

It's how much?

I'll admit it. We go through a lot of soda pop in our household.

As such, we're always on the lookout for a sale, because \$5.00 for a 12-pack can put a real dent in our budget for meaningful things. Like food.

Anyway, we were low on the precious nectar one day when I stopped at our local convenience store and I notice a sign that said that my favorite brand was priced at \$7.00 for two 12-packs. What a deal!

So, I toted one twelve pack under each arm up to the cash register and beamed with satisfaction as the clerk rang me up and announced, "\$8.83."

Now, I'll admit that my knowledge of the exact local sales tax rate might be a bit limited, but \$1.83 on a \$7.00 sale didn't sound right. So, I said, "Hmm...the sign over there says it's two for \$7.00."

The clerk replied, "Really? There's a sign?"

"Yep," I said.

So, rather than checking to see if I was telling the truth about the sign, he called his manager at home. The first line of that call? "Hi, Roberta, I'm sorry to wake you..." Mind you it was 7 p.m. But, that call was all it took for me to know what Roberta's hours were.

Well, the clerk confirmed that I was right and refigured the tax and all was well – until I returned about a week later.

Same situation, same sign still up, different clerk, same incorrect price, same conversation. Only this time, the clerk didn't feel it necessary to wake Roberta. She just rang up the right price. (I must have a trustworthy face because, once again, the staff member didn't seem to feel compelled to wander over and check to see if there was a sign after all.)

The message in all of this is simple: You can't expect your staff members to know everything, but you can provide them with ways of finding out quickly.

In the world of schools, that means that everyone should either know when the football game starts, when third graders eat lunch, and what it costs for the field trip to the zoo – or know how to find out without having to call Roberta.