

MJS, from page 3

“Doesn’t it appear that the local press has dropped the ball in its coverage of the area’s largest college – for better and for worse?”

Mark’s analysis of the failure of the MJS to cover MATC is reinforced by MATC’s recent experience with the paper. MATC has repeatedly and unsuccessfully tried to get the MJS to cover the \$791,000 public safety federal grant we recently won.

Only a few weeks ago, the MJS ran a front page article on the projected economic impact of expanding Lambeau Field in Green Bay. Yet over the last three years it has completely ignored two independent economic impact studies that concluded that for every dollar invested in MATC, the return on investment to the local economy is \$6.

Finally, the MJS failed to report the important role that MATC’s culinary students and faculty played in the recent Wine & Dine event. Last year 45 students volunteered for a total of 180 hours and our faculty worked both days. MATC is a key partner in this high-profile event. But there was not a word about MATC’s role in the MJS’s special section on the event this year except for the college’s paid ad.

If MATC is the area’s best-kept secret, maybe it’s because the MJS and the talk radio squawkers who control the area’s media don’t value our students or the work we do.

Condolences

We offer our condolences to the following Local 212 members, friends and family:

Members:

Lawrence Hanlon – Wife
Linda Matson – Mother
Marquyn McKinney – Grandmother

Friends and Family of:

Instructor – Mia Lytle

Local 212 Endorses ...

Tom Barrett – Governor
Tom Nelson – Lt. Governor

Russ Feingold – U.S. Senate

Gwen Moore – U.S. Congress

Wisconsin Senate

Chris Larson – 7th District
John Lehman – 21st District
Jim Sullivan – 5th District

Wisconsin Assembly

Tamara Grigsby – 18th District
Cory Mason – 62nd District
Tom Michalski – 21st District
Sandy Pasch – 22nd District
Barbara Toles – 17th District
JoCasta Zamarripa – 8th District

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American Federation of Teachers
Local 212
Milwaukee Area Technical College

News & Views

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Fight the Backlash – Show up at the Polls

By Marwill Santiago
Legislative Committee Chair

It’s no secret. Unions are under attack, and public employees are the prime targets these days. During an election season, especially one as heated as Wisconsin’s, the political arena provides the perfect battleground.

The attacks are not just coming from big business and the tea party movement, they are also coming from voters who consistently vote against their own interests.

I see it weekly when we participate in the Labor Walks. By the way, Labor



Local 212 members and friends supporting Russ Feingold.

– Photo by Sue Ruggles

Walks happen every Saturday morning when union members volunteer to visit other union members in particular neighborhoods to talk about endorsed candidates.

For the most part, the families we visit are on board because they know what electing someone like Walker would be like – especially the county workers. For them, we just hope they make it to the polls on November 2.

Every so often, however, we come across those who staunchly support Walker because they really believe

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President’s Message

Stand Up to Grandstanders

By Dr. Michael Rosen
Local 212 President

The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*’s attacks on MATC and its faculty, counselors and professional staff have come to an end for the time being. But none of us should be under the illusion that the campaign by the MJS and grandstanding politicians like senators Alberta Darling and Glenn Grothman to blame the college’s economic challenges on its employees is dead.

If Scott Walker, the Republican candidate for governor, wins the November 2 election, what we went through will feel like a walk in the park.

Walker has built his career on scapegoating public employees and cutting their salaries

and benefits. He has promised to do the same if elected governor.

Just take a look at his latest county budget. In his obsessive and politically motivated effort to reduce the property taxes, Walker has balanced the budget only by including \$17 million worth of wage and benefit concessions from county employees, including a wage freeze, a first-ever employee pension contribution equal to 5% of gross pay, and higher health care costs – which are already sky high – for employees and retirees.

The county’s unions haven’t agreed to the draconian changes. And the county’s own budget analyst has said that this is a smoke-and-mirrors budget. Not to worry, says Walker. If the employees don’t

agree to slash their incomes, he will increase the number of furlough days beyond the 32 (that’s a month-and-a-half of pay, folks) already in this budget.

So unless you are interested in having your professionalism attacked and your

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Fight the Backlash, from page 1

that tax cuts to the rich (on our backs) and taking salaries and benefits off the bargaining table would be in their favor. This coming from union members, regardless of being teachers or electricians, amazes me.

Many of you have been following the *Journal Sentinel's* coverage of "MATC's looming financial crisis," which is a prime example of how Local 212 in particular is under attack. The first in the series of articles gave a horribly one-sided summary on a report from the generally unbiased Public Policy Forum about MATC's fiscal operations.

Right on cue, then came Alberta Darling (R-River Hills) with her attacks on the WTCS and additional editorials claiming that our teachers are overpaid, actually citing a few of our members by name. If you think the *Journal Sentinel's* witch hunt is over, think again.

The *Journal Sentinel* has recently requested MATC's most recent salaries and benefits figures. So despite MATC operating



Local 212 endorses Gwen Moore.
— Photo by Sue Ruggles

under a strong Aa1 bond rating, graduating over 2,300 degree/diploma program students per year, contributing over \$600 million a year to the local economy, and its instructors teaching with more students

per dollar than the university system, attacks will continue and our work will be consistently undervalued if politicians like Walker become elected.

I urge you to help Local 212 fight back. You can do so with your money or your time, and many of you already give with your money through COPE, so please consider giving some of your time.

We must rally for the candidates that are supported by your COPE donations through its endorsement process, and invigorate those candidates' supporters. Join us for weekly labor walks at the Labor Council, or help us make calls at the phone banks. You can also help with mailings at the 212 office or stuff mailboxes at your campus.

Most importantly, make sure that those who share the same interests as you make it to the polls on November 2 to support Tom Barrett, Russ Feingold, Gwen Moore, Jim Sullivan, Tom Michalski, Chris Larson and JoCasta Zamarripa.

President's Message, from page 1

incomes slashed, vote on Nov. 2 for Tom Barrett for governor.

The MJS articles identified a real problem that we have talked about for a long time – MATC's financial challenges. The MJS was dead wrong in identifying the college's professional educators as the source of this problem. The college has financial challenges because the state failed in its commitment to provide MATC with one-third of its funding. As a result, property taxes now account for more than 60% of our funding.

This has been a political problem for awhile because it has unfairly shifted the burden of supporting MATC onto the backs of homeowners. And the Great Recession has exacerbated this problem because housing values, which provided us with the revenue to fill the gaps caused by the decline in state aid, are failing.

Politicians like Walker, Darling and Grothman led the effort to cut MATC's state funding when their Republican Party controlled state government. So it is dishonest for them to now pretend they care about property taxpayers when they are responsible for shifting the burden to the taxpayers. But MATC's budget this year and next will be challenging as we attempt to serve growing numbers of students with decreasing resources. All of us need to help by identifying ways to eliminate wasteful spending to ensure that MATC's core functions – teaching



Local 212 members can always stand strong together and weather any media firestorm. Photo from our Welcome Back party at the Pabst complex.
— Photo by Sue Ruggles

our students and providing them with the services they need to succeed – are not cut.

Local 212 is concerned about some cuts that have already been imposed, like reducing hours in the libraries, academic support centers and food service for evening students. We are also concerned about insufficient staffing in the Welcome Center, which doesn't live up to its name. We will be talking to the administration about the impact of these reductions on student achievement in the coming weeks even as we remain mindful of the challenges the college faces.

I want to thank all of you, particularly those who were targeted in the MJS articles, for helping Local 212 and MATC

weather the recent media storm. None of us signed on to be scapegoats when we were hired by MATC. And none of us should have our professionalism ridiculed. But as always, when we were unjustly attacked, you stood up for your college, your profession and your union. And most importantly, you stood up for our students whose very lives depend on us. And through it all you continued to do what you do best – provide our students with the education and training they need and deserve.

Thanks for that.

And remember to vote on November 2 for candidates who value professional educators and MATC.

Part-Time Faculty News

Turn In Your Teaching Preferences

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

It's time to turn in your teaching preferences for the spring semester. Remember to turn in your Letter of Availability on time. You may not be assigned second semester classes if you fail to turn it in by the deadline. Please remember that you must be certified and qualified for all assigned classes. Qualified teachers will be assigned based on seniority.

Please spend some thought and time in completing this important form. Fill in all information completely, legibly and according to directions.

Question 1: If you are interested in teaching the second semester, check "Yes"; otherwise, check "No."

Question 2: Do not check all of the load percentages. Check only the range you want. You may teach up to 49.9%, but any

load assigned within your load preference is contractually legal. Your teaching load will be filled to the range specified in your Letter of Availability based on seniority and the availability of courses. If you receive a 40% assignment, administration is within their contractual rights because the range is within 40-49%.

Question 3: Would you prefer a schedule consistent with your last schedule (within the last two semesters)? Check "yes" or "no."

Question 4: List in priority order all of the courses that you are qualified to teach. Check that the classes are indeed offered this spring and were not already assigned to full-time instructors. Go to INFOnline at matc.edu for a list of spring semester classes. List specific classes but do not list section numbers. If the class is taught in a traditional and online format, and you are qualified to teach online (by having taken

a Blackboard class), you might want to list traditional and online format after the class. You may also include an attachment of additional classes.

Question 5: Number in priority order (1, 2, 3, 4) the sites at which you are willing to teach.

Question 6: Check only the days and times you are available to teach. Leave the remaining times blank.

Sign and date the form, and be sure to include your Social Security number or COSMO number. Keep a copy for your own records. Turn the form in on time to Labor Relations.

If you have any questions, concerns, and/or would like me to check your Letter of Availability before you turn it in, email lindners@matc.edu or call 414-774-0740.

Journal Sentinel Ignores MATC's Contributions

By Dr. Michael Rosen
Local 212 President

For years, MATC has been called Milwaukee's best-kept secret. Local 212 has pointed out that we might not be recognized by the region's elites, but we are well known and appreciated by low-income, working and middle-class folks who live and work in our district and the employers who hire our students.

In fact, it is hard to find someone outside of the bedroom suburbs who hasn't attended MATC or at least knows someone who has. That's why attacks like the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's* don't resonate with the public. Even after the latest series

of articles, almost every letter to the editor defended the college and its faculty.

In response to the MJS's recent coverage of MATC's phantom financial crisis, Local 212 Executive Board member and pre-college instructor Mark Mankowski reviewed the paper's coverage of MATC.

He wrote that the recent coverage "made me a bit curious as to how the folks in the local press have been covering MATC's successes, initiatives, problems and shortcomings. I thought a comparison with how much this has been done with other major public educational institutions such as UWM and MPS would be instructive.

"Using the JSonline website, I conducted three simple searches for comparison purposes, using the past 60 days as the parameter for each search. Guess what?

"I found over 100 articles in the MJS about UWM and 90 articles in the MJS about MPS between July 27 and Sept. 25. But I found only nine articles in the MJS about MATC – four of those seemingly unrelated links containing people's MATC connections with the phrase MATC buried in the story, two stories about the photovoltaic farm and the first three pieces related to the recent Public Policy Forum report.

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