

# CT News



CLERICAL-TECHNICAL UNION OF  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Volume XXXVIII, Issue 2

Organized and Independent since 1974!

February 2011

## “No ‘rights’ & no ‘work’”

*“In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans, as ‘right-to-work.’ It provides no ‘rights’ and no ‘works.’ Its purpose is to destroy labor unions and the freedom of collective bargaining. . . We demand this fraud be stopped.”*

—Martin Luther King, Jr. (*American Baptist Minister and Civil-Rights Leader, 1929-1968*)

In a resolution passed February 15, the CTU Executive Board committed the union to fighting legislative threats to collective bargaining rights.

The move was necessitated by proposals in both the House (HB 4054) and Senate (SB 120) that would allow the creation of “right to work” zones in a city, county, township, village, public school district, or an intermediate school district.

Those backing the bills say that unions  
**Rights** continued on p. 4



January 25, 2011—Forty-two CTs attended the Winter Membership Meeting.

## Members’ meeting

The Winter Membership Meeting consisted of a financial report, a report from our investment company, and some lively discussion about issues we are facing as a union.

Luke Terry, a financial planner with Rehmann Financial Group, discussed our investment strategy, which he described as “fairly optimistic,” in the current “positive” economic climate.

“We are not looking to put the funds at any significant amount of risk, but

to increase the income that those funds generate,” he said.

Because the meeting fell eight short of a quorum (even with attendees from Macomb and Grand Rapids via PolyCom), members were unable to vote on proposals to donate money from the Contingency Fund to the Greater Lansing Food Bank and the MSU Student Food Bank. The members in attendance made it clear that they wanted the Board to explore the

**Membership** continued on p 7



Bumper sticker from WrongforMichigan.org, a web-based clearinghouse of information to help fight Right to Work Legislation.



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## CTU EXECUTIVE BOARD

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**Editorial Policy:** The *CT News* is the voice of our union. It is our vehicle for communicating, on a regular basis, the issues that confront us as workers. Through this newsletter we explain union policies, show how dues are spent, and explain the views and actions of the elected leadership for evaluation by the members.

The *CT News* is the voice of the membership. We welcome articles from members and stories about members.

While contributions are welcome, they should be constructive and contribute positively to the welfare of our union.

We will accept no attacks on any union leader or member. We will accept thoughtful discussion of all related issues in the letters section, and reserve the right to reply to those that seem to reflect a misunderstanding of the union and its policies.

Direct ideas, letters, questions and comments to Cherylee Finney.

# CT Classifieds

## For sale:

◆ **Table with 4 chairs:** Contemporary/glass top with chrome accents, perfect for office or home, \$250 or BO. **4 chairs:** Good in game room or office waiting area, \$125 for set of 4. **Metal storage cabinet/closet:** Very good condition, solid construction, locks, good for storage, adjustable shelves; \$150 or BO. **2 ladder racks:** One fits small van, the other fits on top of a truck topper, \$75 ea or BO. If interested, please call 517-927-2330.

◆ **New Franz Hoffman Etude violin:** Size for 5-7 years old, \$150. **1997 Aiwa compact stereo system:** \$15. **1/16 adult-size violin:** \$40 or BO. **All wood rocker:** Very good condition, \$75 or BO. **Wooden rocker:** \$45. Email [cath432@yahoo.com](mailto:cath432@yahoo.com).

◆ **TV:** 26" color, \$25. **Vacuum:** Kirby, \$20. **Sweeper:** \$5. **Coffee table:** Oak, \$35. **Dining table:** Large, dark walnut, with or w/o chairs, \$100. **Over commode shelf unit:** White, \$10. **Coffee table:** Wicker, \$15. **Desk:** Wicker, 2 drawers, \$10. **Rocking chair:** Wicker/wood, \$15. **Large upright freezer,** \$75. **Coffee table:** Black metal, glass top, \$10. **Child's**

**cubby hole desk:** Antique, \$25. **Kitchen table:** Octagon walnut pedestal, with chairs (\$80) or without (\$35). **Bird cages:** Various sizes, \$35-\$100. **Electric portable typewriter:** \$25. **Datura:** Moon flower seeds, night-blooming. **Loose emeralds** to mount on/in your own jewelry, quote on request. **Shalimar perfume:** Full bottle, \$20. **Tommy Girl perfume:** Full bottle, \$15. **Inversion machine:** For back problems, \$100. **Swimming pool:** Above ground, with all equipment, \$100 or BO. **Sewing machine:** With cabinet and all attachments (older model), \$100 or BO. Photos on request. Email [millyshiraev@yahoo.com](mailto:millyshiraev@yahoo.com).

◆ **Gold dipped rose:** Perfect for anniversary or anytime you want to say "I love you," \$50. Call 517-927-1972.



## For sale or rent

◆ Beautiful beach front condo: Newly renovated, Ocean Landings Resort & Racquet Club, \$800/week rental April 2–April 9 and April 9–April 16, 2011. 1 bedroom, 2 bathrooms. Full kitchen, dining and living area with queen size sleeper sofa. Balcony overlooking the ocean. Great place for family or cozy for two. On site facilities consist of 2 pools, hot tub. Restaurant and pool grill. Picnic facilities with playground area—shuffle board, tennis, basketball and racquet ball courts. Inside workout facilities. Walking distance from many restaurants and 30 minutes from Orlando. Call 517-525-1363 for further information.

## For rent:

◆ **Suite or individual office:** 2990 East Lake Lansing Road in East Lansing. Will work to meet your specifications. Contact the Clerical-Technical Union, 517-355-1903.

*For rent continued on p. 8*

## 2011 General Membership Meetings

The three remaining Quarterly Membership Meetings in 2011 will be held Wednesday, April 27; Thursday, July 21; and Wednesday, October 26 in Room 252 Erickson Hall. Meetings begin at 5:20, but doors open at 5, so come early to socialize. Membership meetings are for making decisions about the Union, asking questions and receiving updates about Union activities.

## Executive Board Meetings

1st & 3rd Tuesdays at 5:15  
CTU Office

All members welcome.

## President's corner

# Interesting times

By Deb Bittner

I'm told there's an ancient curse: "May you live in interesting times." Well, the times are interesting.

Of course we have the day-to-day defense of the contract and ongoing projects. We also work to quell rumors and put out unexpected fires.

For example, I recently spent the better part of a few days answering email about a message HR sent to some members saying that the university was required to comply with a CTU request for members' restricted addresses.

While "interesting," the issue was unexpected, because we have received restricted addresses since 2004, when the National Labor Relations Board required that we send election notices to each members' home. The only thing new was that we asked for the addresses to be included on our monthly membership download rather than having to order them separately. (All addresses are stored on a secured server.)

I'm glad the members contacted me for



clarification. Almost everyone was understanding once the situation was explained, but it did take up a lot of time.

On a more positive note, I want to commend the administration for being a responsible employer and closing the university during the recent blizzard. It was the right decision, protecting MSU workers and the community by keeping thousands of drivers off local roads and highways. And it was great to have an "adult snow day."

On campus, the EBS project is moving ahead—with some "interesting" results. Several members report that their duties—not just the procedures—

changed significantly under the new system. Some have had duties removed or appropriate access denied. Contact your UR or call the office if you want to talk about how the changes have affected you.

Now, just as we head into contract negotiations, our union is being hit by the biggest legislative assault on labor that anyone I know has ever seen.

Concerned about how some of the proposed laws will affect CTs, your Executive Board passed a resolution to oppose "right to work" and other anti-union legislation (p. 4). We've seen the massive labor turnout to fight similar laws in Wisconsin, and it looks like we will have plenty of opportunity to join other Michigan workers to stand up for our collective bargaining rights.

We have experience with bargaining contracts in bad political and economic climates, so we are ready. Our experience tells us that member involvement will be crucial, so please complete your survey when you receive it and be ready to support your team as we move ahead.

It's going to be a very "interesting" spring.

## Not a spectator sport

**Quote:** "Unions are far more than a kind of employment insurance policy for working people. Plenty of union members and union officials have learned the hard way that when workers come to think of their union as a business that provides service rather than a group of people banding together to fight for common interests, the union quickly loses the clout and credibility needed to defend and advance the members' interests. When an employer looks and sees only a small handful of paid union staff or elected union leaders, and no one standing behind them, pretty soon the employer starts thinking that "the union" isn't really much to contend with. And the truth is, that's right."

—from *The Union Members Complete Guide*, by Michael Mauer



## Rights

*continued from p. 1*

and employers shouldn't be allowed to sign "union security clauses," which require workers to either join a union or pay a fee for the union's efforts on the workers' behalf. In other words, employees should have a "right" to all the benefits and personal representation of a democratically chosen union without having to pay any dues or agency fees. The dues paying members who belong to the unions, on the other hand, would be forced to spend their resources and dues dollars on the "free riders."

Current laws do not *require* union security clauses between unions and employers. They simply permit employers and workers to negotiate such clauses if they are mutually beneficial. "Right to work," therefore, interferes with collective bargaining between workers and their employers and declares that businesses in our state and their workers cannot be trusted.

## What it means for CTs

According to CTU President Deb Bittner, it's a situation that would weaken our collective bargaining efforts at MSU and our contract right at a time when we are embarking on talks for a new agreement with MSU.

"Federal law already protects workers who don't want to be members of a union," she said. The CTU has about 19 agency fee payers who do not belong to the union but pay a fee for the benefits and representation the union secures for them.

"Everyone should pay their share of negotiating and administering the contract," she said. "That's just fair."

"Right to work" will not solve Michigan's problems, Bittner pointed out.

▼It does not create new revenue to help balance the State's budget.

▼It does not guarantee the right to a job.

## CTU resolution to support the right to collective bargaining

**Whereas**, the creation of "right to work" zones will not give anyone a right to employment; and

**Whereas**, the establishment of "right to work" zones will undermine established relationships between labor and employers; and

**Whereas**, union shop security has benefited workers and consumers and helped create a vibrant middle class necessary to growing and maintaining a strong state economy; and

**Whereas**, rights and benefits earned over years of collective bargaining are threatened by recent legislative proposals, including the proposal to allow communities to establish "right to work" zones; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, that the CTU reaffirms its resolution of 2000 in which it declared that the "ability of workers to organize collectively is a fundamental civil right analogous to freedom of association and freedom from discrimination. Workers must be able to decide democratically for themselves if they want a union and how it should be run"; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the CTU opposes proposals to make Michigan a "right to work" state or to establish "right to work" zones within the state; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the CTU of MSU will work in solidarity with other labor groups and organizations to defend against attacks on unions and promote progressive working family policies.

▼It is not part of any economic development. "Right to work" states are suffering the same effects of deindustrialization as Michigan.

▼"Right to work" is divisive and undermines the positive working relationships that usually develop between unions and employers—unions want their employers to succeed.

▼It will not stop organizing or collective bargaining. In fact organizing takes more effort as unions continually organize in workplaces that are not 100%.

▼Furthermore, "It will add to the destruction of the middle class," she said, referring to the fact that workers in other "right to work" states earn significantly less and enjoy far fewer services than those in "closed shop" states. "We can look around right now and see that the growing concentration of wealth in the hands of a few is harming our state and our country."

With Republicans controlling the three branches of Michigan's government, Bittner said, anti-labor forces seem to feel it is a good time to introduce this very divisive proposal.

However, she added, "right to work" is not a partisan issue. Just as some Democrats have let workers down, many Republicans understand the importance of organized labor in building and maintaining a strong economy. Others understand that angering an active constituency of working families could impact their political futures.

This is why it is crucial to contact our elected officials, irrespective of political agendas or party affiliation, and let them know that Right-to-Work is the wrong direction for Michigan. (See contact information in the box on the next page.)

**Work** *continued on next page*

## Work

*continued from previous page*

### Attack on labor

“Right to work” was only one bullet in our new state legislature’s opening salvo aimed straight at working people and their families.

The following bills and resolutions represent a few of the legislative threats to CTs and other employees:

- ▼ **SB 0007** requires public employees to pay no less than twenty percent of the cost of their health care plan (ten percent if the plan is a health savings account).
- ▼ **HB 4052** says that taxpayer funded equipment and facilities cannot be used for union or political activities.
- ▼ **HB 4059** prohibits paying union officials for conducting union business. [Angela Hyde]
- ▼ **SB 0014** repeals the Michigan Health and Safety Act.
- ▼ **SB 0020** prohibits the creation of rules for ergonomics in the workplace. [Karen Ellis]
- ▼ **SJR B** mandates a five percent pay reduction for all public workers.
- ▼ **SJR C** removes collective bargaining rights for health care for public employees and allows legislative control.
- ▼ **HR-10** calls upon the Governor to work to impose an immediate freeze on all state employee compensation, including all wages, for three years.

To view and check the status of Michigan bills and resolutions, visit [www.legislature.mi.gov](http://www.legislature.mi.gov). Choose the type of legislation for which you are searching from the list, and type the number or the letter in the search box.

We will continue to follow these threats to organized labor so that we can discuss them as a union and take action to protect our jobs and our families. Contact your UR if you would like a meeting set up in your district to discuss these and any other union concerns.

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM YOUR UNION

# CAN YOU AFFORD TO LOSE \$5,500 A YEAR



## to the Corporate-Backed “Right to Work” law?

For years, we have been working harder while shouldering more and more of the economic burden. Now, corporate-backed anti-worker politicians hold the majority in the state legislature, and they’re pushing legislation that threatens working families, our wages and our union contract. The “right to work” bill they’re backing:

- ▼ Lowers wages for all workers. \$5,500 a year—That’s how much less the average worker makes in states with these so-called “right to work” laws. In this economy, who can afford a \$5,500 pay cut? (Bureau of Labor Statistics, October 2010)
- ▼ Is unfair to workers who play by the rules. Our union is required to fight for higher wages, better benefits and workplace rights for everyone on the job. But this bill lets free-riders take all the benefits of our union contract without paying their fair share of the costs.
- ▼ Is backed by big business. The bill is backed by the same people who were elected with support from powerful special interests attacking workers across the country with initiatives aimed at lowering wages and undermining our ability to negotiate fair contracts.
- ▼ Endangers worksite safety and health standards. Laws like this one weaken our unions so we can’t bargain for better working conditions—resulting in more injuries and even deaths at work. (“Death on the Job: The Tail of Neglect,” AFL-CIO, 2010)

*Information from [www.aflcio.org](http://www.aflcio.org).*

**Call or write your state legislators today and urge them to oppose it.**

- ▼ To contact your senator about SB 120, visit <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/fysenator/fysenator.htm>.
- ▼ To contact your state representative about HB 4054, visit [http://house.michigan.gov/find\\_a\\_rep.asp](http://house.michigan.gov/find_a_rep.asp).

## WE CAN'T AFFORD “RIGHT TO WORK”

**Q** **uote:** “If any man tells you he loves America, yet hates labor, he is a liar. If any man tells you he trusts America, yet fears labor, he is a fool.”

—Republican President Abraham Lincoln



# Board actions

## July—December 2010

*The following CTU Executive Board discussions took place July through December 2010. All expenditure decisions are included, but the list does not represent meetings in their entirety. CTs can receive copies of complete minutes through the mail or email by contacting the CTU office at 355-1903.*

### July 6, 2010

Transferred \$37,315 from operating savings to checking.

Renewed two-year subscription to *Labor Notes* for \$60.

Discussed the deteriorating state of the union building parking lot, how to proceed with repairs and when.

Agreed that the July quarterly membership meeting is required by the CTU constitution.

### July 20

Voted to send up to two individuals to the annual Michigan State AFL-CIO Community Services Fall Seminar at a cost of \$50 per person.

### August 3

Voted to send two additional people to the annual Michigan State AFL-CIO Community Services Fall Seminar for a total of four at \$50 each.

Donated \$100 to Listening Ear.

Renewed \$220 subscription for Union Communication Services' graphics package.

Donated \$50 to WKAR Talking Book.

### August 17

Declined to participate in the Michigan State AFL-CIO's "Renew America Expo." [Patricia Chavez-Wilson]

Received report that layoffs seem to be leveling off.

Received report that Rosie Garcia has been selected as Chair and Kim

Smith as Secretary of the Union Representative Coordinating Committee.

### September 7

Decided to rekey the upstairs offices to make them more secure for renters.

Declined to donate to Hillel Jewish Student Center.

Placed a \$75 ad in the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Dinner program.

Decided to send up to two people, at \$125 per person, to "Medical Marijuana: Implications in the Workplace," a class offered by MSU Labor Education Program.

Agreed to spend \$50 each for two people to participate in On-line Stewards Training.

Agreed to send one person to "Preparing for Bargaining" class for \$75.

Voted to sponsor two people, at \$20 each, to participate in the webinar, "Legal Issues Surrounding Workers, Unions and Workplace Emails."

Agreed to give a laid off member the option of retaining her UR position if she continues paying union dues.

Agreed to send only two people to a \$20 Labor and Employment Relations Association (LERA) lunch featuring a representative from the U.S. Department of Labor Wages and Hours Division.

Received a report on MI AFL-CIO Community Services Seminar. Discussed the need for a CTU community resources representative.

### September 21

Agreed to remove \$628 from the books for the Educational Loan Program, as advised by our auditors, because we have no way of contacting or pursuing legal action against the three individuals who have defaulted.

Contributed \$50 to the Annual Project Homeless Connect event.

Declined to donate to the Capitol Area Humane Society at this time.

Agreed to provide a basket of union or Michigan made products up to a value of \$50 for Eve's House silent auction.

Renewed \$40 annual membership in National Organization of Women.

Sponsored bus trip for two individuals, at \$50 each, to attend "One Nation, Working Together" march in Washington D.C.

Declined to purchase one \$125 ticket to attend the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame dinner this year.

### October 5

Decided to send an additional three (for a total of five) people to a LERA luncheon about "right to work" for \$20 each.

Authorized up to \$750 to remove two dead trees from the parking lot.

Received report that post retirement healthcare negotiations have been extended due to the inability of the Coalition of Labor Organizations and MSU to reach agreement.

Announced the resignation of the University Services manager and discussed how the union will proceed.

Received report on the "One Nation Rally" in Washington D.C. that was attended by five CTs.

Discussed complaints about the quality of the paper being used for the newsletter.

### October 11 (via email)

Increased the amount of payment for removal of two trees from \$750 to \$1,000, which included stump grinding, cleaning up, laying topsoil, and seeding area.

**Board** continued on next page

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# Membership

*continued from p. 1*

idea of making such donations out of the operating funds.

President Deb Bittner said that the Negotiating Team has started preparing for contract talks. Our contract expires at the end of March. Although we ratified an agreement covering our base wages and health care in 2010, Bittner said, the Team expects these

upcoming talks to be difficult and membership participation to be crucial.

A member asked about the possibility of holding Membership Meetings at lunch. Others responded that one hour isn't enough time to get to a meeting, get information and make decisions, especially since many members have half-hour lunches and people take lunch at different times.

Members voiced concern about the recent attack on unions by some state politicians. According to Bittner, there were 15 anti-worker proposals made in the opening session of the House of Representatives.

Because of concerns and questions that have arisen due to the new EBSF system, Bittner asked members to pay attention to how their work duties may have changed. We also want to monitor the new time management system, so she asked people to pay attention to their sick and vacation accruals.

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## Board

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### October 19

Voted to take nine members with delinquent Educational Loans to small claims court.

Renewed \$65 annual membership in Mid-Michigan LERA.

Donated \$100 to the Capital Area United Way Labor Organization Drive.

Renewed \$183.79 annual subscription to the Lansing State Journal

Decided to ask the membership if there is interest in donating a large amount of money, possibly \$1,000, to The Greater Lansing Food Bank.

Agreed to purchase a server from Vertex Computer at the cost of \$1,995.

Agreed to provide off campus URs a \$50 travel stipend each time they attend union trainings and to pay them retroactively for trainings attended in 2010.

Decided to switch to Comerica Bank for better customer service and to reduce administrative fees.

### November 2

Agreed to donate \$100 to the Greater Lansing Food Bank.

Agreed to send one extra person, for a total of three, to the LERA luncheon on health care at \$20 each. [Ed. note: Event canceled.]

Appointed members to board committees. [Krista Smith]

### November 16

Agreed to purchase a \$25 ad in Capitol City Quilt Guild program.

Agreed to purchase eight tickets at \$25 each and a \$60 ad for Martin Luther King, Jr. Greater Lansing Luncheon.

Donated \$25 to the Capital Area Humane Society.

Received report from the CTU representative to the All-University Traffic Committee.

### December 7

Agreed to place a \$170 ad for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in the State News. [Mary Ann Korry]

Donated \$100 to WKAR Radio Reading Program.

Donated \$100 to The Reading People.

Discussed College of Agriculture reorganization.

Received report that the Joint Health Care Committee continues to meet to work on cutting health care costs.

### December 21

Agreed to send the two contract administrators to the Labor Arbitration Conference in Chicago at a cost of \$375 registration, plus lodging, meals and travel (lowest travel cost available).

Announced the kickoff of preparing for contract negotiations.

Mark Bitman reported on his positive experience with the on-line training program Lynda.com. MSU employees can access it for free at <http://train.msu.edu/lynda/> with an MSU NetID and password.

Betty Walther and Rachel Iseler each won a \$50 door prize. Duferia White and April Moore won CTU sweatshirts.

## UR district news

The following members have petitioned for appointment to UR:

▼ **District 11** (Plant Biology Lab, Pesticide Research, Biology Research, Food Safety and Toxicology): **Katherine Bergdolt.**

▼ **District 12** (Natural Resources, Packaging, Trout Bldg.): **Juli Kerr.**

▼ **District 21** (Holmes, McDonel, Hubbard, Akers, Conrad, IM East): **Karen Jakus.**

▼ **District 30** (Campbell, Central School, Gilchrist, Landon, Mayo, Human Ecol, Union, Williams, Yakeley, Wills House): **Kim Smith.**

Want more information about becoming a UR? Contact URCC Chairperson Becky Sullivan (884-3374, [sulli306@msu.edu](mailto:sulli306@msu.edu)) or Vice President Nancy Gray (353-8632 or [grayn@msu.edu](mailto:grayn@msu.edu)).





**CTU OF MSU**  
**2990 E. LAKE LANSING ROAD**  
**EAST LANSING, MI 48823-6219**

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

## Calendar

**March 1—May 31** Vision care open enrollment through Michigan Employee Benefit Services (MEBS). Look for details in the March *CT News*.

**March 1** CTU Executive Board Meeting, C-T Union Hall, 5:15 p.m. Members welcome.

**March 5** Tri-county Union Label

Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser, UAW 602, 2510 W. Michigan Ave., Lansing, 8:30–12, \$5.

**March 15** CTU Executive Board Meeting, C-T Union Hall, 5:15 p.m. Members welcome.

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## Classifieds

*continued from page 2*

### Services:

◆ **In-home pet sitting:** Qualified, in-home, pet sitting and animal care services. Caretaker holds a degree from MSU in Animal Science, and is a long-time animal owner/caretaker. Less stressful for pets and more affordable than boarding. Please contact Ashley for price quotes and references. *clovis1416@aol.com* or 517-655-8225.

◆ **Quality Resurfacing:** Bathtub, countertop and tile resurfacing is an affordable home improvement. Give us a call for a FREE estimate. 10% discount by mentioning this ad. Visit our website at [www.qualityresurfacing.net](http://www.qualityresurfacing.net).

Call 517-285-0308.

◆ **Capital Area Transportation Authority** offers a ride sharing service called Clean Commute that several CTs are using. Contact Clean Commute toll free (877-921-POOL), locally (517-393-RIDE), by fax (517-394-3733), or website ([www.cata.org/cleancommute/index.html](http://www.cata.org/cleancommute/index.html)).

**Free:** Advertise to your colleagues in the *CT News*. Contact Cheryllee Finney at [ctnews@msu.edu](mailto:ctnews@msu.edu). The *CT News* accepts ads from CTU members on items for sale and/or services provided by CTU members and/or their household family members.

## Bargaining prep

Watch your email for notification of an electronic membership survey that your bargaining team will use for upcoming negotiations.

## Solidarity

Lois Seifring (the woman who delivered the CTU coffee breaks) has resigned as chairperson of Solidarity Committee after many years of service. We thank her for her work and dedication in this role.

Colleen Drake and Betty Walther have agreed to co-chair the committee.