



821 Williamson Street * Madison, Wisconsin 53703-4503 * Phone (608) 257-0491 * Fax (608) 257-1168

Solidarity!

Support the Striking Machinists in Manitowoc

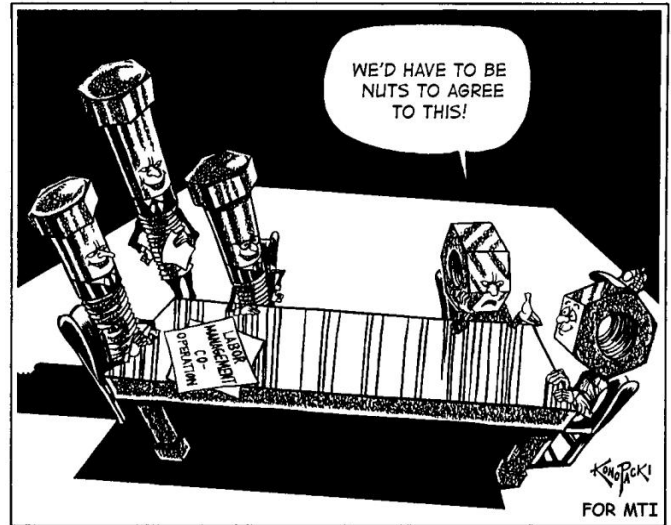
More than 200 members of Machinists Local 516 have been on strike at Manitowoc Cranes since November 15. **Approximately 3,000 union members participated in a solidarity rally on December 10.** They joined forces and walked with them to protest at the plant's gates. Participating labor organizations included private and public sector unions from throughout the state, including MTI.

The machinists at Manitowoc Cranes thought they *were close to reaching an agreement on a new four-year contract, when, at the last moment, the company insisted on language removing a long-standing clause similar to that in the MTI/MMSD Collective Bargaining Agreement which assures work to those in the bargaining unit.* **Union members voted 180-2 to strike over management's demand.**

"It's nothing but union busting," Machinists spokesperson **Benito Elizondo** said. *"I think all of this is being driven by what has happened at the state level. They went after the public worker unions first and now the private sector is following their lead."*

Madison Assembly Representative **Mark Pocan** and several Assembly Democrats held a Capitol news conference on **December 12 in support of the striking workers.** *Pocan is proposing legislation that would remove obstacles to collecting unemployment compensation for workers who lose their jobs because of strikes.* Several companies that do business with Manitowoc Cranes have laid off workers because the strike has slowed their work. Employees who aren't on strike but whose layoffs are caused by strikes sometimes have difficulty with unemployment compensation claims.

MTI members are encouraged to support the striking workers by donating to the MCI Strike Fund, Machinist Local Lodge 516, Post Office Box 222, Manitowoc, WI, 54221-0222. *The South Central Federation of Labor is also organizing donations of non-perishable food and household items for striking workers and their families.* Donations of canned vegetables, soups, dry cereal, toothpaste, paper towels, shampoo, deodorant, soap, laundry detergent and similar items can be dropped off at the SCFL office at the Madison Labor Temple, 1602 South Park Street, room 228, or with the AFL-CIO community services liaison at the Anderson United Way Center at 2059 Atwood Avenue in Madison.



MTI Conducting Survey of SEE-MTI Clerical/Technical Employees Workload

In the September issue of *Solidarity*, MTI referenced a 1990 study by the MMSD entitled *"Elementary School Office Study"* which determined that elementary school secretaries had **"more work than they can handle"**. As was reported then, shortly after the study was released, the MMSD negotiated with MTI over the creation of the position of Clerk Receptionist to serve in this capacity and schools began to add the much needed support. However, since **state-imposed school district revenue limits were enacted in 1993**, there has been a steady decrease in the number of clerical positions and the District has virtually eliminated the position of Clerk Receptionist, even at a time when more and more responsibilities are being added to the school secretary (at all levels).

In response to increasing demands and decreasing staffing, a number of **SEE-MTI represented employees have shared that they regularly work through their "unpaid" lunch, seldom take contractually provided breaks, and frequently work "off-the-clock"** (i.e. additional unpaid hours) before or after their scheduled work day. While these situations have been shared anecdotally and confidentially over the years, many are afraid to come forward out of a concern that rather than address the real work load/staffing issues, the Administration may place the blame on the employee. These concerns are not entirely without foundation as MTI staff has represented numerous employees in the past in such evaluative meetings where questions of work performance and staffing levels are intertwined.

The SEE-MTI Board has discussed this matter and concluded to survey members to determine the extent of the workload concerns. To expedite survey completion and promote confidentiality of respondents, MTI will be conducting the survey via the on-line Survey Monkey program. An e-mail with a link to the survey will be forwarded to all SEE-MTI members who have shared their personal e-mail address with MTI. Those SEE-MTI members without a personal e-mail account can access the survey via the MTI web-site, www.madisonteachers.org.

Survey results will be shared with those who completed the survey and will be utilized by the SEE-MTI Board in determining a course of action. Please encourage all SEE-MTI members to participate.

**Sick Leave Bank Provides
Exceptional Benefit;
Assessment on February 1 Check**

*The Sick Leave Bank is an innovative and progressive benefit for those in MTI's teacher collective bargaining unit. In 1980's negotiations, Contract provisions were created which provide the Retirement Insurance Account (RIA), from which one can pay insurance premiums following retirement with unused sick leave; Long Term Disability Insurance (LTD); and, of course, the Sick Leave Bank (SLB). At the end of each school year one's earned, but unused, sick leave is split with 30% of the balance going to one's RIA. Since 1980, MTI has successfully negotiated improvement in each of these provisions. When it was negotiated in 1980, it was one of a kind. Because of its success, it has since been duplicated by many unions across the country. The SLB has benefitted many MTI teacher bargaining unit members and their families. **True Union solidarity, the Sick Leave Bank has provided to teachers income which otherwise would not be received.***

To originally fund the Bank, each member of MTI's teacher bargaining unit donated three sick leave days to the "Bank". The SLB acts as a *short-term disability policy* for teachers needing to be off work for medical reasons. For example, that includes the time around child delivery during which one cannot work, as established by her physician. SLB benefits begin after a teacher has been absent eleven (11) consecutive work days, and has exhausted his/her Personal Sick Leave Account (PSLA). SLB benefits are payable for a maximum of forty-four (44) days, or until the MTI negotiated LTD begins, i.e. whichever occurs first. **The SLB pays 100% of the individual's daily rate of pay for each work day paid of SLB eligibility.** Without the SLB, teachers without sufficient sick leave to cover an extended illness would be forced to go without pay until LTD benefits begin, when one is continuously absent 55 work days.

Teachers who receive SLB benefits are not required to "repay" the Bank for compensation received from the SLB; rather all teachers are assessed an additional day from their PSLA, when the balance of days in the SLB drops below the contractually defined threshold of six (6) days per teacher. To minimize these assessments, MTI achieved that 80% of the unused sick leave balance in the RIA of one who resigns or dies is now transferred to the SLB.

Given that the SLB balance has dropped below the Contract minimum, all teachers will be assessed one sick day on their February 1 paycheck. *Teachers who do not have at least one sick day in their PSLA will be docked one day's pay on the February 1 paycheck.* This is only the 15th time in the 31 year history of the SLB that an assessment has been necessary.

The SLB is yet another way that, through collective efforts, MTI members are able to care for each other. This unique Contract provision has kept many MTI members from financial disaster.

How Much is Enough For the 1%?

The richest 400 households in the United States own \$1.37 trillion in wealth. That is a difficult number for most people - even math teachers - to comprehend. Ever ask, "What can they buy with all that money?" This list of "10 Things You Could Buy in the United States Today with \$1.37 Trillion" provides some answers:

- A new car for every family;
- Fill every driver's gas tank for 3 ½ years;
- Pay off every student loan for every U.S. college student;
- Pay off all of the credit card debt in the nation;
- Make every mortgage payment for every homeowner for 14 months;
- Pay every tenant's rent for three years;
- Pay the annual salaries of 19 million families;
- Give a \$10,000 bonus to every American worker;
- Triple the number of teachers;
- After tripling the number, give every teacher a \$30,000 pay increase.

Winter Break/MTI Office Closed

This will be the last *MTI Solidarity* for 2011. MTI wishes everyone a safe, enjoyable and relaxing winter break. **When you wonder "who cares", rest assured that your Union cares.** The MTI Office will be closed on December 26 and 27 and January 2 and 3.



- **Tuesday, December 20, 4:00 p.m., MTI**
MTI BOE Relations Committee
- **December 24 - January 8**
Winter Break
- **Monday, January 9, 4:30 p.m., MTI**
MTI Board of Directors
- **Tuesday, January 10, 4:15 p.m., MTI**
MTI VOTERS Political Action Committee
- **Wednesday, January 11, 4:00 p.m., MTI**
EA-MTI Board of Directors
- **Thursday, January 12, 4:15 p.m., MTI**
MTI Special Education Sub-Committee

Our Union Makes Us Strong!

MTI's web page - www.madisonteachers.org
MTI's email - MTI@madisonteachers.org