

Michigan wants to work!

Backers of Right to Work legislation are expected to start the new year with a renewed attack on Michigan workers' collective bargaining rights.

Legislative proposals are pending since last year that would require RTW rules for school employees and establish the ability to declare RTW "zones" around the state.

An all-out push to declare Michigan the twenty-third RTW state is underway from some Republican legislators. In a January 11 interview with CBS Detroit (WXYZ AM 1270), Representative Mike Shirkey (R-Clark), said RTW legislation has been written but not yet introduced. If it is introduced, it could move quickly.

Governor Snyder has said he does not want to deal with such a divisive issue during his term, but he has not made a commitment to veto a RTW law if it comes across his desk.

The idea of a "right" to work may
Work continued on p. 4



Jobless benefits not just a stopgap

Downtown Lansing, December 8, 2011—Workers rallied outside the office of Congressman Mike Rogers for an extension of national unemployment benefits while representatives from the rally met inside with one of his staffers. With Rogers' support, Congress did extend unemployment benefits until the end of February.

Long-term unemployment benefits, extended by Congress just before Christmas in a last-minute deal, don't just keep the proverbial wolf from the door during hard times.

Unemployed workers who receive unemployment compensation do more to find a job than those who never receive benefits, reports Ross Eisenbrey of the Economic Policy Institute (EPI). Research by Carl Van Horn and the Heldrich Center at Rutgers University shows that jobless workers who get unemployment benefits "do more online job searching, are more likely to look at newspaper classified ads, and are more likely to send email inquiries and applications to prospective employers," says Eisenbrey.

"The reason unemployed Americans can't find jobs isn't a failure to look," Eisenbrey adds. They can't find jobs because there are 10.6 million more unemployed workers than there are available jobs, according to EPI.

—Story supplemented with information from Union Communications Services, January 4, 2012

Quote: "Right to work laws are a welcome mat for companies who care most about low-wage, unskilled labor and who are committed to a region only until they are able to relocate to someplace where the laws protecting workers are even weaker."

—Professor Ann Markusen, University of Minnesota

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY

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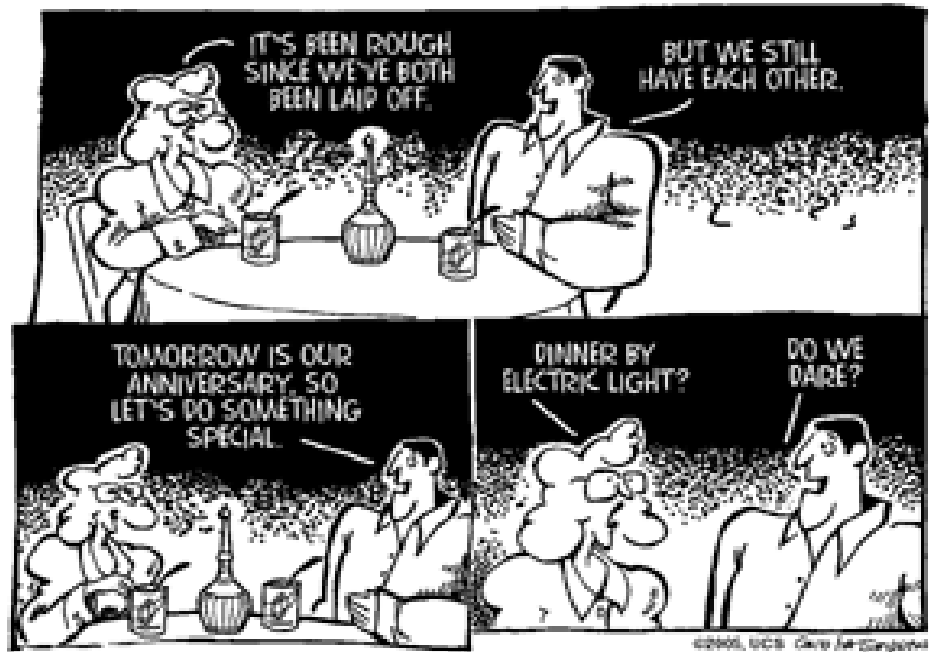
Editorial Policy: The *CT News* is the voice of our union. It is our vehicle for communicating, on a regular basis, the issues that confront us as workers. Through this newsletter we explain union policies, show how dues are spent, and explain the views and actions of the elected leadership for evaluation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



CT Classifieds

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.

Services:

◆ **Custom picture framing and calligraphy services:** Framing items

from posters to keepsakes. Hand lettering of wedding invitations, announcements, etc. One-on-one service. Below retail pricing. By appointment. "If you can hold it, I can frame it." Contact Nansie at Art Affairs, Ink, 517-230-4084 evenings, or ArtAffairsInk@yahoo.com.

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:

◆ **CTU Conference Room:** Available free to members (with deposit). For non-members, \$25/hour plus deposit. For questions, reservations, etc., contact the CTU office at 355-1903.

◆ **Advertise** to your colleagues in the *CT News*. Contact Cheryllee Finney at Cheryl@ctumsu.org. 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.

2012 General Membership Meetings

Quarterly Membership Meetings in 2012 will be held in 252 Erickson Hall on Tuesday, January 24; Thursday, April 19; Thursday, July 19; and Wednesday, October 24. 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.

The fight in 2012

By Deb Bittner

We've said it before but it is worth repeating: "What we win in collective bargaining can be lost at the ballot box!" Just look at last year. It was a bad one for workers in more ways than just lost jobs and lower take home pay. See page 5 for a recap on just how bad it was for workers legislatively.

That's the bad news. The really bad news? It's not over.

Happy 2012!

The new year is starting out with our elected leaders working on a stockpile of bad proposals that can be used to further disenfranchise workers, erode collective bargaining rights, hurt labor unions and weaken our social safety nets. Such losses just make it worse for all workers, union and non-union alike.

Not content with all of the harm done to schools and teachers by bills passed in 2011, many legislators are acting at the behest of special interests that have them pursuing privatization schemes to an absurd level.

One proposal, if passed, will allow private operators to open "cyber schools" that receive the full per-pupil allowance for every student they take from public schools even though they won't need to provide staff support, transportation, extracurricular activities, or building maintenance. Will these "cyber schools" have to follow state rules that protect our kids and make sure boys and girls get equal opportunities? And at what point do we stop calling it "public" education?

The 2012 war on public workers is in full swing. There are proposals call-

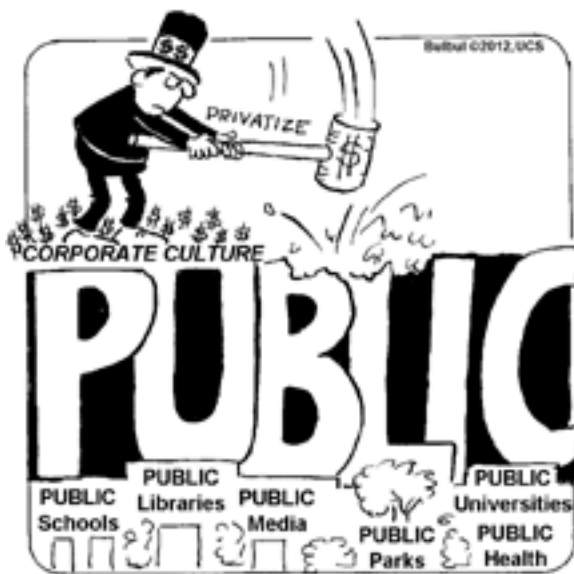
ing for the freeze or reduction of pay for public and state workers. There is a proposal mandating public schools to contract out custodial, transportation and food services. And it is only a matter of time before the attacks on public workers' retirement plans are directed at university employees. Also, expect to see the new laws forcing public workers to pay more for their health care—regardless of the many sacrifices made at the bargaining table—aimed at us.

Project Labor Agreements were outlawed by the state (although they continue to be protected under federal law) in 2011, but there is still another proposal to undermine contract laborers. This one would repeal Michigan's Prevailing Wage Act, a law that requires fair wages for those contracted to work on state projects. The only reason to pass such legislation is to speed the race to the bottom for wages and benefits. It just rewards the lowest, cheapest bidder, not necessarily a good thing when quality and craftsmanship are at issue.

Unions and unionized workers, of course, have been and will be the target of much of the legislation. One

Daily bill update

The Michigan State AFL-CIO provides an excellent update on state legislative actions affecting workers. Go to www.miaflcio.org/legislative-action/legislative-report.html for the spreadsheet, which includes links to the bills and sample letters for local newspapers and elected officials.



group of proposals that explicitly zeroes in on unions would prohibit payroll deduction for union dues. Another states that taxpayer funded equipment and facilities couldn't be used for union or political activities although other groups could use them.

And, to top it all, we expect Right to Work to be proposed (p. 1). We all know that this doesn't mean more jobs, especially jobs that provide a decent standard of living for ourselves, let alone our families.

One has to ask why? Why all the attacks? Why all the unreasonable-ness? Why kick workers when they are already struggling to survive? Why turn on poor and working families instead of taking actions that truly improve Michigan's economy? Why? Why! Why? None of it makes sense. And none of the legislative posturing has improved life for the majority of workers—those of us who count our job as our biggest asset.

A friend once told me that when you become the target for something that is totally "over the top," it might be because you are so powerful that you threaten the opposition into reacting with a very big stick. This is how I see the current attack on unions. We stand

2012 continued on p. 7

Work

continued from p. 1

sound appealing in this climate where many have lost or are in danger of losing their jobs. Michigan workers want jobs. However, as Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “Right to Work” is a false slogan that “provides no ‘rights’ and no ‘works.’”

Does RTW create jobs?

Proponents of RTW say that companies are flocking to states with these laws. Not true. In fact, RTW laws may actually harm a state’s economic prospects. Many RTW states have suffered manufacturing job loss just like Michigan. [Nancy Sehlke]

Between 1994 and 2005, North Carolina’s manufacturing job loss, both in absolute numbers and in the decline in the overall share of manufacturing employment, was far greater than that of Michigan, according to the Michigan State AFL-CIO. Michigan lost 170,000 factory jobs (20 percent of its manufacturing employment) while North Carolina lost 251,000 such jobs (31 percent). Clearly, RTW is not the answer to Michigan’s factory job crisis.

Politicians from Texas like to brag that jobs are growing in their state without acknowledging that “the state’s job growth has come entirely through government jobs, while the private sector shrank,” according to a new study entitled “Working Hard to Make Indiana Look Bad: The Tortured, Uphill Case for ‘Right-to-Work’” (2012).

Another study, “Does ‘Right-to-Work’ Create Jobs? Answers from Oklahoma” (2011) examines the economic consequences of enacting RTW laws in the



current era of globalization. While most RTW laws have been in place for three decades or more, Oklahoma’s law was enacted in 2001. Manufacturing employment in Oklahoma, which increased in the 10 years prior to the enactment of the RTW law, fell steadily in the years following it, suggesting that the law had little impact on the state’s manufacturing sector. In fact, the number of out-of-state businesses opening plants in Oklahoma decreased following the adoption of RTW. Oklahoma’s law did not buffer it from the country’s employment crisis in 2001-2003 or the Great Recession.

When asked what attracts them to particular states for investment, employers don’t cite RTW laws. Instead, they list things like strong education systems, world-class universities, robust digital infrastructure, and a skilled and stable workforce (Working Hard to Make Indiana Look Bad).

What about employee freedom?

Under current law in Michigan, workers democratically decide whether or not to have a union and what to pay in dues. The union then negotiates for and represents *all* the workers. Individuals who exercise their right to decline membership pay a reduced “agency

fee,” which must go solely toward negotiation and representation.

RTW laws make it illegal for unionized workers to negotiate contracts that require each employee who enjoys the benefit of the contract to pay his or her share of the costs of negotiating and policing it.

Therefore, some members, known as free riders, can opt to not pay dues, although the law requires that they get the same benefits and representation.

Advocates of RTW laws say they give individual workers the “freedom” to work without being required to pay anything to a union.

What really happens is that RTW laws limit the resources of the union while requiring the same representation for members and non-members alike, thereby undermining the union’s effectiveness in defending members and negotiating higher wages and benefits.

A strong union ensures workers a voice in the workplace. Weakening or eliminating the union does not “free” them.

However, it can impoverish them, according to the study “Right to Work: The Wrong Answer for Michigan’s Economy” (2011). [Lisa Hurley]

“Wages in right-to-work states are 3.2% lower than those in non-RTW states,” according to the study, and the “average full-time, full-year worker in a RTW state makes about \$1,500 less annually.” The rate of employer sponsored

Race *continued on next page*

WE CAN'T AFFORD 'RIGHT TO WORK' FOR LESS

MI Labor attacked in 2011

In 2011, Michigan workers and our unions took it on the chin from those who were elected to represent us. Here's a partial accounting:

Taxes were shifted to workers and retirees. Michigan pensioners were hit with new taxes and many others in the middle class lost tax breaks while busi-

nesses received a huge \$1,800,000,000 tax break with no conditions or requirements for job creation.

Public workers were vilified. Our police, fire fighters, teachers and other public workers were blamed and left footing the bill—through layoffs, higher health care costs, diminished

pensions, etc.—for the economic problems brought on by an irresponsible and culpable financial sector.

The strategy was to turn workers against each other. Corporate interests and their political henchmen continued their divide and conquer strategy on those of us who work for a living. Worried about the loss of your job? Blame it on teacher's pensions. Why should a public employee get to keep affordable health care if you don't have it? A particularly telling example was the recent loss of health care for families with domestic partner relationships. Little money will be saved, but many politicians found it to be a good issue to exploit on moral or religious grounds. They certainly don't want us to see it for what it is, another step toward denying good, affordable health care to the families of all public workers. They hope we're so short-sighted that we don't understand the implications.

Voters were overruled. Michigan now has Emergency Managers with the
Attack continued on next page

Race

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health insurance is 2.6 percentage points lower in RTW states and employer sponsored pensions are 4.8 percentage points lower. If RTW was universal and these statistics were applied to the nation as a whole, it would mean 2 million fewer insured workers and an additional 3.8 million without pensions.

The study compared all workers, not just union members, to those in RTW states (but did acknowledge that non-unionized workers pay a wage penalty of 3.0%, a health benefit penalty of 2.8%, and a pension penalty of 5.3%). By comparing all workers, the study shows the negative impact of RTW on wages whether or not the workers belong to unions.

It's a race to the bottom. Weakened unions negotiate contracts with lower wages and fewer benefits, meaning workers spend less on housing, food, education and other necessities. Wages for non-union workers also decline because employers no longer need to compete with union contracts. Lower wages mean fewer tax revenues for our public services—services that are critical to effective economic development and attracting investment.

Right to work / wrong for CTs!

The CTU Executive Board passed a resolution in February 2011 opposing

RTW zones and reaffirming 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."

The 2011 resolution stated that "the CTU opposes proposals to make Michigan a 'right to work' state" and pledged to "work in solidarity with other labor groups and organizations to defend against attacks on unions and promote progressive working family policies."

Since then, the CTU has contributed to labor's fight against anti-worker legislation by showing up at rallies, by working in solidarity with unions and other groups engaged in this struggle, and through financial contributions.

As public workers, we are in the cross hairs, and we need to stay educated on the issues as we move into the new year. For updates, check out the CTU website at www.ctumsu.org/news. Take part in conversations about these issues, and take action by writing letters, attending rallies, and voting.

The studies cited in the above article were published by the Economic Policy Institute.



"We're playing pin the blame on the workers."

Attack

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power to overrule the democratic process. They can cancel contracts, including union contracts, sell public property, and take over our schools and local governments. EMs are to be sent in if a local unit of government becomes financially stressed. Ironically, the stress has, in many cases, been caused or exacerbated by state cuts in revenue sharing and education budgets.

Teachers were targeted. Everyone—including teachers—recognizes the need to hold educators accountable, but laws passed and/or proposed in 2011 often undermine accountability while

eliminating seniority rights and prohibiting collective bargaining on school employees' benefits and working conditions. Corporate backed legislators also moved toward privatizing our schools by lifting the cap on the number of charter schools that can operate in the state regardless of their performance.

Project Labor Agreements were outlawed by the state. PLAs are used with contractors to safeguard the integrity of a project, protect taxpayers from predatory contractors and help ensure that middle-class workers are paid decent wages so they can provide for their families. In a political move, Michigan politicians banned PLAs even though they are still protected by federal law.

Workplace safety was compromised. It is now illegal for state agencies to establish ergonomic rules or regulations, meaning workers will be more prone to injuries on the job and more susceptible to lost time on the job resulting in workers' compensation claims.

Workers injured on the job were prescribed more pain. In the final days of 2011, it became harder for injured workers to receive worker's compensation benefits. The new law (Public Act 266 of 2011) cut benefits by subtracting "imaginary wages" from the worker's compensation formula—whether or not they were actually earned; cut benefits for older workers by subtracting an "imaginary pension" from the worker's compensation formula—regardless of financial ability or intent to retire; and gave employers more power to dictate which doctor injured workers must see for medical treatment.

The unemployed were told to do with less. Unemployment benefits were cut from 26 to 20 weeks in April 2011, but that 23% reduction wasn't good enough for the special interests driving our legislators. A new law will force workers



to take much lower paying jobs. Under the old law, a laid off worker would lose benefits if he or she refused an offer of work that paid 70% of their gross wages from their previous employment. The new standard is 120% of the worker's unemployment benefit after a maximum of 10 weeks of benefits. Laid off workers who have spent a number of years learning their trade will be forced to take lower paying jobs rather than being given the time to look for work similar to what they lost. If they are then laid off from the lower paid job, they can be forced into a job paying even less after 10 weeks. The effect is a downward spiral on wages.

That was 2011. But this is a new year, right? [Kathy Bergdolt]

In addition to fighting the impact of anti-worker and anti-middle class laws that were passed last year, Michigan workers are facing a whole new set of legislative challenges in 2012 (See "Michigan Wants to Work," p. 1, and "The Fight in 2012," p. 3). And almost all of the lawmakers who made it their priority to stamp out workers' rights are still in office.

The good news? This is an election
Vote continued on next page



Lynda.com

Access to the Lynda.com on-line training library has been extended for another year until October 15, 2012. [Cathy Morrison]

All full and part time faculty and staff have access to MSU's on-line library of more than 53,000 video tutorials. Topics include Adobe applications, Microsoft Office, Web design, programming, etc. For access, follow the instructions at www.train.msu.edu/lynda/.

Direct questions to the Academic Technology Services (ATS) Help Desk at 432-6200.

UR district news

The following CTs have been appointed to UR positions:

▼**District 1** (Admin. Bldg. Floors B, 1): **April Moore** can be contacted at 432-3956, mooreap@msu.edu.

▼**District 9** (Life Sciences): Contact **Stephen Stofflet** at Stephen Stofflet, 884-0409, stofflet1@msu.edu.

▼**District 15** (Nisbet, Manly Miles, Univ. Printing, Spartan Village Community Center): Contact **Rosie Garcia** at 884-0205 or garciar@msu.edu.

The following members have petitioned for reappointment to UR positions in their districts. If no other members from their respective dis-

tricts express an interest in the positions before 5 p.m., February 7, they will be appointed.

▼**District 17** (Grounds, Physical Plant, Wilson, Holden, Case, Wonders, Duffy Daugherty Football Building) and **District 34** (Agriculture Hall, Cook Hall): **Pam Sloan** is stepping down from her UR position in **District 17** and petitioning for the **District 34** position.

▼**District 29** (Berkey, Olin Health Ctr.): **Mary Canady-Hernandez**.

For more information about becoming a UR, contact URCC Chairperson Becky Sullivan (884-3374, sulli306@msu.edu).

2012

continued from p. 3

for rules, laws, social justice, fairness, and the time and opportunity to be educated and participate as citizens. Historically, we successfully rejected the employment model of child labor, 12 hour days, substandard wages requiring two or three jobs to survive, dangerous workplaces. . . . It's little wonder we are a target.

We are strong, and in the coming year, each of us has the opportunity to tell candidates to stop targeting working families, our legal protections and our organizations. If we have ever needed a reason to get politically active or even to get out and vote, we have it now. [Elizabeth Gorski]

Stay united. Stay informed. Stay engaged. Happy 2012!

* * *

While we are pleased to congratulate Nancy Gray for her promotion to Business Manager in the School of Social Work (APSA), we are sorry to lose her as a valuable leader in CTU. With thirty-two years as a CT, Nancy has been a union representative, Executive Board director and, always, an advocate for our contract and our members. We are confident that she will translate that background into excellent supervisory skills. We need good supervisors, too!

Members will have a chance to elect a new vice president at the January 24 Membership Meeting. If there is no quorum at that meeting, the Executive Board will appoint a vice president. (Because the Membership Meeting will have taken place before this newsletter is distributed, an announcement went out to the membership via email.) Members will then have the chance to choose someone for the job at the next meeting with a quorum or during the October elections.

Sometimes you have to laugh

The Union-buster's Choice

After a union-buster's fatal heart attack, the Angel of Death appears and tells him he has a choice about where he'll spend eternity: Heaven or Hell. He's allowed to visit both places before making his decision. Heaven turns out to be quite lovely, with St. Peter leading a tour showing blissed-out people floating on clouds as harps play softly around them. The tour of Hell, led by none other than the Devil himself in a custom-made three-piece suit, shows off a rocking nightclub, with an open bar, fancy buffet and everyone happily eating, drinking and making merry. Back with the angel, it's time to make a decision. "Well," the union-buster



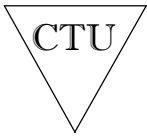
says, "As nice as Heaven looks, I have to admit that Hell looks more like my kind of place, so I've decided to spend eternity down there." The union-buster is promptly sent down, where he's unceremoniously thrown in a hot, smelly cave and chained to a wall. "Hey!" he yells, "When I came down here for the tour, I was shown a whole bunch of bars and parties and other great stuff! What happened?" The Devil just grins and replies, "That, my friend, is what you get for believing Management's promises."

—Union Communications Services

Vote

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year. Even if we can't turn out all of the politicians who targeted labor, we can send some of them packing. Hopefully, the rest will get the message that they work for us, not the special interests that funded their campaigns.



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Calendar

January 27. “The Centerpieces and the People’s Party: Creating a Workplace Holiday Tradition.” The Centerpieces of the Michigan Historical Center. MSU Museum Auditorium, 12:15–1:30 p.m. An Our Daily Work/Our Daily Lives Brown Bag luncheon.

February 5. Vegan potluck. Co-sponsored by Everybody Reads. Please bring a vegan dish to pass and a copy of the recipe. First Sunday of every month. C-T Union Hall, 6–7:30 p.m.

February 6. “On Equal Terms: ‘Respect, Opportunity and Dignity’ for Women in the Construction Workplace.” Susan Eisenberg, Women’s Studies, Brandeis University. MSU Museum Auditorium, 12:15–1:30 p.m. An Our Daily Work/Our Daily Lives Brown Bag luncheon.

February 7. CTU Executive Board meeting, 5:15 p.m., C-T Union Hall. Members welcome.

February 10. “The General Motors Strike: Reflections on the Flint Sit-

Down Strike and Anti-Capitalist Art.” Dylan Miner, MSU Residential College for Arts and Humanities. MSU Museum Auditorium, 12:15–1:30 p.m. An Our Daily Work/Our Daily Lives Brown Bag luncheon.



February 14. “Emotional Wellness/ Understanding Stress,” first of a six part series presented by Jonathon Novello. Balancing work and family life can feel hard sometimes. What if there was a way to experience a busy, full life without feeling so exhausted, overwhelmed, and stressed? This series will help you learn new, practical ways to reduce your stress and manage your daily life more effectively. Mondays, 12:10-12:50, 108 Morrill Hall,

Feb. 14, “What Is Stress?”

Feb. 21, “Thoughts and Belief”

Feb. 28, “A Cycle of Thinking”

Mar. 14, “The Power of Now!”

Mar. 21, “Stress in Relationships!”

Mar. 28, “Putting It All Together”

Register for this class at health4u.msu.edu/registration/H4U_Registration_Form.pdf or send an email message to health4u@msu.edu, or call 353-2596.

February 21. CTU Executive Board meeting, 5:15 p.m., C-T Union Hall. Members welcome.