



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

Solidarity!

“Why I’m Sticking to the Union - and Others Should Too”

(By Andrew McCuaig, English teacher, LaFollette High School)



Joining a union is an act of faith: a belief that people coming together with similar daily work lives can have an impact on those people who may have goals that don’t take into account anything but the bottom line. By joining a union, you are asserting that you were not put on this earth merely to do what you were told, but that you believe you should have a say in your own livelihood. But more than that, as a union member you believe that wealth should be more evenly distributed, that supervisors should not have absolute power, and that the details of the actual work should be mutually agreed upon, because you cannot get that coal out of the ground, that car made, or that student to graduate without a contract that respects both sides.

Renew at www.madisonteachers.org

But joining a union is also a practical matter. Wherever unions exist, wages are higher. That is one reason why corporate interests throughout history have tried to weaken unions whenever they can. Fair wages, vacation days, sick leave, maternity leave, overtime, seniority, even the notion of a 40 hour work week - *all* exist because of the Labor Movement, and all cut into a company’s bottom line. When you pay union dues, you are supporting a staff that bargains on your behalf, that defends you when you require defending, or, more likely, defends someone *else* you might not even know who has your same job and is being treated unfairly. If the accused has truly screwed up, they get due process and what’s coming to them. If they haven’t, they are not simply fired in a Donald Trump dreamworld but are given their job back. The employer, meanwhile, is given a message not to abuse its authority.

Madison teachers are now actively responding to two union-busting rules justified by our state legislature’s notion of fairness: the elimination of automatic dues deductions by employers, and the option for teachers to not pay their “fair share” dues once our contract expires on June 30th. “Fair share” dues refers to the decades-old court ruling that workers who choose not to join a union must still pay for those services that they benefit from. The recent 4-4 Supreme Court deadlock on “fair share” upholds this practice for private sector unions but doesn’t affect Wisconsin’s teachers and other public employees under Act 10. Starting this month, teachers in every Madison school will be encouraging each other to continue their membership with MTI by supplying their bank’s routing number to pay dues. Some will need convincing, and some will want to pocket their dues now that they can. This will surely cause tension among colleagues. Also causing tension will be the teacher who keeps the money and then finds himself unfairly disciplined and in need of union representation he is now not entitled to. It’s a nice divide and conquer ploy, and those responsible deserve credit for their meanness.

On the other hand, heading into this new, mean work environment gives Madison teachers a chance to come together in solidarity, to freshly justify our existence, and to educate a new generation of teachers why we have just cause, paid sick days, and other things we now take for granted. The continued existence and influence of MTI will no doubt keep the meanest politicians up at night, which is just another reason to sign up.

(Note: This article was originally published, with some changes in *The Capital Times*, opinion section, on 4/15/16)

Nonrenewal of Contract

Sections IV-I and IV-J of MTI’s Teacher Collective Bargaining Agreement set forth the procedures which principals are required to use when management notifies a teacher that he/she is being considered for non-renewal of contract. By Contract, the District is obligated to advise a teacher **before May 1, if they are considering non-renewal**. Under Wisconsin State Statutes, such a notice must be delivered to the teacher on or before **May 15**.

MTI professional staff should be present at any and all meetings between the teacher and any administrator in this regard, given that the meeting may indeed affect the teacher’s continued employment status. The teacher has the legal right to MTI representation and does not have to begin or continue a meeting without representation. *See the reverse side of your MTI membership card.*

(Continued on reverse)

Nonrenewal (*con't*)

For probationary teachers, a request for a hearing before the Board of Education must be submitted within five (5) days of the teacher's receipt of the notice that the Board of Education is considering non-renewal of the teacher's contract. **For non-probationary staff**, a request for arbitration must be made within fifteen (15) days of a non-renewal notice.

It is extremely important for any teacher receiving such a notice to immediately contact MTI.

GHC Election: VOTE

MTI members who have selected Group Health Cooperative as their health insurance carrier are reminded to vote in the **important upcoming election for GHC Board members**. Information on how to obtain an absentee ballot is in the mail to all MTI members who are insured by GHC. Please act quickly to obtain your ballot. Anyone age 18 and over can vote. Make your vote count.

**Academic Leave of Absence
Deadline May 1**

Section VI-B (Leaves of Absences) of MTI's Teacher Collective Bargaining Agreement provides that all *non-medical leaves except academic, adoption and childrearing leaves, must be for a minimum of one full school year* and must commence at the beginning of the first semester. Academic or childrearing leaves must be for a minimum of one semester. A request for an academic leave or for an extension of same must be made to the Department of Human Resources by **May 1, 2016**, for the first semester or the entirety of the 2016-17 school year. In discussions with MMSD Human Resources staff, MTI was able to gain clarification that the District *will continue to honor the current Contract leave of absence language cited above for teachers who request leaves of absence for the 2016-17 school year*. After the Collective Bargaining Agreement expires on June 30, 2016, requests for leaves of absence will be governed by the provisions of the Employee Handbook which are substantively different and, in certain cases, more restrictive. If you have questions on leave of absence options, MTI staff are available to assist at 257-0491.

**Ready Set Goal Compensation
Deadline May 1**

Pursuant to the MTI/MMSD agreed-upon Memorandum of Understanding elementary teachers who have completed Ready, Set, Goal (RSG) Conferences, and whose request for compensatory time cannot be accommodated due to the unavailability of a substitute teacher, may, *upon written notice to their principal by May 1*, choose among the following options: (1) request to be compensated for RSG conferences, travel time, and up to 15 minutes per conference for any reasonable administrative time associated with each conference; or (2) have said day(s) added to the teacher's Personal Sick

Leave Account (PSLA) or, *if the teacher has the maximum amount in that account*, the day(s) may be added to the teacher's Retirement Insurance Account (RIA) [any such days accumulated to one's RIA from RSG services are not subject to the PSLA or RIA maximum]; or (3) carryover one (1) paid RSG leave day into the following school year; or (4) a combination of items 1-3 above. Contact MTI Assistant Director Eve Degen (degene@madisonteachers.org) with questions regarding RSG compensation.

**Special Education Plan for Student
Services Meeting - May 2**

In a joint effort to clarify various special education issues, Peg Coyne (MTI Assistant Director) and John Harper (MMSD Executive Director of Student Services) will host a **Q & A session on Monday, May 2, 2016**. The meeting will take place from 4:00-6:00 p.m., at the WEA Member Benefits Building (660 John Nolen Drive, 2nd Floor). This is an opportunity to share current information and discuss the recently proposed Special Education Plan for Student Services. All interested District staff are invited.

April Calendar

- **Monday, April 25, 5:30 p.m., Doyle Room 103**
BOE Special Meeting (Open)
- **Monday, April 25, 6:00 p.m., Doyle Auditorium**
BOE Regular Meeting
- **Wednesday, April 27, 4:30 p.m., MTI**
SSA-MTI General Membership
- **Thursday, April 28, 4:30 p.m., SCFL**
MTI Membership Organizing Training
- **Monday, May 2, 4:00 p.m., MTI**
MTI Elections Committee
- **Tuesday, May 3, 4:15 p.m., MTI**
MTI Bargaining/Handbook Committee
- **Wednesday, May 4, 4:30 p.m., MTI**
SEE-MTI Board of Directors

**MTI 50th/EA-MTI Walk-out 20th/
Strike 40th/2011 Protest 5th
Anniversary Celebrations**

Date: **Saturday, May 7, 2016**
Time: 6:00-10:00 p.m.
Location: Madison Labor Temple
(1602 S. Park St.)

Our Union Makes Us Strong!

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