

A Few minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

Back from the Land of the Mouse

As I return to the Land of Oz in good old Illinois, I see that little has changed. But what did I expect?

A week on the Florida beaches gazing at a magnificent ocean, frolicking dolphins and hungry sharks can take your mind off of your woes. Then a week in Disney World with your grandkids and everything is *magical*.

Really, after a week of “Have a magical day” I was ready to slap someone. Me, the cynical dude watching everyone be nice to you is hard to take.

But that’s the reason you go to Disney; because everyone is nice. The Disney way, I guess. But even there in Utopia, management is not pro-union. Never was, and every once in a while you will find an employee with an ax to grind.

Once on an inter-park bus in a past visit while held captive with 60 other sweaty ‘Mickey lovers,” we listened to the driver just lambast the place. Rare, but it happens. I’m sure he must have been on his last eight-hours. Funny and sad. Here in Disney World, someone was unhappy. I enjoyed it, though. Made me feel like I was home.

If you ask others who work there where they go on vacation (like I do) you get the look. Lift the eyebrows, look over, smile a little and then “I’m here eight hours a day, five to six days a week...” words linger as they look to see if I’m a plant, then they ring up your purchases and it’s “Have a magical day.” Yes, I’m being satirical as always, but for the most part, it is a great way to vacation and I will return.

But in between the mouse and the cheese, these people have to make a living and it underscores that with all the great stuff, crap is crap no matter where you are. It’s just a different flavor. It’s your perspective.

But here in Illinois, a lot of it **is** crap. Not very tasty, either. Politicians and the press are still on a beat down of your pensions. That horse just won’t die already.

Red and blue politicians are still fighting on all levels. Unemployment is staggering and people have no money. And politicians want to take more from the public sector workers. (As an aside, I saw little starvation in Disney World. Everyone who still has a job must have been there when we were there—because it was **crowded!**)

But the reality is that times are still tough. My immersion in fantasy is over. While away, my staff did an admirable job in getting a strike vote at Northwest Central Dispatch. More on that next time and on our website shortly.

Elections were won for new chapters and here in not-so-utopia Illinois, this union has continued to fight for our members in many different venues. On a good note, I have denoted a slight decrease in obstinate behavior in some municipalities.

MAP and some chapters were able to renegotiate some new contracts without management threatening layoffs or concessions.

Amazing. We hope the trend continues.

Until the next time, have a magical day!

Vita é Bella