

212 Paras United

By Susan Richards

This new column is for all MATC paraprofessionals. Our membership includes more than 200 full-time and 175 part-time union members. I'm writing this column because I asked why we did not have any newsletter space dedicated to us. If anyone would like to submit an article, they are due by the first of the month to wichmanj@matc.edu.

At the October paraprofessionals meeting, snacks were served, we discussed the importance of COPE contributions, and many members expressed concerns about decreased staffing.

We work in child care, information technology, student services, academic divisions, marketing, special needs, pre-college, libraries and many other areas integral to supporting students and faculty. Without us, the college would not function. We can be proud of the work we do.

As a whole, our group is usually not aware of staffing decreases except in our own areas. Perhaps our union leaders could let us know when this happens in an area, so we could express our concern to management. This would help us support each other.

Marietta Love will send us a survey on how to make our group more cohesive. Please watch for it in your e-mail.



Packer Trip

Photo and text by Pam Bautch

Approximately 150 Local 212 members, families and friends attended our first Local 212 Social Solidarity Packer event on Sunday, October 17. The trip to Lambeau Field was a first for many who attended.

Although the Packers lost to the Dolphins in overtime, the weather was absolutely beautiful and we couldn't have asked for a better day. Feedback from participants has been positive and inquiries have already started coming in asking if we will do a Packer trip again next year. The Social Solidarity Committee indicates this event may happen again in 2011 if our members show enough interest. Thanks to all who helped make this event a success!

Big Thanks to Our Volunteers

A record number of AFT Local 212 members, too many to list individually, volunteered to help elect our endorsed candidates on November 2.

While most of our candidates lost, the work of Local 212 members delivered. Milwaukee County voters chose MATC-friendly candidates by a vote of 62% to 38%. Despite the statewide results, YOU delivered. Thanks.

Coming up soon...

*Local 212's
Holiday Party*

Event details will be
posted on
www.local212.org

beverages * food * fun

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News & Views

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President's Message Prepare to Fight Back

By Dr. Michael Rosen
Local 212 President

The November 2 election was bad for MATC, our students and you.

Before I discuss what we can anticipate from the Walker administration, I want to thank all of you who contributed your time and money in support of candidates who support MATC, our students and professional educators.

Local 212 members volunteered in record numbers for a mid-term election, manning phone banks and visiting union members because YOU understood that the stakes in this election were so high. Thank you for your hard work and your commitment to our students and MATC.

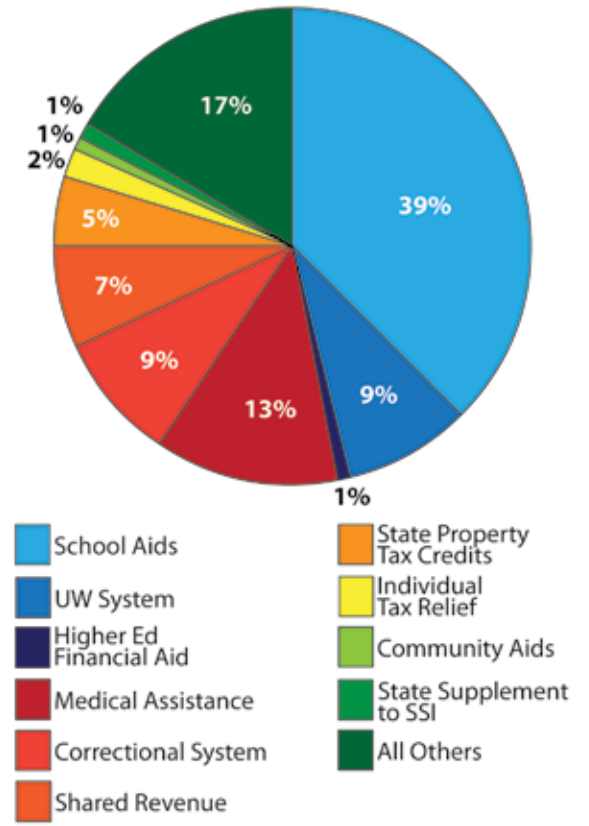
Governor-elect Scott Walker has announced that he will hold a special

session of the Legislature on Jan. 3 where he plans to introduce legislation to eliminate the corporate income tax, the third largest source of state revenue. This will cost the state another \$800 million, increasing the deficit from \$3.2 billion to \$4 billion. Other business taxes will also be cut, making the deficit even larger.

Walker has promised that he will balance the budget (a legal requirement) without raising taxes (*New York Times*, 11/08/10) and that he will not cut highway funding. The road builders are Walker's financial backers. Since education spending is 50% of all state spending, he will have to propose draconian cuts in education to balance the state budget if he is to keep his promise not to raise taxes.

In addition, Walker has promised to

WI State Spending - Where Does It Go?



And in This Corner... Challenging the Culture of College Bureaucracy

By Charlie Dee
Local 212 Executive VP

A full-scale assault on the middle class is about to start from Scott Walker, with the first attacks being aimed squarely at public employees.

With cuts from the state looming, we must work together with the administration to find efficiencies in our operations. However, that is very difficult as long as there

are middle managers at MATC who don't listen to frontline employees and seem to care more about their bureaucratic self-importance than solving problems and serving students.

Here are some recent examples.

Textbook Lunacy

The Academic Services bureaucracy, in collusion with the bookstore, cooked up rules for ordering textbooks that are so bizarre they'd leave Kafka shaking his head.

First, the bookstore started telling departments that all sections of the same course had to have the same supplementary texts. As we looked into this clear violation of academic freedom, we were told this was

Continued on page 2

Inside this issue...

Convention Highlights - 3
Part-Time Faculty Corner - 3
Social Solidarity - 4

In This Corner... continued from page 1

done to keep us in compliance with federal regulations. This turned out to be false.

Then, we traced this to an administrator telling departments and faculty that this was a “policy of the MATC Board.” A quick check revealed that the policy actually states the **exact opposite** and makes clear that instructors can require supplementary texts that are not required in other sections of the same course.

Then, these same bureaucrats set up a new system for ordering texts that seems to be designed to make as much meaningless busywork as possible, efficiencies be damned!

Instead of simply requiring **changes** in textbooks to be filed with the bookstore, the bureaucrats now require every single section to file new textbook information every semester even if the information remains the same from past semesters.

I think it’s fair to say that instructors have better ways to spend their time than re-

entering information the computer system already has.

Welcome Center

The Welcome Center in the “S” Building is the first point of contact for many prospective students. For six months now, 212 leaders have been telling the administration this center is not adequately staffed. The result is that students are often sent to stand in one line after another before they get the information they need.

Another result of the understaffing is medical problems for some of the professional staff, resulting from workplace stress and anxiety. Despite our pleas, nothing has changed as we start the big push for spring registration.

Student Life

Over the past eight years there have been many strange things happening in Student Life, from non-students “winning” a volleyball championship to two different Stu-

dent Senate presidents being removed from their offices when they dared to ask tough questions about the Student Life budget.

The latest problem reflects these same skewed priorities. We just faced an election with tremendous ramifications for MATC. This was a perfect opportunity to get students fired up to register and vote.

Now, the Student Life office rides herd on student government closer than squirrels monitor my bird feeders. But rather than enabling student government on our four campuses to do major voter registrations, it put as many bureaucratic roadblocks as it could in front of the one student organization, WISPIRG, that organized voter registration.

All of these examples speak to a culture of management existing to perpetuate itself and assert control rather than taking a broader view of how to work with others to make the college better. We need to change this culture, and soon.

President’s Message, continued from page 1

introduce legislation that requires state employees to pay the employee portion of our pension contribution. Since Republicans control both the Assembly and the Senate by big margins, I see no way to prevent this bill from becoming law. We have contacted our attorneys to see if a legal challenge is possible.

Don’t expect the Walker administration or the Legislature to do anything about spiraling health care costs, either. But they will introduce a bill that removes health care from bargaining. Once passed, the administration can unilaterally increase the amount we pay for health care.

Walker will scapegoat public employees (particularly educators), blaming us for the weak economy. Our nation’s economic problems will not be blamed on the greedy Wall Street titans from Goldman Sachs, the banks that improperly foreclose on homes or on the companies that are leaving the United States for cheap labor in China, Mexico and India.

Walker and his colleagues will make YOU and our union, the very organization that brought you professional salaries, benefits

and employment, the enemy. This began on Friday, November 5, when Republican Senators Alberta Darling and Glenn Grothman attacked MATC and its leadership at a forum at the Mequon Campus and continued on the following Monday when Walker said he would “force” public employees’ salaries and benefits “into line” with everyone else’s (*NYT 11/08/10*).

In his victory speech, Walker repeatedly stated, “Wisconsin is open for business.” Aside from the fact that it always has been, Walker assumes that the only thing businesses care about is low taxes. Yet there is no evidence for this position. Studies by economists of all political stripes indicate that access to markets, not taxes, determines firm locational decisions. And that new investment is driven by demand for a firm’s product or service, not low taxes.

The states with the largest, most diverse economies are not low tax states like Mississippi, but states that make strategic investments in their infrastructure and their people. Put simply, businesses won’t locate in a state without a world-class transportation system and world-class labor force, the product of its public education system.

Walker’s decision to return Wisconsin’s \$810 million federal stimulus grant for a high-speed rail system demonstrates how little he understands economics. Aside from the more than 4,000 construction jobs that will be lost, Talgo, the Spanish train manufacturer that located in Milwaukee, will probably leave, taking their jobs with them.

Retiring won’t take anyone out of the crosshairs. Rep. Paul Ryan, the next budget chairman of the new GOP-controlled House, threatens Medicare and SS: “Ryan’s personal policy blueprint, known as the ‘Roadmap,’ calls for sweeping changes to Medicare and Social Security that most lawmakers in his own party have shied away from” (*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 11/4/10*).

Simply put, there is no escaping these threats by retiring. We cannot walk away from these issues. We owe it to ourselves, our families, and to the students to fight back. Your profession and your union need you more than ever. That means we must prepare now for what will be very tough negotiations and the next election cycle in 2012.

AFT-WI 79th Annual Convention Highlights

Overwhelming Support for Local 212 Resolutions

By Christy Breihan
Local 212 Delegate, WTCS Committee

The 79th annual AFT-WI convention was held Oct. 27-29 at the Radisson Hotel in Appleton. Joining the national AFT in its campaign for Faculty and College Excellence policy and legislation, the WTCS committee recommended adoption of the FACE resolution submitted by Local 212.

The resolution addresses the “casualization” of academic workers as a threat to the quality of life for faculty and the quality of education for students.

Pegging this trend as part of a broader ideological fight against working people, the resolution, passed by the convention, calls on the AFT-WI to develop and advocate for legislation that would protect “the teaching and research missions of colleges and universities” while seeking “equity in pay, benefits, and treatment” for all workers holding similar responsibilities.

The convention also passed the other Local 212 resolution to come out of the WTCS committee, this one calling for regulation

of “proprietary schools” and their “predatory practices.” Defining these as schools that exist primarily to turn a profit rather than advance education, the resolution supports a “gainful employment” rule to permit student loans only up to an amount that the student is likely to be able to pay off. There would be no more public financing of huge tuitions for programs that lead to only low-paying jobs. And graduates would no longer find themselves permanently encumbered by debts that dwarf their earning potential.

This resolution received overwhelming support from the delegates, even one who announced to the convention that he had never before agreed with our Local 212 president on anything. On this issue, he made a point to publicly shake Mike’s hand in solidarity.

Retirees — Join and Unite!

by Janet Nortrom, Delegate

One of the talks I attended (even if I am not retired and do not plan to for awhile), was titled “The Effects of Health Care Bill and its Implications for Retirees,” presented by Leon Burzynski, president of the Wisconsin Chapter for Retired Americans. At the talk I met many fascinating retirees from



Janet Nortrom (foreground) at the convention with Halloween costumed friend Rita Czukas.
— Photo by Sue Ruggles

around the state who said the AFT Retiree Chapter needs more members from Local 212. So please join. Just go to www.aft-wisconsin.org, click Retiree Chapter Link, and sign up!

Part-Time Faculty Corner

Administration Not Hearing Print Pilot Concerns

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

Administration has announced that in January 2011, the college will implement a new Print Management Pilot program to identify areas where printing and duplicating costs can be reduced. It will only affect printing and copying done at the Downtown Milwaukee Campus in the Faculty Resources Center, ER&D office, the Library and Room H126.

Am I against this pilot program? Of course not! As a part-time instructor, I know how to live frugally within my very limited salary. I support any plan that will save dollars and further support the environment.

Do I have issues with the Print Management Pilot? Yes, I do.

To use the copiers, one now needs a Stormer ID card. These cards are available only from the ID office, which has limited hours and is not open in the evenings. How will many part-time instructors, especially those who teach nights only, obtain a card?

A limited number of generic Stormer Passes (without a picture ID and COSMO number) will be available for faculty and staff to pick up at their division office for printer use only. But the division offices are closed in the evenings. Again, how will part-time evening instructors obtain those cards?

Further, the college did not listen when I proposed that they give part-time faculty a requisition book and let us use the bindery. As I clearly pointed out, bindery costs are far less than if we use the copiers.

In the end, it comes down to administration neither listening to part-time faculty nor addressing our rightful concerns. By being open only very limited hours, they have prevented many of us from obtaining ID cards and generic Stormer Passes.

As part-time employees at the college, we have an ethical obligation to offer our best efforts to our students and our profession. MATC’s administration must recognize that it is in the college’s best interest to work with us to address our concerns and needs.

When will administration acknowledge that they need to include part-time faculty at the table as an essential part of the conversation? When will they open their ears and listen to our concerns?