



American Federation of Teachers, Local 212
Milwaukee Area Technical College

N E W S L E T T E R

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Janet Nortrom, Editor

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Happy Holidays!

The Executive Board and Staff of Local 212

Wish You a Peaceful Holiday Season and Joyous New Year

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear members of Local 212,

I hope that you and your families have a very happy holiday and a fun, but safe New Year.

You have worked hard this semester. Please use your time off to have some fun and recharge your batteries for the spring semester.

Last month I suggested that one of the factors contributing to MATC's decreased enrollments was the administration's failure to promote the college based on our competitive advantage, our occupational programs that lead to family supporting employment. Instead of focusing on what makes MATC unique, that we provide students with the middle level skills that lead to employment, the college's marketing efforts have emphasized that we are cheaper and quicker or that we are a stepping stone to a real four year education.

A new study by the Workforce Alliance says "...the demand for workers to fill jobs in the middle level of the labor market-those that require more than high school, but less than a four year degree-will remain quite robust relative supply, especially in key sectors of the labor market. Accordingly we see the need for investment in high quality education and training in the middle of the skills range, not just for (four year) college graduates...."

Preparing our District's residents to enter technical programs and providing them with middle level skills is MATC's mission. This focus contradicts the administration's emphasis on four year college transfer.

A discussion I had with a T and I instructor helped clarify what MATC should be doing. He pointed out that MATC markets MATC or in its most recent ads technology. But MATC is not a brand like the UW Badgers, Ohio State Buckeyes or the Golden Eagles, if that is what they are know as these days! Few colleges really are! And technology is not a set of marketable skills.

CONTINUED NEXT COLUMN

Our competitive advantage is our programs, mechanical design, animation, nursing, automotive technical, IT, heating and air conditioning, web site design, tool and die, etc. Rather than marketing the college, which puts us head to head with the Badgers, the Golden Eagles and the Panthers, we should be marketing our programs! **It is our occupational programs and the fact that our education leads directly to work that make us unique, different and attractive.** Let's focus on our strengths, what we do better than everyone, rather than trying to be like every other college and university!

The new radio ads are a step in the right direction although they seem aimed at middle class parents who traditionally have four year degree aspirations for their children. They should be focused on our potential market- dislocated, unemployed and underemployed workers, working class and poor students who would be the first or one of the first in their family to attend college, immigrants, many of whom not even finished high school, and their kids, and those seeking apprenticeships and entry to the skilled trades. We are a working class college that prepares people for family supporting careers. We should be proud of that!

A special congratulations and warm thank you to Ed Putnam who is retiring after 25 plus years at MATC. ED was a union man who served on the paraprofessional bargaining team for 15 years and was the VP of the paraprofessionals for 10 years. Ed was a dedicated worker for Local 212 whether pursuing a grievance, negotiating a contract or calling members to get them to support a 212 endorsed candidate. All of MATC's employees' lives are better because of his service. Thanks Ed and happy hunting which in this case is not a metaphor.

Finally, thanks to all of you. Your work and dedication to our students and your profession make MATC a special place. Have a happy and safe holiday. I'll see you in the New Year!

MICHAEL ROSEN, PRESIDENT

TAX NOTICE REGARDING PORTION OF 2007 DUES THAT ARE DEDUCTIBLE

Local 212 **does not** have the ability to keep track of the total dues paid by each of our more than 1400 members. The total dues paid during 2007 should appear on your final check stub for the year. Please save that for your income tax filing purposes.

In accordance with Internal Revenue Service code section 633 (e)(1)(A) we are required to report the amount of dues paid by members that relate to lobbying and certain political expenditures. Please be advised that 16.68% of the dues paid by you during 2007 related to lobbying and certain political expenditures and are non-deductible pursuant to Internal Revenue Service code section 162(e)(1). Please consult your tax advisor regarding your individual reporting requirements.

JIM BENEDUM - 2ND V.P. - FINANCIAL

"FACES OF THE IRAQ WAR" GIVES VETS A FORUM

On November 19th, Local 212 sponsored a veteran's forum, "Faces of the Iraq War." Iraq veterans Aimee Davis and Larry Roberson, Jr., and Vietnam veteran Mark Foreman talked about the day-to-day realities of life in a combat zone and the difficulties veterans have returning to civilian life. Their stories were compelling, and straight from the heart.

Aimee Davis, a Mechanical Design instructor at MATC and member of AFT 212's executive board, spent 8 years in the Army Reserve and is a Staff-Sergeant. She was activated with C Co. 980th Engineer Battalion in Texas and spent 11 months in Taji, Iraq, and 1 month in Kuwait in 2004-2005. She served as Armorer and Operations NCO. While most of her activity was confined to post, she frequently traveled on convoys to and from the Baghdad area.

Larry Roberson, Jr. is a veteran of the Iraq War and is currently a MATC student in the Civil Engineering Technology program. He has re-enlisted in the Army, and will return to military service after he gets his degree.

Mark Foreman was a Navy Corpsman attached to the Marines when he served in Vietnam in 1968. He told the harrowing story of how he had most of his right hip blown off and laid on the side of a mountain for five days and four nights waiting for a medivac helicopter to fly him to a field hospital. Since then, he's had twenty-one major surgeries and many years of physical and psychological therapy to get back on his feet. He is currently an active and proud member of Veterans for Peace.

We are grateful for the participation of all of our veterans, and thank them for their service. They have a lot to teach us about war and its aftermath.

CONTINUED NEXT COLUMN



(L-R) M. Forman, L. Robeson and A. Davis

As a nation we have a special responsibility to help our veterans re enter civilian life. Unfortunately, some legislators are proposing feel good veterans legislation without appropriating the money needed to pay for it.

The Wisconsin state legislature is a case in point. It passed a bill that provides free tech college and UW education for veterans. Unfortunately, the Republican led assembly did not fund the bill. Governor Jim Doyle included some funding in his budget, but the bill remains woefully under funded. As a result, tech colleges will have to reduce financial aid to other students or cut other college functions if we are to provide vets with these services.

As the numbers of vets return from Iraq, the cost of providing them with tuition, medical care and rehabilitation services will grow. This is one of the hidden costs of the war in Iraq that the Bush administration has not included in its woefully inadequate estimates of the cost of the war.

**SUE RUGGLES
USLAW STEERING COMMITTEE**

RETIREMENT NOTICE

December 14 is the anticipated date for the distribution of this newsletter and my 55th birthday. What is significant about that is it will allow me to take advantage of our diligently protected early retirement language at the end of the semester.

I would like to thank all the paraprofessionals, faculty and counselors who have helped me in my union work over the years. I can only hope I have been equally helpful towards them. Marietta Love will be assuming the duties of my 5th Vice President position for the remainder of my term. Please help make her transition a smooth one.

There is more to life than MATC and my intention is to explore other possibilities. Thank you and the union for a satisfying 26 years.

**ED PUTNAM
OUTGOING 5TH V.P. LOCAL 212**

PART-TIME FACULTY CORNER



Holiday Greetings, Colleagues!

This past October I sent out an email to several of our "new" part-time instructors inviting them to become members of Local 212. Back came dozens of responses..."SAL, "You are mistaken...I am a member...every month dues are taken out of my check."

Yes, all of us pay what is known as "fair share dues" which gives us the benefit of being covered under the contract (wages, working conditions, etc.). However to become an official Local 212 member, you must SIGN A MEMBERSHIP CARD. The sad fact is that out of 873 active part-time faculty, only 440 part-time instructors have membership cards on file and are considered "full fledged" members. So the bottom line is that only 50% of the part-time instructors have signed membership cards on file. In contrast, the full-time faculty (608 active) has 564 cards on file or 93% have signed membership cards on file. Quite a contrast...isn't there?

Why would any part-time instructor want to become an official member? First of all, you are already paying dues; why not get the full benefit of membership? It's not going to cost you a penny more!

I can't speak for you, but I know my primary reason for joining Local 212 was to show solidarity and to officially indicate that I am a Local 212 member. In my opinion quite frankly, that should be the primary reason for all of us to become full-fledged Local 212 members.

Besides being entitled to run for office and vote for your Local 212 officers, signing a card and becoming a full-fledged member entitles you to some nifty benefits, both locally and nationally through the AFT Benefit Programs which include the following:

- Insurance Benefits: Combination term life and AS&D, new member only \$12,000 no cost life insurance, disability insurance, universal life, auto insurance, and home insurance.
- Travel Benefits: Car rental, hotels, theme parks, travel, and entertainment.
- Financial Services: Credit card, education loans, mortgage and real estate, personal loans, credit counseling and personal credit scores.
- Discounts and Services: Books, dental, vision, prescription program, dining, flowers, health clubs, magazines, legal, pet care savings, pet care insurance, union made clothing.

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So how do you determine if you are a Local 212 full-fledge member or not? If you don't know if you have a membership card on file, call (414-774-0740) or email me (lindners@matc.edu). If you are not a member, I'll send a membership card to you. All you have to do is fill it out and send it on to Local 212.

Speaking of the American Federation of Teachers...have you ever accessed their web site - www.aft.org? It is filled with info that we part-time instructors can make use of. I especially was interested in a new discussion internet blog that they have called "Face Talk" where we can discuss such topics as fair and equitable treatment for all faculty.

In closing, I know that this is a hectic time of the year for all of us! You are completing projects of your own in many cases as well as final assessments. On top of that, the Christmas holidays are approaching. To all of you, I wish tenderness for the past, courage for the present, and hope for the future. May your cup overflow with blessings, rich and eternal, and may your path lead to peace. Take time for yourself and enjoy the break. I look forward to seeing you in January 2008. In Solidarity.

**SALLY A. LINDNER ("SAL")
VP, PART-TIME FACULTY**

THE FREE OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE MOVEMENT

An extremely important and interesting session about free computer software was presented at this year's AFT-Wisconsin conference by Mr Al Nettleton, who works for the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene as an Information Systems Architect. Mr Nettleton discussed the benefits of using open source computer software and the Linux operating system for home, work and education. He demonstrated how easy it is to use the Ubuntu operating system in place of Microsoft Windows. He showed how stable and fully functional free open-source software is in replacing software such as Microsoft Office, the Internet Explorer web browser, and various commercial communication programs like Outlook email, MS Messenger IM and Voice over IP telephony packages. The concept behind open source is simple and unwavering - it is always free and open to refinement by the international development community, not closed, proprietary and for sale.

Through his simple demonstration, he broke through the rhetoric of fear, uncertainty and doubt that for-profit software companies such as Microsoft have sown in the marketplace against these free open-source alternatives.

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FREE OPEN SOURCE - CONTINUED

While it takes a bit of computer savvy to install a different operating system on one's PC or laptop, there is a great deal of information and support for those who would like to try. In fact, it is possible to go to <http://www.ubuntu.com> and download or order a bootable CD with the latest Ubuntu Linux system and then simply run the open system on any PC currently running XP or Vista. Simply insert the Ubuntu CD and then set up the machine to boot from the CD. This allows a user to try a full open source experience without installing it.

Part of the power of the open-source software movement is in allowing older machines to run functional modern software. Students could run Ubuntu on older machines that have been discarded by business users in order to upgrade to the higher end machines necessary to run newer versions of Windows. Much Windows software is very bloated and runs slowly and inefficiently, even on this newest generation of machines. By installing the open source system, it is possible at no cost, to give faster or new life to current or older machines.

We are going to set up a demo Ubuntu machine in the ESL Workshop, Room C344, at the Milwaukee campus for anyone to take a look at how an open source system really works. We invite you to come over and try it out. It will offer a fully functioning Open Office environment, the Firefox web browser with complete Blackboard capabilities and various other interesting and useful functionalities.

Open source has also led to the "One Laptop Per Child" worldwide education project, also known as the \$100 laptop project. For more information, please visit <http://www.laptop.org>. Several ESL instructors will be taking advantage of the Give 1 Get 1 promotion that allows people in the USA to buy two of these laptops during the initial production run this November and then donate one to a child in the developing world and keep the other as a functioning symbol of the power of open source. These unique laptops will be available for anyone in the MATC community to examine and use in the ESL Workshops at both the Downtown and West campuses. Next semester these machines will go on a "tour" of the college to spark faculty and staff interest in this important educational movement. For more information please contact Mark Mankowski at mankowsm@matc.edu or 414.297.7412.

MARK MANKOWSKI
ESL AND ER&D FACULTY MEMBER

CONDOLENCES TO...

Vivian Beckley, Part-Time Instructor and Local 212 Part Time Faculty Representative, on the loss of her sister.

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MIDDLE – SKILL JOBS **MATC STRENGTHS**

Skills2Compete.org, a bipartisan campaign to guarantee that America's workers can gain the skills needed in today's economy, reminds us that:

"Every U.S. worker should have access to the equivalent of at least two years of education and training past high school—leading to a vocational credential, industry certification, or one's first two years of college..."

As a follow up to President Michael Rosen's column on the mission of our college on adult and vocation education, convincing evidence to support the need for technical education has recently been published (November 12, 2007) in a study "**AMERICAN'S FORGOTTEN MIDDLE-SKILL JOBS: Education and Training Requirements in the Next Decade and Beyond**," as part of the national "Skills2Compete" Campaign.

This report, based on BLS statistics on projected demand for job openings up to 2014, estimate that **45%** of them will be in the category of "middle-skill" occupations requiring post-secondary training, but less than a bachelor's degree. Of the 26 high demand occupations listed, MATC offers associate degrees or certificates in **all** but six of them. (A recent article by Joel Dresang in The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel summarizes the findings of the report.) The complete study, written by Harry J. Holzer of Georgetown University and Robert I. Lerman of American University for the Workforce Alliance, and sponsored by an unusual coalition including the Joyce Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Ford Foundation, can be easily accessed online at **Skills2Compete.org**, and you can also watch the national launch on YouTube, or listen to the podcast. This report solidly confirms what we, as instructors, understand about the real mission of our college.

LIZ HARRIS, MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

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