

A Few minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

Nothing coming up roses for Quinn

Well, August 17, 2012, the day our governor ordered the general assembly back to work for one day to vote on pension reform came—and went. Headlines quipped “Pension talks do nothing,” “Quinn gets blamed for pension inaction” and “Reform may have to wait until after election.”

Yep, that about sums it up. Even with the press hammering endlessly about reform (easy for them, it’s not their pensions) and absorbing the \$40,000 cost for the one-day big waste of time, the legislators did the right thing. Don’t let Quinn and the press boss you around. The municipal and state managers and leaders have FUBAR’d this for many, many years. Waiting until a cogent plan is laid out **is** the right thing to do. And most Democrats, outside of a certain Northbrook area representative and a few others, seem to know this.

Some kind of reform is coming. We all get it. We all know that our fine mayors and other governmental leaders screwed this up so bad that the debt at stake will only be lowered with some changes. Notice I said changes, not reform.

A methodical examination of all the facts, participation with all parties and a sense of truthfulness will eventually provide resolution. But you can’t force feed the tiger which is the worker who stands to lose the most. He will refuse to eat this crap and could very well bite back.

Demanding a one-day fix is inane, inept, and inappropriate. The governor trying to muscle everyone isn’t going to work, especially with an election looming. The press, for all their vindictiveness for public employees, should just take a chill pill.

Leave it alone, as the politicians are not going to kowtow to his very public griping about reform. They will get the job done and the Democrats seem to be strategizing wisely. But they scare me too—but we have to trust one of the parties.

So it’s off to the Fall Veto Session on November 27th through 29th, and then December 4th through the 6th. But it’s more likely that this whole pension gig won’t be resolved until the 2013 Session next winter/spring.

There is a lot to discuss, analyze, and incorporate, so hopefully wiser heads will prevail despite the governor’s whining for a “grassroots campaign” to get voters to push for reform by pressuring legislators. You forget, sir, that public employees are voters, too.

Sometimes I think the guy wants a binding referendum. Have the public that the press has poisoned with anti-union sentiment vote to denude our pension and benefits, and then maybe collective bargaining rights. So we are on hold for a while.

Before we close, wasn't it good to see all those union members following the governor around at the State Fair, making it difficult for him to rally his base (whoever that is now) and eat his pork chops? It was great. Honorable dissent, but of course the press called them "a mob."

We need more of this to make sure he gets the message, because the message **he** is sending is confusing. One day the governor is cancelling workers' raises required under lawful contracts, another day he orders his legislators back to hash out a very difficult proposal in one day, and on another he is walking in support of striking Caterpillar workers, delivering a \$10,000 check from his own re-election campaign fund. What the ...?

The cynic in me sees an election in two years and he wants to keep his seat. So he is straddling the line, giving out mixed messages. He is hoping to get pension reform now so everyone will forget it in two years. But we won't.

One can only hope that Mr. Speaker of the House can find a better Democrat to run against Quinn, because we cannot vote for a Republican who could try to re-make Illinois into Wisconsin. We need a Democrat who understands that they are supposed to be the party of labor.

Vita è bella