

CT News



CLERICAL-TECHNICAL UNION OF
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Volume XXXVIII, Issue 3

Organized and Independent since 1974!

April 2011



Lansing, April 13, 2011—CTU joined 5,000 to 10,000 Michigan workers and our allies at the Capitol to protest the attack on public services, education, the elderly and working families by Governor Rick Snyder and the majority of State House and Senate lawmakers. The event lasted from 1 to after 6 p.m., which allowed local students and workers to participate. Huge quantities of canned goods were also collected for the Greater Lansing Food Bank to help those affected by many of the proposed cuts.

President's corner

It is really that bad!

By Deb Bittner

And the news just keeps getting worse.

In almost every issue of the *CT News* over the past year, we have discussed the Michigan economy, our personal financial struggles, and the efforts of our employer to balance its budget with a minimum of harm to students, employees and critical programs. And we have talked about how we can all chip in and help work toward solutions.

CTs are “making sacrifices” every day at every level of their lives in order to be part of the solution. CTs know what problems *really* look like. CTs know the stress levels. As we keep saying,

we are not the enemy. We are citizens who work and shop and live and participate in Michigan cities, towns, communities. We are law-abiding tax payers.

The recent assault shouldn't come as a surprise, really. We know that labor, in general, has been losing ground economically and that many unions have been weakened by anti-worker laws and practices. We know that anti-worker lawmakers have gained the upper hand in State politics. But the recent all-out assault on public employees has been so abrupt and so vicious that it makes our heads spin.

As public employees, we find ourselves on the front lines. And it sure

President *continued on p. 3*



Action Alert!

Politicians are unfairly exploiting Michigan's economic crisis to attack students, seniors and working families. The Michigan State AFL-CIO has compiled a list of *over 40 pieces of anti-worker legislation* introduced since the beginning of the year.

The issues

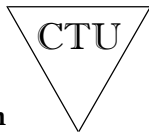
Some of the proposals that would directly impact CTs include:

SB 7: This bill passed the House on April 13 and has been passed to the Senate. It will require public employees to pay no less than 20 percent of their health care premiums.

SJR B: This proposed constitutional amendment would empower the legislature to impose a five percent pay cut for all public employees, including college and university employees. That lowered amount would then be frozen for a period of three years, and not subject to bargaining. The proposal is in the Reforms, Restructuring and Reinventing Committee.

HB 4059: On April 13, a bill passed in the Michigan House that

Action *continued on p. 4*



Clerical-Technical Union
of Michigan State University
2990 East Lake Lansing Road
East Lansing, MI 48823-2281

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

Phone: (517) 355-1903

Fax: (517) 353-3284

Website: www.msu.edu/user/ctumsu

CTU EXECUTIVE BOARD

President:

Deb Bittner ctupres@msu.edu

Vice President:

Nancy Gray grayn@msu.edu

Treasurer:

Jan Wallace wallac12@msu.edu

Secretary:

Pamela Brock brockp@msu.edu

Directors:

Willie Paulsen paulsenw@msu.edu

Walt Peebles peeblew@msu.edu

Jeanette Robertson robertso@msu.edu

Janet Roe-Darden jroe@msu.edu

Norma Teague teaguen@msu.edu

Duferia White whitedu@msu.edu

Jennifer Woods woods@msu.edu

CTU STAFF

Contract Administrators

John Klusinske ctuca2@msu.edu

Dan McNeil ctuca1@msu.edu

Financial Manager

Patricia Shackleton ctumngr@msu.edu

Organizational Manager

Barb Harris ctustaff@msu.edu

Communications Specialist

Cherylee Finney ctnews@msu.edu

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

Services:

◆ Tree trimming and removal:

Old brush piles removed. No job too small. Not only will I cut your trees, I will cut your cost!!!!!! NO TRASH PLEASE. Jeff Mitchner, 517-562-1080, email mitchne1@yahoo.com.

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.

Ride share:

◆ 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).

Free: Advertise to your colleagues in the *CT News*. Contact Cherylee Finney at 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.

2011 General Membership Meetings

The remaining Quarterly Membership Meetings in 2011 will be held 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.

Sometimes you have to laugh



Overeducated

A young man was hired by a supermarket and reported for his first day of work. The manager gave him a broom and said, "Son, your first job will be to sweep out the store."

"But I'm a college graduate," the young man replied indignantly.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't realize that," said the manager. "Here, give me the broom—I'll show you how."

—Union Communications Services



"We've outsourced payroll to a Las Vegas-based company. Do you want your paycheck, or do you want to let it ride?"

UR district news

District 20 (Eppley, Owen, Shaw, N Business College Complex): **Tammy Jo Sopocy** has petitioned for reappointment to UR. She will be appointed to the position if no other CTs express an interest in the position by 5 p.m. on May 13.

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

President

continued from p. 1

feels like a battleground. Every day a new bill is either introduced or passed that targets us with some kind of penalty because of where we work and how we do business. Some of the bills obviously are meant to destroy unions while others seem designed to eliminate our ability to live in this State and do the normal stuff adults do, like buy groceries, pay bills, let our kids play on athletic teams, drink coffee with our friends—just every day, normal life stuff. How do you do any of it if you cannot take home a paycheck that meets basic necessities?

I know that not every legislative proposal affects CTs. And with all of the pressures on us as an organization and on each of us as individuals, I understand that some of you might ask why we should care about proposed laws that affect other workers only.

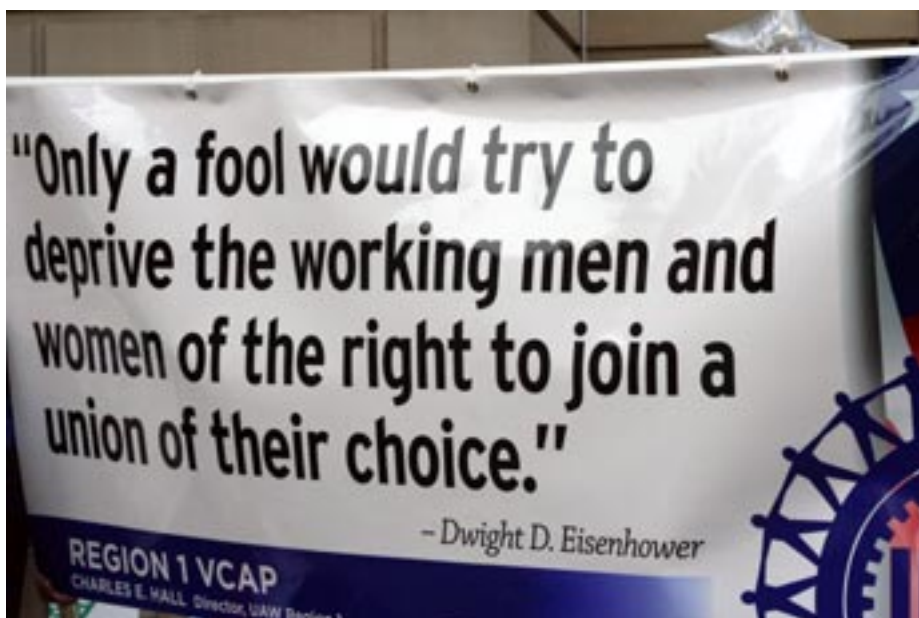
I believe that eventually all of these bills will indeed affect us. A teacher or a bus driver or a plumber or a worker earning poverty level wages is a community member who could be your neighbor. Their loss will affect the owners of the small businesses who cannot sponsor the little league team and who may need to shut down and lay off more employees. Then the tax base drops and you need another millage to keep the fire department. The cycle spins viciously.

If, as Senator Gretchen Whitmer suggests, a budget isn't just a financial document but a statement of our values, then what are we doing as a state when we raid the K-12 School Aid Fund to give businesses a billion dollar tax break that hasn't ever been linked to refreshing an economy? How does cutting the hard-earned pay of workers and teachers help our future economy when our kids cannot learn?

Where will jobs be created by punishing workers for using a collective voice to solve workplace issues and help their employer succeed? Where will jobs be created by harming employees now that the ergonomic standards are eliminated? Where is the common sense? Where is shared sacrifice?

has ties to a group that made a controversial public land grab in the town. He has now ruled that elected officials of that city can only meet, approve minutes and adjourn meetings. They are prohibited from making decisions.

EFMs can be appointed for cities,



What is really missing from all of this chaos is straight talk and problem-solving. Workers are not asked for input and are ignored when they try to give it. I hear this from citizens everywhere, from business owners to rank and file members to faculty to grandparents. The dialog is not there. The proper framing of the issues is not there. This is harmful and destructive.

If we aren't vigilant, our middle class way of life could be gone before we know it. At one of the many town hall meetings I've attended, we were told that the budget has never moved this fast through the legislative process before. That is scary.

Political favors are being handed out. For example, the Emergency Financial Manager appointed in Benton Harbor

townships, counties, schools and universities in financial stress. With revenue sharing slashed and budgets to schools and universities cut drastically, who is next? [Norma Ruiz]

Yes, the bad news seems to keep getting worse, but there's good news, too. The good news is that we, the citizens of this state, are organizing and responding to the attacks as a group. We are embracing the concept that we need to stand up for others today because it might be us tomorrow.

There are plenty of ways to be involved and be part of the solution. In this issue of the newsletter, we provide a lot of information and present several avenues for participation. Many CTs are already engaged in the struggle. Please join us.

Action: How we can fight the assault on workers

continued from p. 1

would prohibit MSU and other public employers from agreeing to pay mem-



bers for time released to do union work—including collective bargaining

and grievance representation. The bill has been sent to the Senate.

HB 4052: This bill is still in committee (Oversight, Reform and Ethics). It would prohibit 1) public employees and their unions from using public buildings for meetings; 2) union members from talking to their coworkers about joining a union; 3) using email to communicate about union events.

HB 4152: This bill would prohibit employers from paying step increases or covering increases in the cost of health care when employees are working without a contract while bargaining continues. The bill, which also prohibits any retroactive pay to cover these costs when the contract is finally settled, has passed in the House and is in its second reading in the Senate.

We're used to outrageous bills being proposed and languishing in committee. These bills, however, are moving through the system with surprising speed, so we must act quickly.

For example, **HB 4245**, the bill allowing the appointment of an Emergency Financial Manager who can unilaterally remove elected officials and overturn contracts, including union contracts, has already passed and been put into effect with some disturbing consequences. [Kathy Ganser]

Other bills making their way through the system would *require* privatization of certain services, allow legislators to regulate our health care benefits, create right-to-work zones, etc.

What can we do?

The CTU leadership is very aware of what is happening downtown and is working to protect our jobs, benefits and workplace rights.

On February 15, the CTU Executive Board voted to participate in the Michigan State AFL-CIO's legislative



battle against these and other proposals that will hurt Michigan workers. As part of our participation, the Board agreed to donate

\$480 per month (30¢ per member) for three months to the struggle.

In addition, CTU board members, staff, union representatives and members have joined several demonstrations to oppose lawmakers' decisions that will destroy the middle class in Michigan. CTU President Deb Bittner has been invited to participate in the local Community Action Team and the multi-union labor/group table.

Whether or not you, as an individual union member, can make it to a demonstration or join a protest group, you can lend your voice to the cause. The Michigan State AFL-CIO provides a handy spreadsheet that lists the bills

and their current status. The spreadsheet has an "Act Now!" column where



a click of your mouse provides information on a bill, suggestions for letters and a direct email connection to your legislator. You can also use the information to prepare your own letters and mail them to lawmakers. See www.miaflcio.org/legislative-action/legislative-report.html.

The spreadsheet also facilitates letters to the editors of local papers. The letter to the editor section is one of the most widely read sections of the newspaper and can reach a large audience. It allows community members to comment on the way issues are being addressed in the media and to influence the topics the local paper may choose to cover. Elected officials often monitor this section of the newspaper and take notice of constituents' opinions. Remember, editors want to hear from you in your own words.

Prefer to make a phone call? The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) offers a phone connection that makes it easy to contact your elected leaders on selected topics of interest to workers. Just call 1-888-793-3601 to hear the topic being featured, key in your zip code, and wait for a connection.



MSU labor program will comply with FOIA request

MSU's Labor Education Program will "fully comply" with the Mackinac Center's request for materials under the Freedom of Information Act, according to LEP Director John Beck. Beck was quoted in the online *Michigan Messenger*.

The Mackinac Center, a right-wing think tank in Michigan, is seeking emails from LEP—as well as from labor programs at Wayne State and the

University of Michigan—that contain the words "Madison," "Wisconsin," and "Rachel Maddow," among others.

The request is very broad, and compiling the materials might be quite expensive and time consuming. In addition, the results could include a lot of extraneous material. For example, a search for "Madison" could include all correspondence with MSU's James Madison College.



GEU wins contract

Congratulations to MSU's Graduate Employees Union on their new contract. GEU's bargaining team reached a tentative agreement at 6:35 a.m. on Friday, April 15, after a thirteen-and-a-half-hour negotiations session.

The three-year agreement, which covers MSU's approximately 1,300 teaching assistants, provides for a wage increase each year, improved health care, a better dental plan and an increase in the tuition waiver.

First our jobs, then our art

Maine Governor Paul LePage has removed a mural from the state's Department of Labor building. The mural depicted Maine workers, including colonial-era shoemaking apprentices, lumberjacks, a shipyard "Rosie the Riveter" and a 1986 paper mill strike.

After several business officials complained, LePage (R) deemed the scenes too one-sided in favor of unions, reported Steven Greenhouse in *The New York Times*. [Elaine Bailey]

The 11-panel mural is "based on historical fact," artist Judy Taylor told *The Times*. "I'm not sure how you can say history is one-sided."

—from UCS Labor News Service



Take action!

Find out the latest on legislative proposals targeting the middle class, link to copies of the bills and get pointers on writing letters at the Michigan State AFL-CIO website:

www.miaflcio.org/legislative-action/legislative-report.html

Be counted when you call your legislator. Use the AFSCME phone connection to make your voice heard:

1-888-793-3601

If you want to contact your elected officials directly, you can find information for doing so under "Links" on the CTU website:

www.msu.edu/~ctumsu/



Board actions

January—March 2011

The following CTU Executive Board discussions took place January through March 2011. 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.

January 11 (via email)

Transferred \$36,000 from operating savings to the checking account.

January 18

Discussed the threat of proposed “Right to Work” laws in Michigan.

Received report from CTU Investment Advisor Fred Schaard and Financial Planner Luke Terry of Rehmann Financial about the performance of our investments and new opportunities.

Agreed to spend \$30 each to send two people to the Michigan AFL-CIO Community Activist Class.

Confirmed Saturday, January 22, preparation session for the bargaining team.

February 1

Agreed to subscribe to the *Society of Human Resource Management* magazine for \$170 per year.

Decided to send three people to a seminar on privatization at a cost of \$50 each. [Seminar subsequently cancelled.]

Approved \$1,585 to 1) replace permanently “on” lighting fixtures in the lobby with ones on a timer, and 2) install weather proofing and re-caulk windows above the header in the South entrance way.

Agreed to repair malfunctioning security lights and install new ones

for \$922.24.

Agreed to pay \$250.04 to install a light in the kitchen.

Voted to spend \$701.88 to install motion detectors at the entrances to the building for security purposes.

Agreed to send up to four individuals to the MSU Labor Education Program Labor Law Conference at the cost of \$125 per person.

Approved \$100 for a table and five registrants at the Michigan Summit.

February 15

Donated \$480 per month for three months to participate in Michigan State AFL-CIO’s legislative battle against State proposals that will hurt Michigan workers, including CTs.

At the direction of members attending the January Membership Meeting, agreed to donate \$1,000 to the Lansing Food Bank and \$500 to the MSU Student Food Bank.

Passed a resolution against “right-to-work” proposals by Michigan legislators.

March 1

Donated \$75 (Friend level) to Meridian Township recycling events.

Approved up to \$6,000 to replace worn, deteriorating conference room tables with ones made in Michigan.

March 15

Agreed to purchase a computer monitor, cost not to exceed \$175 (including labor), for the CTU Financial Manager.

Approved purchase of a defibrillator for \$1,245.

Donated \$50 to the 23rd Annual Community-Wide PAC-MAC Spelling Bee. [Diane Kolk]

Received Finance Committee recommendation to decline a request from the Humane Society for a donation.

Received report on the educational loan process: Collections on delinquent accounts have been put on hold pending an independent audit of all loans and the process.



"We felt a dance competition to decide promotions was better than a seniority system."

CTU notables



UR Amanda VanKoevering with her bachelor's degree.

While working full time and raising her children, **Amanda VanKoevering** pursued a Multidisciplinary Bachelor of Arts degree from Sienna Heights University, an educational institution that caters to the working adult. After many years of effort, she has achieved her goal.

“Without educational assistance [secured under Article 14 of our contract] and without CTU’s Gerri Olson Loan Program, I would not have been able to get this diploma,” she said, adding that her department, Internal Audit, was also supportive.

VanKoevering completed her associate’s degree at LCC when her children were babies but didn’t return to school for over a decade.

Taking the Excellence Training in Competencies for CTs classes through MSU Human Resource Development, along with coaching from facilitator Lois Wolf-Morgan, put her back on the path to completing a four-year program.

VanKoevering’s next educational goal is a master’s in homeland security.

“But if we lose educational assistance, it would stop my educational pursuits, she said.”



April 4—**Colleen Drake** (right) was recognized during a special ceremony of the Lansing City Council for making a positive difference in her neighborhood. The council acknowledged Drake’s receipt of the Bea Christy community service award earlier this year. Jerry Ambrose, Executive Assistant to Mayor Bernero, and Council Member Carol Wood presented the recognition.

Vegan potluck at CTU

By Marian Erickson, Retired CT

Want to try something different?

Join us for:

A plant-based (vegan) potluck

**Sunday, May 1
6-7:30 p.m.
C-T Union Building**

CTU is located at 2990 E. Lake Lansing Road in East Lansing (the Campbell Building on the northeast corner of Lake Lansing and Hagadorn Roads). Call 355-1903 for help with directions.

This way of eating has been “scientifically proven to help you feel bet-

ter, live longer, lose weight and gain health,” according to Dean Ornish, MD. Dr. Ornish was influential in President Bill Clinton’s decision to adopt a vegan diet to improve his heart condition.

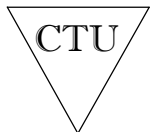
The event is cosponsored by the CTU of MSU and EverybodyReads community bookstore, 2019 Michigan Ave., Lansing.

Please bring a dish and your recipe containing no animal products (meat, eggs or dairy).

There is no admission charge. All are welcome. Donations can be made to the Greater Lansing Food Bank.

Contact Marian Erickson for more information or recipe ideas at 517-394-5485 or mle@msu.edu.





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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Calendar

May 3 CTU Executive Board Meeting, C-T Union Hall, 5:15 pm Members welcome.

May 5 USA/Union Label Road Show and Open House. Hosted by Four Corner Promotions at the Michigan State AFL-CIO offices (419 S. Washington Ave., 1st Floor Conference Rm., Lansing), 4 to 7 pm. Come to discuss all of your union-made needs. Light hors d'oeuvres, beer and wine will be served.

May 17 CTU Executive Board Meeting, C-T Union Hall, 5:15 p.m. Members welcome.

May 17 Deadline for health care open enrollment.

May 30 Deadline to nominate a CT for the Gliozzo award. Forms and information can be found under HR News at www.hr.msu.edu/.

May 31 Enrollment deadline for vision care. Information is available on the CTU website at www.msu.edu/~ctumsu/. [Laurie Ruiz]

Care.com

Michigan State University has a new partnership with Care.com, a national firm that will help the MSU community connect with a variety of family care services in their own homes.

MSU faculty, staff and students will have free access to a search service for babysitters, nannies, special-needs care, senior-home care, pet sitters, tutors and housekeepers through a national network of caregivers.

There are limited free spaces available to MSU families. The retail rate for the service is \$35 per month. MSU is covering this expense to make it easier for MSU families to access these services.

Families in need of caregivers can search by ZIP code, service and pay rate. The search service is free, but patrons will pay for the caregivers' services.

To learn more, visit www.care.com.

Sign up at www.care.com/group/msu. To register for the free access you must use your MSU Net ID email address.

For more information contact Lori Strom at the MSU Family Resource Center: call 517-432-3745, email frc@hr.msu.edu, or visit the website at www.frc.msu.edu.

Bittner elected CLO president

CTU President Deb Bittner was elected president of the Coalition of Labor Organizations at MSU on April 20. She was elected by the leaders of the other MSU unions.

She had filled the position on an interim basis for several months.

Charlie Heckman, President of Local 999, Council 25, AFSCME, was elected vice president.