pin in a couple of years? Looking for that defined benefit plan? If the press gets their way, say goodbye to that. You’ll get Republican Tom Cross’ *R-Oswego*, three-tiered plan to muck up your pension. You’ll get that with Democrat Mike Madigan’s blessing.

Yes, they want to change all of your pension benefits—now—if they can. The press is driving the politicians’ carts for them, telling them to forget about our Illinois constitution. Be bold, they say. Make the overhaul happen. Change the benefits. It’s a new day. A new year. They see things so differently than I do as I gaze into my peaceful backyard.

I think they must see Mr. Cross and Mr. Madigan as the new Moses and his best buddy, who will lead Illinois out of the desert of pension unsustainability. Unfortunately, the promised land, if that happens, will no longer be your destination upon retirement. You won’t be able to afford to live there if these politicians get their way. Their “promise” to us means nothing to some of them. The media could care less about us because we are the plague of “bloated government.”

Nice, eh? We can die for them, but we are the bloat. Sometimes they can really be nauseating.

So not withstanding their failed promises to keep up with **their** contributions, some press in Du Page County want Illinois to be like “Little Rhode Island” (their words, not mine). You know, that little state somewhere out east! Smaller than a flea’s thumb, if a flea had thumbs, Rhode

Island with an unfunded pension liability addressed the problem head on, not caring who they pissed off. Rhode Island suspended the annual 3 percent cost of living increases. Nice to screw over your retirees, isn't it? They increased the retirement age for most workers to 67 from 62.

Then they moved all state workers to a hybrid pension system—a defined contribution plan and a small annuity. Democrats voted for this plan, too, and some will do so in Illinois if they drink the Kool-aid, also. The press is now doing research for the politicians and implores them to be like “Rhode.” Some in the print media want Illinois Dems to be courageous too, just like in tiny Rhode Island.

But it is an election year, and politicians may not have the stomach for change—yet. The only way to keep it that way is to continue to tell them you will vote them out if they think of dishonoring our Illinois Constitution and change the rules for those who were hired under this constitution.

Let them know what you feel, or before long, you will see signs along the highway that we are a sister state to Rhode Island.

Vita é Bella

Hope you had a good New Year.