

Labor Day discussion topics

Sept. 3, 2011

Labor Day is upon us, and with the holiday comes the opportunity to picnic with friends and family. That means you'll need a lot of chit-chat material. Here are some things you can toss into the hopper.

Gov. Rick Snyder has hired John Covington as the new chancellor of the Education Achievement Authority. The EAA is the new state-wide school district charged with turning around failing school districts in Michigan. Covington will be paid \$1.5 million over four years, a sum which enticed him to abruptly leave his former post as head of the Kansas City schools. Covington is touted as a reformer, but here is what KansasCity.com said about his performance: "Last week, a preliminary report card from the state showed the district meeting just three of 14 state standards — a drop from four a year ago. Districts generally need to meet at least six standards to be provisionally accredited and at least nine standards to be fully accredited." File his departure from KC in the "timing is everything" folder.

You hear a lot about how lousy the business climate is in Michi-

gan. So how does Michigan rank in economic clout in relation to other states? According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Michigan ranks 12th.

This makes you wonder about the need for the massive tax shift from businesses to senior citizens and middle class taxpayers. The tax shift has been touted as a way to create more jobs, so how about this idea from a Detroit Free Press reader? Set up a system whereby every business can get a tax reduction, a maximum amount. Then give a certain amount of that maximum to the business for each job it creates. The more jobs created, the bigger the tax reduction. Create no jobs or outsource jobs overseas and the business gets nothing. This would set up a simple performance-based scenario that fits perfectly with conservative economic theory.

Speaking of taxes, here's some-



Neff
Zone

Jim
Neff

thing to aid your digestion. According to the New York Times, "At least 25 top United States companies paid more to their chief executives in 2010 than they did to the federal government in taxes. The companies — which include eBay, Boeing, General Electric and Verizon — averaged \$1.9 billion each in profits ... The chief executives of those companies were paid an average of more than \$16 million a year."

Here's something a bit more fun relating to money and taxes if you're a sports fan. Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton

Manning recently signed a \$90 million five-year contract. This season, he'll make \$16 million. He'll only have to pay Social Security taxes on the first \$106,800 he makes. Since he earns \$5,731.16 per hour, it will only take him 18 hours of "work" to fulfill his Social Security responsibilities. For more fun go to

<http://www.best-reviewer.com/>

how-much-money-does-peyton-manning-make-11003840-usd.htm to see how much money Peyton Manning made while you were reading this paragraph.

That's almost as good of a deal as Florida governor Rick Scott has going. According to the Miami Herald, Scott pays only \$30 per month for taxpayer-subsidized health insurance for himself and his family. Meanwhile, the janitors who clean his office in the state capitol pay six times as much out of pocket for their own health coverage. Florida is one of 20 states suing for the overturn of "Obamacare" as unconstitutional.

Finally, here's the straight poop about the air over Detroit. The Detroit Free Press reported that a team of researchers studied the winter sky above Detroit looking for bacteria. They found that the most dominant form of airborne bacteria is the same one found in canine feces. This reinforces your mother's warning to never eat the yellow snow.

JIM NEFF is a local columnist. Read Neff Zone columns online at www.neffzone.com/cadillacnews.