

MCCC



News

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Mass Unionists Rally for Wisconsin

On Feb. 22, Union members of all types rallied outside the State House to demonstrate solidarity with public employees in Wisconsin and across the nation.

With a legislative super majority, Wisconsin Gov. Walker was pushing for a radical cut in the collective bargaining rights of public employees in Wisconsin. The rally celebrated the 14 Wisconsin senators who left their own state to prevent a rush into rash legislation.

The crowd of about 1500 ranged from blue-collar construction workers, to teachers, and state professionals. They were not alone with similar demonstrations going on in other cities including another large



MCCC members show their colors at the Feb. 22 rally in Boston to show solidarity with Wisconsin public employee unions. Holding the sign from left are Kenn Anania (MaCC), MCCC VP Donnie McGee, Margaret Wong (QCC) and MCCC President Joe LeBlanc. In front wearing earmuff is Cathy Boudreau (MaCC). (MTA photo)

one in Springfield. MCCC members participated at both of these locations.

Massachusetts is more favorable to labor, but even here the benefits of public sector employees have been under attack. Even so, contrary to Wisconsin, Gov.



Standing up for workers rights is a family affair for MCCC member Liang-Shu Han, a faculty member in the Visual Arts Dept. at Massasoit Community College, who brought his daughter Renee to the rally in Boston on Feb. 22. (MTA photo)

Patrick spoke to the rally and assured them that he fully supported and respected the right of collective bargaining.

The rally showed that labor was not going to take the criticism sitting down. Supporters stood up to show the public that unions are their neighbors and their friends and that union members are ordinary people struggling to support their families just like everyone else.

Union members were not alone at the rally; a small contingent of Tea Party supporters were on hand to oppose the union positions. One Tea Party demonstrator told the *Boston Globe*, "Public sector workers have gotten out of hand in their demands for money, pensions, and benefits."

Addressing this common mythology, MTA President Paul Toner published a piece in the *Boston Globe* pointing out the reality of Massachusetts public employee benefits. In Wisconsin, and in many other states, public employees paid nothing into the pension system. (Even in New Hampshire they pay only five percent.) Here, the state has phased in higher contribution rates over the past 20 years so that now the average contribution is 10 percent of employee salaries. The state only contributes about 2 percent.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

MCCC Delegate Assembly
April 30, 2011

Registration 8:30-9:30 AM
Call to Order 9:30

New Location

Courtyard by Marriott
Marlborough, Massachusetts

Delegates will receive a Delegate Packet, with reports and the proposed budget at least one week before the meeting.

Chapters are allotted one delegate for every 10 members. The MCCC By-laws state that "each chapter shall elect its own delegates."

Chapters should begin recruiting members to ensure full representation of the membership.

DIRECTIONS

Courtyard by Marriott
75 Felton St.

Marlborough, Massachusetts
Phone: 1-508-480-0015

From I-495 (North or South) take Exit 24B (Route 20 West/Northborough). Take first right onto Felton Street (before Shell gas station) Hotel is on right. ■

This represents a net savings for the state because Massachusetts does not participate in Social Security. If it did, the state would have to pay 6.2 percent of employee salaries to the federal government. In the end, 90 percent of state pension costs are borne by the participants.

Toner also mentioned the increased cost to members of health care. Cities and towns have negotiated a wide range of plans, but state employees, who are all in the GIC, have seen contribution levels rise to 25 percent and seen co-pays and deductibles rise significantly.

Any event like the rally is intended to get news coverage, and unions have often been disappointed in how they have been covered. This time was no

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MCCC Launches Ad Campaign

Given the state budget constraints and pressures to cut costs, especially cuts in community college budgets, the MCCC has taken steps to bring some of our issues to the public.

With the recent actions against public employee unions in Wisconsin and other states, it is increasingly important for public unions to make a case for their importance.

On Feb. 17 the MCCC ran the ad that appears below on the Op Ed page of the *Boston Globe* as well as in the *Worcester Telegram and Gazette*, and the *Springfield Republican*. The *Globe*

ad in particular brought the Union's concern about the increasing use of adjunct faculty over full-time positions to a wide audience of state decision-makers.

Overall the ad has received a positive response, but some members have felt that it put adjuncts in a poor light. The ad's intent was to point out the lack of institutional support for adjunct faculty, and that the lack of support for such a large percentage of our faculty is not the best situation for students.

Even the *Boston Herald* noticed and, in an article about Bristol Community College hiring a former legislator, referred to the

related web site the Union set up specifically for this campaign. The site compiles statistics about full-time/part-time faculty ratios, higher ed. funding, and studies on the effects of overuse of adjunct faculty.

This ad was produced in-house with help from MTA Communications. As the MCCC moves forward with a larger PR campaign professional assistance will be engaged. ■

War on Unions is Civil War

Putting together last month's issue with the headline about an assault on our right to arbitration, no one expected the unprecedented actions starting in Wisconsin and spreading to other states.



Don Williams, MCCC Communications Coordinator

It is amazing how a recession caused by deregulated, aggressive business practices ends up affecting public employees and not the prime offenders. It's amazing how

the populist Tea Party movement ended up supporting the agenda of big business against other members of the populace.

Wisconsin Gov. Walker's actions against collective bargaining were couched in Tea Party budget-cutting terms, but he had a greater agenda to weaken the unions. This was brought out by a prank call from a Buffalo radio personality pretending to be billionaire businessman David Koch—a strong anti-union libertarian.

Although supported by the Tea Party, Walker was extremely deferential to the pretend Koch. The governor spoke as if they had the same pro-business agenda. Gov. Walker bragged that just as Wisconsin had led in the movement for public employee collective bargaining 50 years ago, now the state would lead the nation in taking away those rights.

Businesses look for ways to increase profits, and if they see the weakening of unions as profitable (as they appear to do), then they will spend money to support that cause. In fact the real David Koch had given thousands to Gov. Walker's campaign. And with the Supreme Court's decision on campaign finance, not only does the business sector have the money, but now they are allowed to donate lots of it to political campaigns.

Nearly all media outlets are in corporate hands (look out PBS), and corporate money dominates the media market. The agenda of big business is embedded in the programming as well as in the advertising. Fox News may be the most overt, but the influence is pervasive elsewhere in subtler forms. Public opinion is enormously affected by this influence. The Tea Party movement to some degree benefitted from it.

For public sector employees the influence of politics looms large. The public mood can swing wildly. Candidates, elected officials, and opinion leaders can push the public mood in a direction—sometimes the opposite of what is intended. Finding scapegoats is an effective diversionary tactic, and public employees are convenient targets. Public employee unions are essential to dampen these mood swings.

Now the economic collapse is being blamed on public employees. We didn't cause the economic collapse in Massachusetts. And employees in Wisconsin didn't either. But with the economic uncertainty and declining standards of living, the public is ready to find someone to blame. And the financial sector, in particular, has managed to shift the blame from themselves. Gov. Walker told public employees that everyone had to "share the pain," but then he gave businesses a \$117 million tax cut. Some pain.

We need to fight back. We need to show the important work we do. We need to show how unions look out not only for their own members, but also for society at large. We need to tell our critics that they would have even fewer benefits from their employers if we didn't stand up for ours.

Unions arose on the ideals of "little guys" banding together to stand up to the "big guys." Their origins are noble and humane. In an era of increasing income inequality, and multinational corporations that are bigger than governments, the "little guys" need all the help they can get. We need to convince the Tea Party folks that they have more in common with us than with the media manipulators. ■

ADVERTISEMENT

The Professor Is In...



Welcome to My Office!

Like 7 out of 10 faculty members in Massachusetts community colleges, I'm a part-time employee. I have no college office, no computer, no phone, no fixed place to meet and help students individually, not even a place to hang my coat.

We're hired on a course-by-course, semester-by-semester basis. Sometimes we have one course, sometimes two or three. We never know for sure and neither do our students. Because we have to teach at multiple colleges to piece together a modest living, we've been called "freeway fliers"—rushing from one college to the next, hoping not to be late, leaving little time to help students outside of class.

Our students matter. More than 140,000 students count on Massachusetts community colleges to get the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the workforce—and in life. They represent almost 50 percent of all students in the state's system, yet community colleges get less than 25 percent of the total funding. We need to invest in our future and theirs.

Let's give our students a better shot at succeeding. All students—especially community college students who face challenges of all kinds—benefit from the continuity that comes from regular contact with faculty and staff. Adding more full-time faculty will go a long way toward helping our students stay in school, graduate, get good jobs and, ultimately, help build and grow our state's economy.

Join the campaign to add more full-time faculty at the Commonwealth's 15 community colleges. We need to do what we can to help all of our students make it. Let's start by adding more full-time faculty members.

For more information go to <http://www.StrengthenCommunityColleges.org>



This message sponsored by the Massachusetts Community College Council.



MTA Consultant Miles Stern, who is assigned to the MCCC for DCE issues, stood up for workers rights at the Springfield rally on Feb. 22. (MTA photo)

Workers from The Past Inspire Us to Action



Joe LeBlanc,
MCCC President

Wisconsin's assault on organized labor is but the latest episode in a never-ending struggle. Our battle for collective bargaining rights began in 1800's New England when workers demanded justice in the workplace.

In 1852, labor pioneer George McNeill and his co-workers walked off the job at The Woolen Company in Amesbury. Ten year-old McNeill began working the 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. shift in 1847. MassMoments reports, "The workers were allowed a 30-minute break for breakfast, 15 minutes for 'luncheon privileges,' and 45 minutes for dinner. In 1852 the new manager, John Derby, decided this was excessively generous and announced the elimination of the morning and afternoon breaks." The strikers lost their jobs, but McNeill became a union organizer and the Father of the Eight Hour Workday.

In 1860, Lynn shoe workers acted up. After suffering years of wage cuts and demands to speed up production, they started a strike that eventually grew to 20,000 workers throughout the region. Shoe workers earned miserable wages: \$3 a week for men and \$1 a week for women working 16 hours a day, six days a week.

The New York Times provides this sexist, pro-business account of the protestors on Feb. 28, 1860: "Their banners flaunted bravely. Their inscriptions of "Down with tyranny," "We are not slaves," "No sympathy with the rich," "Our bosses grind us," "We work and they ride," "No foreign police," and many others of like import, read very well and look very pretty, but they don't buy dinners or clothing, or keep the men at work or the women at home about their business." In the end, workers won higher wages, but the factory owners refused to recognize their union.

On Jan. 1, 1912, Massachusetts state law reduced the workweek from 56 to 54 hours. On Jan. 12, workers at the American Woolen company Mills in Lawrence found their pay had been cut to protect the mill owners' bottom line. Polish women were the first to walk off the job. More than half of Lawrence's mill workers were women and children, and the unskilled immigrant laborers spoke many languages. Mill owners didn't think the strikers could hold out. They were sure union solidarity would crumble and the workers would be forced to return to work.

Weeks later after huge marches, favorable press coverage and Congressional hearings to examine the dismal working

conditions in America's factories, the company settled. Workers won a 15 percent raise, overtime pay and protections for the striking workers. Lawrence's immigrants showed that workers could prevail.

In 1919, New England Telephone Company operators walked off the job to demand the right to organize for better working conditions and wage increases. Telephone operators worked in a demanding, rule-filled environment. The women were expected to dress and behave professionally, and workers were not permitted to speak to one another in cramped quarters. The poorly paid operators were required to work two separate shifts with an unpaid 3-hour break in between.

Initially, management ignored the workers. Postmaster General Albert Burleson, given control over the telephone system during WW I, refused to speak with the union and wouldn't allow the company to negotiate. The Boston Globe (April 12, 1919) wrote this account of the strike vote: "When it was declared that the vote to strike was unanimous, the cheers of the girls could be heard in Adams Square... One of the operators yelled, 'It took the Yankee Division to lick the Kaiser. Now let the Yankee [telephone] operators lick Burleson!' This remark roused the operators beyond all restraint and from that moment it was only a question of putting the strike question to them, to have it unanimously approved." The strikers

won again. The system shut down. Workers won the right to organize, a salary increase and an end to the split shift.

More recently, organized labor has suffered. President Reagan fired 11,345 air traffic control workers. In 2005, Gov. Mitch Daniels, R-Indiana, eliminated collective bargaining for state employees by executive order and forced workers to accept pay freezes, merit pay, loss of seniority rights, an increase in health insurance premiums from \$3,400 to \$5,200 and privatizing of some services costing hundreds of workers their jobs. Earlier this year, Gov. John Kasich, R-Ohio, said, "I want to break the back of teachers unions."

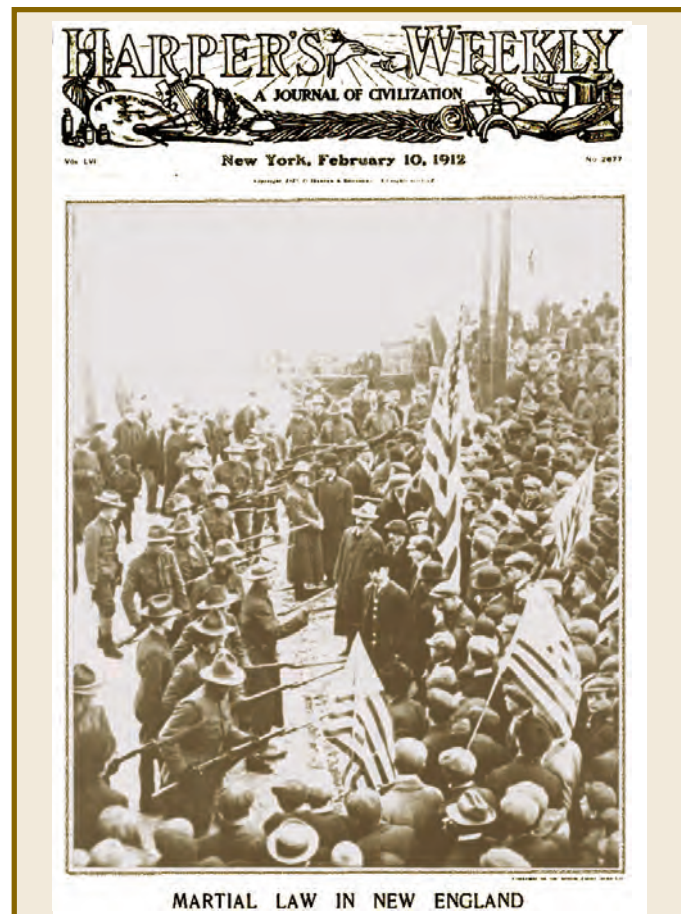
A generation ago, our higher education faculty won collective bargaining rights. While our work has never been easy—especially on the salary front where zero years have been too common—day unit members have won and preserved a system of hard-earned benefits and decent working conditions. While we still have a long way to go to win full justice for our adjunct and part-time colleagues, their salaries have tripled since the early 1990's and class sizes are now uniform across our system.

These challenging times demand that we confront those who would take back our gains won at the bargaining table. Workers from the past in Lawrence and elsewhere inspire us to action.

Bread and Roses

*As we come marching, marching in
the beauty of the day,
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand
mill lofts gray,
Are touched with all the radiance that
a sudden sun discloses,
For the people hear us singing: "Bread
and roses! Bread and roses!"
As we come marching, marching, we
battle too for men,
For they are women's children, and
we mother them again.
Our lives shall not be sweated from
birth until life closes;
Hearts starve as well as bodies; give
us bread, but give us roses!
As we come marching, marching, un-
numbered women dead
Go crying through our singing their
ancient cry for bread.
Small art and love and beauty their
drudging spirits knew.
Yes, it is bread we fight for — but we
fight for roses, too!
As we come marching, marching, we
bring the greater days.
The rising of the women means the
rising of the race.
No more the drudge and idler - ten
that toil where one reposes,
But a sharing of life's glories: Bread
and roses! Bread and roses!*

by James Oppenheim ■



Massachusetts made front page national news in 1912 with the Bread and Roses strike in Lawrence. The state militia was called out to quell violence and to protect the mills as this picture shows. Photo courtesy of the Collection of the Lawrence Historical Center, Lawrence, Massachusetts.



MCCC Research Coordinator Hilaire Jean Gilles gave his report to the MCCC Board of Directors at their February meeting. He noted the increase in both part-time faculty and full-time professional staff members relative to full-time faculty.

(Photo by Don Williams)

MOVING?

Please make sure the MCCC has your correct mailing address. This affects receiving the newsletter, elections, important mailings and notices.



Call the office at **1-877-442-MCCC** toll free
or go online at
<http://mccc-union.org/ChangeMyAddress/>

Betsy Smith— Candidate for Part-time/ Adjunct Director

Betsy Smith of Cape Cod Community College was the sole candidate this year for the two Part-time/Adjunct At-large Director positions that are open annually. Other candidates expressed interest but none completed the nomination forms. As per MCCC policy, a second at-large director will be appointed by the Board of Directors.

Smith's name appeared on ballots that only went to MCCC part-time and adjunct Union members. Her statement is printed below for full-time members and for non-union members of the MCCC unit, who do not get that ballot.

Statement of Betsy Smith

Much to my surprise, in the ten years that I have been an MCCC member, I have become a union activist. In 2003, three years after I started teaching at 4Cs, I found myself as the only representative from the union at a hearing on including adjuncts in the GIC health insurance plan. I have subsequently testified and written in favor of the Legislature's changing the law, but they have been very slow in considering the motion, so I am currently



one of the plaintiffs in the MCCC's lawsuit to obtain health insurance for us.

During the past ten years, I have been involved in various activities, from being a member of the 4Cs ExCom, to proposing a by-laws change at Annual Meetings to give adjuncts a full vote, to attending the NEA-RA, NEA/AFT Higher Ed Conferences and COCAL.

Most recently, I served on the DCE bargaining team. With that challenge temporarily over (I would like to use what I learned about bargaining this time around by being on the team for our next contract), I would like to be one of the two Part-time Adjunct Directors. I would be honored to have your vote in this election.

I thank you for your confidence in my ability to represent you on our Board. ■

Know Your Day Contract

March 2011

March 30 Department Chair evaluations (p.70)

March 30 Preferred schedules and course submitted (p.32)

March 31 Department chair vacancies announced (p.55)

April 2011

April 6 Dean's leave of absence recommendations due (p.26)

April 15 Dean's tenure recommendations due (p.38)

April 15 Title changes announced (p.59)

April 20 Patriots Day holiday (p.22)

April 25 Professional Staff unused vacation days in excess of 480 hours (64 days) converted to sick leave at end of last pay period in April. (p.22)

April 30 Fall assignments to faculty, fulltime schedules to chapter (p.41)

N.B. Dates may vary depending on the first day of classes. Most of these dates are "last date" standards. In many instances the action can be accomplished before the date indicated. ■



MCCC member Peter Flynn (NECC), center holding sign, shows his support for Wisconsin public employee union members at the Feb. 22 rally on Boston Common.

Mass Unionists Rally . . .

continued from front page

exception. The *Boston Globe* covered it under the headline "Patrick Reaches out to Unions." Fox TV25, which has an office across the street, covered it focusing on heated words between a Teamster and Tea Party demonstrator. And WBZ TV led their evening news with a 5-day old piece about an excessive retirement benefit for the Massport chief Tom Kinton and then buried a brief mention of the rally later in the broadcast.

In Wisconsin public employee benefits may have been better than what we have in Massachusetts. But these were

negotiated with the state, and as their state budget crisis increased the employees agreed to cuts. But the attack on collective bargaining itself is a threat to the very existence of unions, and the event on the Common was one effort to push back.

As for now Gov. Walker has prevailed. The legislation that passed is before the Wisconsin courts and may be overturned on procedural issues. But the issues are still before the court of public opinion. And while surveys show a solid majority of citizens support collective bargaining rights, unions still have a lot of image building to do. ■



MCCC News

<http://mccc-union.org>

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The MCCC News is a publication of the Massachusetts Community College Council. The Newsletter is intended to be an information source for the members of the MCCC and for other interested parties. Members' letters up to 200 words and guest columns up to 400 words will be accepted and published on a space-available basis. The material in this publication may be reprinted with the acknowledgment of its source. For further information on issues discussed in this publication, contact Donald Williams, North Shore Community College, One Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA 01923. e-mail: Communications@mccc-union.org

GIC Alert

For those full-time and benefitted part-time members who participate in the Group Insurance Commission health insurance plan there are major changes this year.

For Massachusetts residents only:

This year everyone must specifically enroll into a plan during the Open Enrollment Period: April 8–May 9, 2011.

- In prior years if a member did not take action they would be automatically re-enrolled into their existing plan.
- Now if you do not select a plan, you will automatically be enrolled in one of GIC's new Limited Network Plans.
- GIC is offering the incentive of three free months of premiums to members who choose these lesser cost plans.
- Members should research the various plans and whether their doctors participate before making a final selection.
- See the GIC's website for more information. Health fairs are being held throughout the state (five at community colleges) and they can be found on the website also. (www.mass.gov/gic)
- The changes take effect July 1, 2011

REMEMBER

You must re-enroll in a health insurance plan during annual enrollment or the GIC will pick a plan for you.

Enrollment forms will be sent to your house, and must be returned before May 9, 2011.