

## President's Message, continued from page 3

into taking severe wage and benefit cuts, not because the company required such restructuring, but because they could use the threat of unemployment and plant relocation to get the concessions that have turned middle-class jobs into working-poor ones.

Walker and company cite this as evidence that private-sector workers have sacrificed, which is like saying the victim of an armed robbery willingly gave his wallet away to charity. They have been ripped off.

And then Walker says that public employees haven't sacrificed, even though we have given up negotiated wage increases, been forced to take furlough days and pay more for our benefits.

Scapegoating by Republicans and by Democrats, for that matter, is nothing new. In the '90s Republican Governor Tommy Thompson scapegoated welfare mothers like Ronald Reagan had before him.

The difference this time is that public employees have unions and the resources to fight back. And that is exactly what we are doing at the Capitol, in the streets and at the ballot box. That is the real reason Walker wants to destroy public-sector unions. Because we are the last obstacle that stands in the way of the banker and CEO dream of an unregulated, low-wage labor market and total control of the political process by Republicans and their corporate masters.

This year we negotiated a new three-year contract with MATC that saved the college

more than if it had adopted Walker's proposal. Our experience proves that collective bargaining works – in this case helping the college solve its budget problems so we can continue to serve our students. But Walker and company ignore the facts and continue to attack our agreement.

They don't care because, as Walker told the caller he thought was billionaire David Koch, he's not a pragmatist, someone interested in governing and solving problems. He is a conservative, a true believer who is committed to an ideology – Ayn Rand's philosophy that views business owners as producers and all of the rest of us as parasites living off their productivity.

So the struggle continues. We have already gotten enough signatures to recall four of the senators who have supported Walker. In the Supreme Court race, an unknown came from 30 points down to almost knock off an incumbent who supports Walker. And the Milwaukee County Executive race was



The weather was frightful, but we didn't mind. Please join us May 1.

– Photo by Sue Ruggles

a referendum on Walker and he lost badly.

On May 1, Local 212 and thousands of other workers will march in a solidarity rally that brings the fight to the streets of Milwaukee.

No one knows how this battle will end. But one thing is clear: Walker has created a new generation of union leaders. He has awakened a sleeping giant and helped create a new workers' movement. That is something he will never legislate away or steal from us!

Solidarity. Si Se Puede.

INSURANCE

Protect your pets!  
(they won't get by on those looks alone)



**aft** A Union of Professionals  
AFT + Member Benefits

For more information about these and other savings, go to:  
**aft.org/members**

AFT + is your advocate. For information on all AFT + programs, call 800/238-1133, ext. 8643, or e-mail [aftplus@aft.org](mailto:aftplus@aft.org). The AFT has an expense reimbursement and/or endorsement arrangement for marketing this program. For more information, please contact AFT Financial Services at 800/238-1133, ext. 4493; send an e-mail to [disclosureinfo@aft.org](mailto:disclosureinfo@aft.org); or visit [www.aft.org/benefits/disclosure](http://www.aft.org/benefits/disclosure).

Newsletter Editor: Julie Wichman - [wichmanj@matc.edu](mailto:wichmanj@matc.edu)  
Director of Communications: Susan Retzer

AFT, Local 212  
739 W. Juneau Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53233-1416  
414.765.0910 [www.local212.org](http://www.local212.org)

American Federation of Teachers  
**Local 212**  
Milwaukee Area Technical College

# News & Views

Volume 35, No. 7 :: April 2011

## President's Message

# When They Screw Us, We Multiply

By Dr. Michael Rosen  
Local 212 President

For almost two months, Wisconsin's working people – including hundreds of 212 members, students, farmers, business owners and Democratic legislators – have been engaged in a fierce battle to protect the American Dream.

This fight began when Governor Walker announced a budget repair bill filled with hundreds of policy changes that will adversely affect Wisconsin and its people for decades.

Most egregiously, it included legislation that would not only cut the incomes of the state's public employees, teachers, firefighters, garbage men, social workers, scientists, nurses and others, but would eliminate our democratic right to be represented by a union.

In Wisconsin we stood up to Governor Walker and said this is not what democracy looks like.

### Solidarity March and Rally Sunday, May 1

- 1:30 p.m. – Assemble at 5th & Washington streets, Milwaukee
- 2 p.m. – March to Veterans Park
- 3 p.m. – Rally at Veterans Park
- 4 p.m. – Commemoration of Bay View Tragedy at E. Russell & S. Superior streets

Keynote: Richard Trumka,  
President AFL-CIO

This is not what our parents and theirs before them fought for, and in some cases, died for.

And this is not the kind of state and America that we want to leave for our kids and grandkids!

It was truly inspiring to be in the Capitol during the takeover. It was filled with the sounds and energy of democracy, with students drumming, with the firefighters' bagpipes singing, with creative pro-worker chants and signs everywhere.

My favorite: When they screw us, we multiply.

And in truly wholesome Midwestern fashion when the custodians cleaned the building at night, the walls shook with a chant you won't hear in New York: "Thank you! Thank you!"

Governor Walker claimed his union busting measures were needed to balance the state's budget. But this year's deficit is relatively small, and taking away people's right to have a union would have little impact on the deficit in any case.

Let's call the proposal what it is: an attempt by a rogue governor to use the state's economic problems to bust unions – the long-held dream of right-wing Republicans – and to consolidate corporate control over Wisconsin's government.

It is the same shock therapy being used in virtually every state in the nation.

Walker and other anti-union governors are the active pawns of right-wing strategists



Expect to see an even larger crowd at the May 1, 2011 Wisconsin Solidarity March.

– Photo courtesy of Voces de la Frontera and Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

who know that if they can destroy public-sector unions, they will destroy the financial base of the democratic opposition and its main source of foot soldiers.

Continued on page 3

## Inside this issue...

Veronica Neumann - 2  
Remembering Two 212s - 2  
Part-Time Faculty Corner - 3

## Member Profile – Veronica Neumann

# Instructor on the Frontiers of Biotechnology

By Julie Wichman  
Local 212 Newsletter Editor

In her nine years at MATC, Microbiology instructor Veronica Neumann has become known as our expert on “plagues, people and power.” That, in fact, is the name of her Natural Sciences class covering historical and cultural impacts of infectious diseases.

“I’ve been teaching Plagues, People and Power for almost four years now,” she said. “I love teaching it and the class always fills up fast.”

She is instructional chair of the Life Sciences department, which includes anatomy and physiology, biology, nutrition and microbiology. She is also the Local 212 Grievance Rep At-Large.

Another popular course she teaches is Microbiology, where Health Occupations students learn about interactions between humans and microorganisms. The course also examines microbes in the environment, industry and biotechnology.

Neumann took the chance to stretch beyond the usual curriculum when she created a demonstration for the 2009 Renewable Energy Summit on how to get electricity from mud.

“It was about generating electricity from microbial muck,” she said. “I used it as an opportunity to show one of the ways microbes can impact renewable energy.”

Always an explorer of new knowledge, Veronica grew up in an atmosphere of travel and constant learning with a Mexican mother and German father. Her father worked for UNESCO and the family lived in Spain, Venezuela, various U.S. states and finally Wisconsin when her father became a UWM professor (he still teaches there). Her sister is Voces de la Frontera executive director Christine Neumann-Ortiz.

Veronica received a bachelor’s degree in biology and a master’s in microbiology from the University of Alabama, then moved to Madison to work as a research assistant at the biotech company PowderJect Diagnostics.

“It was interesting work with DNA-based vaccines,” she said. From there, she worked as a project manager at the company’s Oxford, England headquarters for three years.

“The company was bought out and the patent rights were sold off, and I was at a crossroads in my life,” she said. “I had the opportunity to stay in England but I missed my family here in Milwaukee.”

Not surprisingly for those who know her as an engaging instructor, her favorite parts of her biotechnology career involved teaching and training others. Becoming an MATC faculty member was a natural next step.

She is currently active on the MPS task force for STEM (Science, Technology,



Veronica Neumann – Photo by Sue Ruggles

Engineering and Math), where she and others impart science and technology knowledge and practices to MPS teachers and students.

“It’s important to help students advance into science careers early. It must start in grade school,” she said.

Please write [wichmanj@matc.edu](mailto:wichmanj@matc.edu) with suggestions about MATC faculty or staff members you’d like to see featured in the Member Profile column.

## Phil Blank Remembers ...

By Phillip Blank  
Retired L212 Past President

**Douglas Van Beek**, retired Bricklaying instructor and Local 212 activist, left for his next assignment this past April 4. He was 83 and most recently served as treasurer of the Local 212 retirees’ organization. Doug was energetic in all of his activities. He was an avid stamp and coin collector as well as a gardener. He was one of the last World War II survivors from our faculty, served on the Local 212 Board and on the committee that organized one of the first local chapters of what was then known as the American Vocational Association.

The national convention passed two resolutions sent from the first AVA meeting: one urging the formation of local chapters throughout the nation and the other recommending work sabbaticals for all employees of VTAE schools.

A memorial service was held April 9. Donations in his name should be made out BAC Local 8, P.O. Box 510617, New Berlin, WI 53151 with memo notation: Scholarship Fund. (Many of our T&I instructors stayed in their former unions in addition to their membership in Local 212.)

I met master tailor **Ernie Schocke** shortly after my hire in 1957. This World War II Navy veteran served 38 years here. A ships’

tailor during the war, he weathered many changes in his craft during his tenure and accommodated them in his classroom as they came along.

Ernie’s personality and good humor earned him many friends among the faculty. When psych instructor Ed Gunderson was in the hospital due to a hernia operation, Ernie was visiting him when an orderly came in and Ernie greeted him. Gunderson asked how Ernie happened to know this person, to which Ernie replied: “He’s a student of mine; he probably sewed you up.”

Ernie died April 6, 2011 at age 98. A memorial gathering was held on April 12.

## President’s Message, continued from page 1

As Rachel Maddow has pointed out, of the 10 largest campaign contributors, seven are corporations that fund Republicans. The other three are public-sector unions that support Democrats. Destroy public-sector unions and you destroy any organized opposition to the corporate agenda.

Walker is using the economic crisis caused by Wall Street as an excuse to bust unions, drive down the middle-class wages and benefits that public employees receive, and slash investments in education.

This is an orchestrated plan, heavily financed by right-wing billionaires like the Koch brothers who are also committed to eliminating environmental regulations, the minimum wage, Medicare, Social Security and public education.

The attempt to destroy unions has its roots in the early 1970s when corporate America and the foundations and politicians that they fund declared war on working people.

Following the largest post-WWII strike wave, the unionization of public employees and farmworkers, the passage of OSHA, consumer and environmental protection, corpo-

rate America launched a counteroffensive.

Douglas Fraser, president of the UAW at that time, resigned from President Carter’s Labor Management Group because in his words, “corporate America was waging a one-sided class war against labor.”

Fraser declared that he could no longer in good conscience serve on a committee that provided cover for these attacks whose aim was nothing less than to dismantle the New Deal institutions that created the blue-collar middle class and the nation’s post-World War II shared prosperity.

Walker and his allies are the bitter fruits of this 30-year war on the working middle class and a society that provides a modicum of economic security for working people.

For years, Walker and his allies have demonized public employees as overpaid bureaucrats who never held a real job.

It takes one to know one – Walker has never held a job in his glorified private sector since getting kicked out of Marquette.

Walker’s goal is to divide private-sector workers against the public employees who

serve them. To do this, he lied that state workers were paid more than those in the private sector, when we know that the opposite is true. When you account for education, Wisconsin public employees are paid 4.6% less.

Teachers have been demonized, and as a result real earnings for Wisconsin’s teachers declined by 2.3 percent over the past decade so that Wisconsin ranks 46th nationally in salary change, with 45 states experiencing greater increases in income.

Walker and his anti-worker crowd have painted a false picture of pampered and protected public employees, whom Walker has the audacity to call “the new haves.”

Wisconsin’s working class, all of it, has been hammered by a 30-year corporate offensive and more recently by the Great Recession, which has been used by Wisconsin’s CEOs to drive down workers’ wages and benefits. Profitable Wisconsin firms like Harley-Davidson, Mercury Marine and Kohler blackmailed their employees

Continued on page 4

## Part-Time Faculty Corner

# Operative Words: Work Together

By Sally A. Lindner (SAL)  
6th VP – Part-Time Faculty

This haiku was written on March 13 by C. Ncube: “In an instant, waves from the tsunami washed their lives into pieces.” And Japan’s horrendous drama was only beginning to unfold.

Closer to home last month, the temporary restraining order against lawful publication of Governor Walker’s so-called budget repair bill remained in effect, and lawsuits surrounding open meetings law violations were only the tip of the litigation iceberg as Republicans navigated their *Titanic* directly toward it.

“Buttload” is a good way to quantify the number of lawsuits underway. These pending lawsuits each offer different grounds – unconstitutionality, unfair labor practices, unequal application – you name it. They will be brought by teachers, firefighters and even people unaffected by the law.

Politics involves choice and we can choose (and maybe help others choose) which opinions and actions to take. The people of Japan are making life-and-death choices with unity toward a common purpose.

Here is another Haiku written by the great 17th-century Japanese poet, Basho. “*The vicissitudes of life. Sad, to become finally a bamboo shoot.*” I believe that the Japanese will work together in a positive manner to nourish that “bamboo shoot” into a stronger country.

The operative words here are *work together*. This is something of a contrast to the polarizing, bickering politics on display here in Wisconsin and across the United States. Perhaps there is something to be learned about cooperation here.

My sympathy, heart, and prayers go out to Japan – along with hope. And this hope also goes to all politicians here in our own state and across the United States.

Find us on  
Facebook!



Local 212 now has  
a Facebook page.

Go to:  
[www.local212.org](http://www.local212.org)  
for a direct link.