

A Few minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

On and On:

Kenny Rankin had a song with that title. It was about a lost love. Maybe we can apply it to the efforts being made by much of the population, the press, and of course, the politicians “to lose” our pensions also, because these efforts go on and on.

Many pundits, especially on the “Red” spectrum, are all over the news “bashing” unions and our “lucrative pensions.” Lucrative is the media’s description—not ours.

And yes, lucrative may fit, but only for the superintendants, directors, and other high ranking employees out there, but sorry, it doesn’t for the grunts. But lucrative is the buzzword for the New Year, as politicians continue to spew out disinformation about our cop pensions. It will be bandied about until we all puke up our oatmeal.

The grunts who plow the streets over Christmas and New Year’s, the fire guys who lose their lives in burning buildings, and the cops who can’t stand outside their PD’s, have a cup of coffee, stand in front of their homes, or process a crime scene without getting murdered do get a pension. It is the promise given to us by our one-time sympathetic legislators who understood that too few people want to fight off a snowstorm on midnights in your town so the public can return Christmas gifts the day after the holiday.

Or for firefighters who give up their lives while containing a fire from spreading while looking for squatters in an abandoned building. Or the too numerous to mention officers who gave up their lives in ambushes, vehicle accidents, and sometimes while standing on their own driveways.

It is a promise of 30 years of taking this risk that the government used to acknowledge was a small price to pay for having clean streets, Smokey the Bear on alert, and coppers putting up with all kinds of nastiness.

All so the average joe can enjoy his eggnog, football, and walk the streets in some form of relative safety. It was—we will take care of this job that few may want, and in return for 25-30 years of unbelievable stress, shift work, missing family time, and a myriad of other less-than-enthusiastic job assignments that can make a grown man weep, we could rest in the knowledge of a decent wage and security in our old age that a pension brings.

In exchange for fighting the stress and the bs, (both outside and within the hallowed halls of government) the public sector worker, sick with lung problems, heart problems, and nerve problems was given the promise that we could one day retire to our proper place in the Magic Forest.

Most cops stay for the full 30 years, and retire at 55 or 60 and not at 50, as the press so widely reports. And unless you get rank, sister, your pension is nothing you can usually

live off without supplementing your job at Walmart, or some type of security gig, unless, of course, you are the big boy on the block. Then you can “score from the point,” double dip if you want and go out in style with a pension that makes what a grunt takes home look like peanuts.

Sure, a pension pays you and your spouse until you go to Never-Never Land, but that’s the promise. Who wants an old man patrolling your streets? The society we are in needs to take care of our warriors. It is only fair. It is only just. Up until a few months ago, nobody was bitching about our retirements. Most people, only a few years ago, did not even want to do police or government work. The money was in the private sector. Now that this sector is in the tank, all of a sudden those greedy folks want our jobs or want to diminish them.

And the politicians, even some in “Blue” have turned their backs on us, inciting the mantra that our pensions have overburdened our city governments. For example, in a recent *Daily Herald* report, they cite the “bloated” annual pensions of five municipal workers and five government educators.

Guess what? Yep, everyone in the municipal worker column was a former **director** in park districts, public utilities, or convalescent sectors. Where were the bloated cop pensions in this story? Nope, nary a chief or patrolman was mentioned. So obviously they ain’t the culprits either.

The educators? All former superintendents of various school districts. The press must believe all these special interest taxpayer type groups that get the ink lately and just jump on the bandwagon that slides their propaganda along to a public who are buying into this because they don’t want to be taxed any more. I can understand that, but please give us a break. Don’t throw the proverbial baby out with the bathwater. Tell the whole truth.

Who is at fault—those who get their huge pensions or the workers? Is it both, simply because government is a huge employer? Is it the politician who failed on their promise and in an effort to get out from under their screwups, blame—us? I’d put my money on the politicians.

Keeping society safe from bad guys, preventing your hacienda from burning down, and clearing the streets of the white stuff so you can get to Grandmas is a big project! It takes a lot of people to get it right.

And now we are reading how major newspapers out east in New York are covering the poor job of the 2010 December snow removal that was caused by...*the unions*, who due to budget cuts conspired to sabotage snow removal in New York City. Same old bs.

So investigations were begun because when it snows, it has to be somebody’s fault. Can’t be the politicians. That’s what the public wants, someone to burn in effigy, I guess. And the press is more than willing to stoke the fire. They know the next election could ride on Frosty the Snowman and the ability to get rid of him, so let’s find a scapegoat. Forget the

simple fact that in the northeast, as well as other parts, winter means snow and sometimes lots of it. To quote the famous “Pogo” comic strip, “We have met the enemy, and he is us.” Politicians should be honest with themselves and study that quote, as well as some in the media.

But the baloney and desire for you to lose your wages and pension goes “on and on” as the press laments that if it’s true that unions are to blame for the poor job in New York, it could be the beginning of the end of the union movement in the US. The story of the decade it says. And now that people have perished from the snow covered streets, it is the union’s fault and if it turns out to be, as the press calls it, “negligent homicide” every union hall in America they exclaim “will be shaken by the aftershock!”

My Lord, enough is enough. But do you see a pattern here? First our pensions, and then the only thing that prevents the politicians from taking over our careers—unions. Not a good thing.

Stay safe

Vita é bella

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