



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

# Solidarity!

## MTI President Coyne and MTI Activist Kathryn Burns take Political Experience to Japan

The **Osaka Social Forum (OSF)** is “*a coalition of citizens’ groups, trade unions and other issue-oriented groups*” in the Osaka and Kansai region, which includes Kyoto and Kobe, in Japan. A four day Pre Forum planning session was held February 24-27 and, at the request of OSF, **MTI President Peg Coyne** (Black Hawk) and **MTI activist Kathryn Burns** (Shorewood) were guest speakers and participants in the forum, sharing the stories of the “*Wisconsin Uprising*”. The Japanese organizers wanted to benefit from MTI’s leadership in fighting Governor Walker’s anti-public worker legislation. As **Mr. Yoshihide Kitahata**, a forum organizer, OSF host and translator, explained, “*It is very difficult to bring the many groups together in Japan, and we want to hear about the struggles against harsh attacks on public education and trade union rights in Wisconsin.*”

A series of meetings held in Osaka and Kyoto featured a video produced by Labor Beat and Osamu Kimura, a former Japanese high school teacher and current documentarian; and speeches with question and answer sessions by **Coyne** and **Burns**. **Many observed that current mayor and former governor of the Osaka Prefecture, Toru Hashimoto, seems to be “taking pages out of Wisconsin Governor Walker’s play book.”** Mayor Hashimoto and his backers are *proposing 40% pay cuts for city bus drivers, threatening to throw the office of the city workers’ union out of city hall and has introduced an ordinance requiring teachers to stand and sing the national anthem at all school functions.* The Mayor’s proposed ordinance “*proposes to choose principals by open recruitment and incorporates a clause to dismiss teachers who refuse to stand while singing the Kimigayo national anthem at school functions.*”

**Coyne** and **Burns** heard stories of teachers fired over the national anthem issue. *Ms. Msako Iwashita, a retired high school social studies teacher, said that 200 of her students followed her lead and refused to stand as the flag was raised and the anthem played at a high school graduation.* **Ms. Iwashita**, whose business card displays the words, “**Hope, Peace and Article 9**” explains that many citizens and older teachers, in particular, are *distressed that the government did not replace the rising sun flag and Kimigayo after World War II.* It is felt that these two symbols of Japan’s aggression against neighboring Asian countries and the United States are an embarrassment and too militaristic for a modern country that espouses peace. (Article 9 is a Constitutional Agreement that declares Japan’s commitment to peace and refusal to engage in weapons build up.)

During the several sessions which included presentations by **Coyne** and **Burns**, forum organizers and audience participants stated their admiration for the willingness of

**Wisconsin teachers to stand up to Governor Walker** and their surprise at the respect and support teachers received during the time of demonstrations last spring. One young teacher tearfully approached **Coyne** and **Burns** during one session to say, “*It is so difficult ... how did you get the love and respect....?*” Translator and host, **Kitahata** later explained that most Japanese view teachers as overpaid and under worked and would not be inclined to rally to teachers’ support.

Other issues addressed at the Forum were, “*Mothers against nuclear power*”, petitions to remove U.S. military bases in Okinawa; Code Pink; **and the need to build coalitions of labor unions.** For instance, there are multiple teachers’ unions in Japan and a single school staff might be represented by three or more unions, which makes communication and solidarity difficult. **Impressed by the presence of COPS for Labor signs and the Unions of Firefighters marching in support at the Wisconsin demonstrations** (featured prominently in Mr. Kimura’s DVD), it is illegal for police and firefighters to have unions in Japan.

The final meeting of the Pre Forum gathered a crowd of over 150. It ended with both the MTI leaders and Japanese hosts leading those present in enthusiastically singing “*We Shall Overcome*” as they stood and locked arms. The hosts also incorporated visits to a feudal castle, ancient temples in Kyoto and Nara, as well as treating them to many exquisite, traditional Japanese meals. The culminating event, a meal, at which Forum organizers including lawyers, teachers, university students and citizen-activists *told their stories of why they are committed to the Social Forum.* Coyne and Burns were presented with gifts and praise. In return, **Coyne & Burns** presented their hosts with MTI t-shirts, books about the Wisconsin uprising, and songbooks. The evening ended with the group singing “*Solidarity Forever*”.

## \*\*\*Important Reminder\*\*\* Teacher Contracts Due April 16

The District has issued individual teacher contracts for the 2012-13 school year. **MTI strongly recommends that teachers return their signed contracts, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE,** to the District Office of Human Resources in person to assure that it is received on time. Take your copy with you and ask that it be stamped “received”. **Failure to return a signed contract by April 16 may result in the District accepting such as one’s resignation.**

## Our Union Makes Us Strong!

MTI’s web page - [www.madisonteachers.org](http://www.madisonteachers.org)  
MTI’s email - [MTI@madisonteachers.org](mailto:MTI@madisonteachers.org)

**Nominations Due for MTI Officers;  
Bargaining Committee**

Any member of MTI's "teacher" collective bargaining unit who is interested in nominating a colleague for MTI President-Elect, Vice-President, Secretary or Treasurer may contact MTI Executive Director John Matthews via email ([matthewsj@madisonteachers.org](mailto:matthewsj@madisonteachers.org)) or 257-0491. The term of office for these positions is one year. As of this writing, seeking re-election are incumbent **Art Camosy** (Memorial) for Vice President; incumbent **Liz Wingert** (Elvehjem) for Secretary; and incumbent **Fred Rosevear** (East) for Treasurer. President-Elect **Kerry Motoviloff** (Elvehjem), who was elected last April, will assume the MTI presidency for the 2012-13 school year. Given the negative impact of Governor Walker's Act 10, and to provide continuing leadership of those familiar with the political issues, **current President Peggy Coyne** has agreed to seek election as President-Elect.

Nominations are also open for five (5) positions on the 15 member MTI Bargaining Committee. Of the 15 positions, one position from the elementary school, middle school, high school, at-large, and educational services are elected each year. Terms are for three (3) years. Seeking re-election are: for High School Representative - incumbent **Mike Lipp** (West); Middle School Representative - incumbent **Karlton Porter** (Cherokee); Elementary School Representative - incumbent **Nancy Curtin** (Crestwood); At-Large Representative - incumbent **Susan Covarrubias** (Midvale); and for Educational Services Representative - incumbent **Judy Gump** (Memorial).

Nominations for both the MTI Officers and Bargaining Committee will be received and closed at the March 20 meeting of the MTI Faculty Representative Council. Nominations can also be made by an MTI Faculty Representative, from the floor, at the March 20 meeting, or called/emailed to MTI Executive Director John Matthews by noon, March 20. MTI's general election will be held April 23-25.

**What Does it Mean to be  
Declared "Surplus"?**

This year, the District's Human Resources Department provided staff allocations earlier than usual to principals/supervisors who have until March 16 to respond to HR with surplus declarations. While the Contract deadline to declare surplus remains July 1, most surplus declarations are expected to occur by March 16. MTI Faculty Representatives at each school have been provided seniority lists for those assigned to the school. The lists contain the licensure for each, as well. See your MTI Faculty Representative if you have questions.

While being declared surplus from one's position can be stressful, the stress is heightened when ones confuses the terms "surplus" with "layoff". These two provisions of the **MTI/MMSD Collective Bargaining Agreement** are separate and distinct with far different implications for the individual. Both are defined in Section IV-O of the Contract.

A teacher who has been declared "surplus" is defined in the MTI/MMSD Collective Bargaining Agreement as *any teacher presently teaching under a regular full time or regular*

*part-time contract who has been declared by their principal to be above staff requirements* for the ensuing school year or semester at their school. Simply stated, a "surplus teacher" is considered to be no longer needed in the school in which they currently teach but is needed to teach elsewhere in the District. By contrast, a teacher who is issued notice of layoff is considered to be no longer needed to teach in the District because they are above staff requirements for the District.

**Issuing declarations of surplus is a two-step process** which, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Contract, must begin with the **principal first requesting volunteers**. The purpose of requesting volunteers is to give teachers, who would otherwise not be declared surplus, an opportunity to change their assignment using the surplus/reassignment procedure. *The principal does not have to accept the volunteer as surplus if the teacher volunteering to be surplus would result in the remaining teachers at the building not being certified to teach the remaining assignments at the school.* If there are no volunteers, or if there are an insufficient number of volunteers, then the principal must declare the teacher(s) surplus using the procedure set forth in Sections IV-O-2 & 3 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement as follows:

**Elementary and Middle Schools: Inverse order of seniority among those teachers in the school**, except "where the instructional requirements of the school are disrupted." (*An example of disruption to the instructional program would be where declaring the least senior teacher surplus would leave the remaining staff uncertified to teach the remaining assignments.*)

After declaring surplus in the elementary or middle school, a principal may need to make necessary adjustments in assignments within the school. The principal may do this provided he or she "duly considers" the prior experience and certification of the remaining school staff.

**High Schools:** Based on certification and the **inverse order of seniority** among those teachers **within a department**.

**Seniority**, another topic of frequent misunderstanding, is defined as **how long one has been employed as a teacher in the MMSD commencing with the first day worked** under contract followed by continuous service (see Section IV-O-1 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement). There is no such thing as "building seniority". One's seniority in the district is used to compare to others in the building as regards surplus and to compare to others in the District as regards layoff. See Contract Section IV-O for additional criteria.

**Calendar of Events**

- **Monday, March 12, 4:30 p.m., MTI**  
MTI Board of Directors
- **Tuesday, March 13, 4:15 p.m., MTI**  
MTI VOTERS Political Action Committee
- **Wednesday, March 14, 6:00 p.m., MTI**  
MTI Movie Night
- **Monday, March 19, 4:30 p.m., MTI**  
SEE-MTI Elementary Secretaries
- **Tuesday, March 20, 4:15 p.m., SCFL**  
MTI Faculty Representative Council