

Please Welcome...

Each issue of Local 212 News & Views will include profiles of new MATC faculty or staff members, or longtime L212 members we know you'd like to know better.

Please welcome four new part-time faculty members: **Marcia Firmani**, Microbiology; **Lori Geddes**, Economics; **Mark Hamilton**, Economics; and **Miriam Hartley**, Microbiology.



Lori Geddes returned to teach at the Oak Creek Campus this summer after spending the past seven years in Spokane, Washington.

"I am so happy to be back," she said, adding that besides

missing her family, much of her homesickness was due to missing her work at MATC.

This semester she's teaching an accelerated microeconomics course for the FORWARD Management program, as well as Applied Economics and Human Relations.

She'll also teach Principles of Macroeconomics through a partnership with the Correctional Education Association. Prisoners in Wisconsin can earn an associate degree through MATC and transfer their credits to four-year colleges and universities. The courses are made available to prisoners via DVD, study guides and test proctoring. Dr. Betsy Rezel manages this program through MATC.

"We have gotten calls and letters from parents of some of the students, just glowing about how this has helped them in terms of coping while they are in prison," Lori said.

Mark Hamilton began his MATC career at the Downtown Milwaukee Campus this past June teaching a six-week section of the introductory economics course, ECON-195.

Mark is a graduate student at UWM who also works as a teaching assistant there. He spoke a bit about the differences between the two teaching experiences.

"The class demeanor is much different at MATC. I got a lot of student participation, which made it fun for me to teach the class. MATC students really like to learn," he said.

This fall, Mark is teaching SOCSI-330, Applied Economics in Human Relations. The diploma course provides a much-needed focus on crucial workplace "soft skills" as well as survival skills for American life in general: personal finances, interpersonal relationships, workplace punctuality and much more.

— Julie Wichman

Please write or call if you know any new faculty or staff members you'd like to see featured in this column. Write Julie Wichman at wichmanj@matc.edu or call 414-297-6335 (MATC extension 76335).

An Evening at the Zoo

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"My husband and our two grandkids had a great time. The meal was really nice and the weather was perfect. I think it would be a super annual event. Thanks again for all you do for our and the students' best interest."

— Ellen Schleicher

"My family attended the outing and we had a lot of fun. I thought the event was well planned. Maybe next year we could have some of our MATC students performing. I noticed there was a stage/platform in the picnic area. I would definitely attend this event every year."

— Toshiba Adams



Nick and Olivia Packer, Pam Bautch's nephew and niece.

Want More Family Fun?

**January 8 and 9
Winter Break Special
Wilderness Resort, Wisconsin Dells**

Local 212 has set up a Winter Break Special at the Wilderness Resort in the Wisconsin Dells. Room rates are \$99 per night with the inclusion of six wristbands for the waterpark.

Watch for details on Local 212's website www.local212.org or in upcoming editions of this newsletter.

An Evening at the Zoo

First annual event attracts 222 Local 212 members and families

Forecasts threatened possible thunderstorms on Wednesday, July 22 but the weather held up beautifully for Local 212's Summer Evening at the Zoo.

Local 212 members, their families and friends started the evening at the Zoo Ter-

race, a large enclosed area near the carousel. The place was filled with families enjoying burgers, hot dogs, brats, chips, potato salad, pasta salad, cookies, soda and beer.

Bob Barton offered the numbers: 222 people attended altogether – 161 adults and 61 children. Just about everyone who bought tickets attended, he said.



Greg Johns and wife Pam with granddaughters Jaelyn and Rylee.

The ticket price included zoo admission and parking, food and beverages, and a free train ride or carousel ride or admission to one of the special exhibits. Many who attended said they especially enjoyed the "Wings from Down Under" special exhibit,

where they interacted with more than 1,000 Australian Cockatiels, Eastern Rosellas and Grass Parakeets that swooped around people's heads and sat on fingers and arms while being fed from millet seed sticks.

The Local 212 office received numerous positive responses to our first annual Evening at the Zoo. Among them:

"I would love to see it become an annual event. I think adding some entertainment would also be a great addition. There is a little stage area that would have been perfect. There are many things we can do with this. Thanks to all who worked to make this happen."

— Lorraine Tyler

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President's Message

Crowded Classrooms Undermine Our Mission

All of us can be very proud that MATC is where people turn for help when the economy sours.

The thousands of new students in our classes, labs and clinicals know that this is the institution where they can receive affordable, occupationally based education that leads directly to employment. It's where class sizes are small enough that students can interact with their instructors and receive the attention they need to succeed. It's why more UW grads attend tech colleges than tech college students attend UW schools.

But this fall, the administration had begun to undermine the quality of the education we provide through an unprecedented increase in class sizes. Class sizes of 40, 45 and even 50 have become routine in econ, psychology and sociology classes.

This is changing the character of the college and the education we provide. It is breaking our promise to our community.

Local 212 discussed this with the administration prior to Labor Day when we became aware of the problem. The college's leaders agreed with us that the literature on reten-

tion and college success is clear that large classes undermine student success and the quality of education. And we agreed that classes starting after Labor Day would be split.

They were not.

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Part-Time Faculty Corner Our Work Changes Lives

Welcome back, part-time instructors! Or if you are newly hired, welcome to MATC for the first time. The heart and soul of this college is the faculty and staff who provide our students with a high-quality education. The magic that is MATC begins in our classrooms, labs and shops. What makes MATC work is the relationship between you – our faculty and professional staff – and our students.

As I have said many times before, the work we do changes lives and provides many in our community with hope and opportunity. So welcome back or simply welcome.

Reminder: Our seventh Part-Time Instructors' Forum will be held on Saturday, Oct. 24, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. at The Brewery Restaurant on 3825 South Kinnickinnic Ave.

Meet and greet your fellow instructors. Learn about contractual and other relevant issues of interest to all.

I'll also discuss how to complete the Letter of Availability (which administration sent out by Oct. 1) correctly. This letter is your ticket to employment at the college and needs to be completed with care and diligence.

Following our discussion, a complimentary lunch, courtesy of 212, will be provided to all participants. Hope to see many of you in attendance. To reserve your spot, email or phone me at lindners@matc.edu or (414) 774-0740. Include your name, address, and home phone number.

In closing, as you know, I advocate open channels of communication. I always welcome input from fellow part-time instructors. If you have any questions or problems, email or phone me or Vivian Beckley, our part-time grievance rep.

*In solidarity,
Sally A. Lindner ("SAL")
Sixth V.P. - Part Time Faculty*

Crowded Classrooms Undermine Our Mission

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It is now too late to correct this problem for this semester. But it cannot be allowed to continue.

The provost has notified all those responsible for academics that departments and divisions should meet immediately to discuss appropriate class sizes. **INSIST THAT THIS BE DONE.** And make sure that the results are written up and sent to the appropriate associate dean and Local 212.

I'd be a rich man if I could cash in all the times I have run into former students who told me how much more they liked MATC than UWM because of the small class sizes and the relationships they could develop with their instructors.

We gave up our salary increases to ensure our students are served. The administration has a moral and professional obligation to correct this problem.

* * *

State Rep. Cory Mason (D-Racine) has introduced new legislation to create a Wisconsin jobs initiative to take advantage of federal grant money and expand worker training programs. If passed, the bill would provide funding for 40,000 dislocated workers and generate \$135 million in federal grant money through the American Graduation Incentive, which was recently passed by the U.S. House of Representatives and awaits Senate passage.

The state's investment to get the money would be \$145 million generated through a 1 percent income tax increase on individuals in Wisconsin earning \$1 million or more. Our state's millionaires can afford this. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the richest 1% of Americans in 2006 garnered the highest share of the nation's

adjusted gross income for two decades, and possibly the highest since 1929. Yet the average tax rate of the wealthiest 1% fell to its lowest level in at least 18 years. They have literally made out like bandits, so they can certainly afford this modest tax increase to help Wisconsin's unemployed

and underemployed workers.

State Rep. Tamara Grigsby (D-Milwaukee) called the bill a real strategy for future economic development and said it would be unacceptable to let the state continue with high unemployment.

This is very important legislation given the huge increase in demand for our services, the state's unfunded mandates and our fiscal challenges.

Milwaukee area state reps Tamara Grigsby, Josh Zepnick and Jason Fields have signed on to the bill.

Please call your state rep and urge them to sign on to Mason's Bill.

*– Dr. Michael Rosen
Local 212 President*

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COPE Update

WTCS Saved from Chopping Block

This summer, the Wisconsin State Legislature passed a state budget that included funding increases for the Wisconsin Technical College System. Out of all of the widespread cuts in funding to various state agencies, technical colleges experienced their first increase in years.

This happened for a couple of reasons. Obviously, it is widely accepted that during an economic recession, people turn to technical colleges for retraining in much higher numbers than when the economy is better off. Then there is political work, and you should know that AFT-Local 212's COPE has done its share of it.

This includes educating our representatives on the importance of technical colleges. It includes knocking on doors for candidates who understand our issues. It includes fund-raising for those who value our work and are willing to stand up for us. As a state-registered PAC, AFT-Local 212 COPE does all of this with the help of very active members and monthly contributions from many of you.

Because of strong relationships with our state representatives, our political leaders knew that with the rise in unemployment there was a huge increase in the demand for our services, and that is why WTCS

was safe from the chopping block this time around.

You can help us strengthen these relationships. If you are not currently contributing through payroll deduction, please consider doing so. If you are contributing, please consider increasing your deduction. Just fill out the COPE deduction authorization form and return it to the Local 212 office. Feel free to download one from COPE's action center www.local212.org or email me for more information at santiam@matc.edu.

*– Marwill Santiago
Legislative - Standing Committee Chair*

Editorial Opinion

Help Keep Public Option Alive

We're fortunate to have excellent health insurance coverage through MATC. That's the result of a strong union and united membership. Yet rapidly rising costs with no end in sight threaten to undermine our health care plans unless reforms are made now. But what would it mean for Local 212 members if the insurance giants get their way and effective reform doesn't happen?

For one thing, the college administration would certainly intensify demands that we start forking over large amounts of cash to cover skyrocketing out-of-pocket health-care expenses. Increasing health care costs make it harder to negotiate wage increases. Farther down the road, we might even see devastating losses in coverage. The fractured healthcare system's condition can only worsen over time, and we would suffer right along with it.

Our bargaining committees are doing a great job, but as Labor Relations Director Frank Shansky pointed out in a recent email, "Unless health care costs are brought under control through healthcare reform, it will be very difficult for your bargaining committees to continue to deliver the kinds of labor agreements you need and deserve."

It's not just about us. Many people in Milwaukee and elsewhere are suffering because they can't afford health insurance and forego seeking care. The number of

uninsured Wisconsin residents continues to rise. Even among those who are insured, rapidly rising premiums are squeezing family budgets to the breaking point.

We're certainly not getting what we pay for. According to the World Health Organization, the U.S. ranks a staggering #2 out of 193 countries in terms of total health expenditures as percent of Gross Domestic Product. Yet the U.S. holds an unenviable 37th place on the WHO's list of health care systems. WHO also ranked U.S. as the absolute worst in terms of preventable deaths or "mortality amenable to healthcare" among 14 other nations. According to the report, "the slow decline in U.S. amenable mortality has coincided with an increase in the uninsured population..."

So what can you do about it? Support healthcare reform with a public option. Only a public option will guarantee quality, affordable coverage to the uninsured, while boosting the economy. Insurance companies would have to step up the competition, leading to a reduction in costs. There is little chance costs will come down to sane levels without a public option.

Here's another little thing you can do that will make a big difference: Stop allowing the insurance industry to get away with spreading outright lies in their war against healthcare reform. Gather the relevant facts

if you don't already have them. Then write letters; call in to talk shows; talk up the facts with your friends and neighbors at town hall meetings and elsewhere.

Call Senators Kohl and Feingold, and your congressional representative. Tell them you support the public option and none of the watered-down plans currently on the table.

*– Julie Wichman
Newsletter Editor*

Got something to add? Disagree? Please write wichmanj@matc.edu or call Julie Wichman at 414-297-6335 (MATC ext. 76335) and I'll try to include a few of your comments in an upcoming round-up story.

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**AFT, Local 212's
Fall Social**

Friday November 6th
at
Potawatomi Bingo Casino
5:30pm Reception
7pm Dinner, 8pm Dancing

Tickets: \$15

Tickets ONLY on sale until October 30
Go to www.local212.org
for event details