

CT News



CLERICAL-TECHNICAL UNION OF
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Volume XXXVIX, Issue 2

Organized and Independent since 1974!

February 2012

CTU updates

We started the year off with a January Membership Meeting. Because President Deb Bittner was on vacation, the meeting was chaired by Treasurer Jan Wallace. [Helen Farr]

Wallace gave an accounting of our current financial situation and said that the 2012 budget should be ready for our April 19 Membership Meeting.

Members unable to conduct business

Wallace read Bittner's prepared report updating us on the CTU's activities since the last meeting, including our ongoing campaign to keep high quality, affordable health care, Bittner's work on the search committee for MSU's new Assistant VP of Human Resources, the donations collected by the union for various charities, and our participation in MSU's Martin Luther King, Jr., commemoration.

Forty-one members attended, nine short of a quorum. Lack of a quorum meant that no business could be conducted by the membership. However, the members present voted to let the Executive Board know that they want



Treasurer Jan Wallace chaired the January Membership Meeting.

Meeting continued on p. 5



Overtime: We need to know our rights to protect them

When we are asked to burn the candle at both ends by putting in overtime, we all agree we should receive extra compensation. In fact, it's the law.

According to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), overtime of at least one and one-half times an employee's regular rate must be paid after 40 hours worked in a week. Operating within this requirement, employers are able to offer and unions are able to negotiate more favorable arrangements.

Since ratifying our CTU/MSU contract last year, there has been some confusion about how overtime compensation (Article 9) works for CTs.

Hours worked

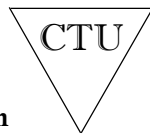
The biggest change in our overtime language is that overtime now is computed based on *hours worked* in a week rather than *hours paid*.

Under our previous contract, paid time off—such as vacation, sick, personal, funeral, compensatory—counted toward the basic 40, after which we received overtime pay at one and one-half times our regular rate.

This was more generous than required by the FLSA, a situation the University found increasingly costly (when accounting for all MSU labor groups) and difficult to justify to hostile legislators looking to slash college budgets.

Your negotiating team fought to keep our original overtime language, arguing that CTs are not in a position to abuse overtime, that our overall usage is low and that a change might be abused by some supervisors. The union did not prevail in this argument (although we did reject an MSU attempt to drastically alter the manner in which employee work schedules could be

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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:

◆ **Retro (1930s) bedroom set:** 4-drawer chest, 3-drawer vanity with mirror and stool, double-bed frame (head and foot boards with wood side rails), night stand and side chair, made by Berkey and Gay Furniture Co. (all pieces are solid wood). Photos available upon request. \$500. Email runner6742@yahoo.com or call Anne at 332-6896 and leave a message if interested.

◆ **REDUCED PRICES. 18 kt gold dangle earrings** with blue or red beads, custom made, beautiful! \$100 per pair. **Matching couch and chair with stool:** White washed wood trim, blue/off white, custom made, very tastefully done, \$250 for the set. Mickey Mouse purse/satchel: Cross-stitched leather, shape is similar to a physician's bag, well preserved, old and very adorable, \$50. **Office chair:** Black leather, great shape, \$10. **Stereo system:** Panasonic, surround sound bookshelf style, \$45. **Hair piece:** Never worn, several shades of blond from Elegant Wigs, \$10. **Portable sewing machine:** \$20. **Sewing machine:** In-cabinet older model, electric,

with extras, \$80. **Table:** Oval, antique oak, needs refinishing, \$65. **Coffee table:** Wrought iron with glass top, \$8. **Table:** Octagon, walnut pedestal, \$40. **Male umbrella cockatoo:** 15 years old, whistles, barks like a dog, named Cisco, says "Hi Cisco, hello. . .," can train to speak many more words, make a reasonable offer. **Canaries:** 3 young, variegated colors, female canaries, \$45 each. **Bird cages:** All shapes/sizes, call/email for info. **Pool items:** Hayward heater, filter, pump, hoses, automatic vacuum, debris screen with pole, chlorine generator, ladder, call/email for info. **Loose emeralds:** Several sizes. Quote on request. Photos on request. Any reasonable offer may be accepted. Email millyshiraev@yahoo.com or call 269-823-3739.

For rent:

◆ **Beach side cottage:** Drummond Island. 2 bedroom, 1 bath log cabin on the south shoreline. Beautiful spot for swimming! Secluded, ranch style, "Up North" waterfront cabin. RARE white, sandy beach! Wood fireplace, VCR with some movies, DVD player, charcoal grill, and 2 kayaks. Pet friendly. Available May-September. For vacancy and reservation information contact us at 906-493-6799 or drummondislandhotel@alphacomm.net.

◆ **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).

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2012 General Membership Meetings

Quarterly Membership Meetings for the remainder of 2012 will be held in 252 Erickson Hall on 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.

A year of e-BS

By Deb Bittner

A few years ago, we heard that a new way to do University business was coming to campus. We heard that it was an upgrade from how we were doing our work. We heard it was going to be messy but it was needed. We heard that we would need to work hard to learn our jobs all over again and we would need patience. We prepared for this latest challenge. We went to trainings and even became “coaches” to help our coworkers.

MSU hit “Go-Live” on implementing Enterprise Business Systems a little over a year ago.

It seems like longer.

The union continues to hear about the havoc caused in our workplaces by EBS. We hear the new system referred to as eBS (a little “e” with a big “BS”). Even employees who don’t work regularly with EBS have experienced its effects in time reporting problems, paycheck delays, etc. It’s been a long year.

One exasperated CT called the office so upset with all that was being required of her to do her job and how long it was taking her to get her work done, that she asked repeatedly, “What did the union ‘get’ in order to agree to EBS?” [Jacquelyn Hohenstein]

This is not a case of “more seasoned” employees unwilling or unable to keep up with the times. Most of us have performed our jobs admirably for years, some of us through the computer revolution and any number of changes in software, equipment and systems. We are very familiar with adapting to change. However, many of us feel

undermined by this transition. It's hard enough to learn a new system while on the job, but when that system doesn't perform as projected, when it seems to cause problems, and those problems begin to escalate, it's frustrating, to say the least.

Just to clarify, MSU, as the employer, has the right to move away from the old hodgepodge of administrative systems to the new centralized and standardized one. But this doesn't mean that we remain silent on the impact it is having.

Along with the rest of the MSU community, we were given and took advantage of opportunities to attend presentations about EBS. As part of the Coalition of Labor Organizations, we were able to provide input in some areas before the implementation.

There wasn't anything really to fight against with the change to this new system. It was going to happen, but CTU has approached this change as we did the move from typewriters to computers or the implementation of any new software. That is to say, the union will defend militantly its members and the contract regardless of management's choices of hardware and/or software.

To help members in the workplace and to bring problems to the attention of the “EBS powers that be,” the union relies on us to speak up when we need assistance.

Have you received the training you



need to do your job under the new system? Many units did not realize the extent to which their operations would be affected and so did not prepare for the change. If a lack of training is causing problems for you on the job and your supervisor is unwilling to provide for the training, call your union.

Has the new “more efficient” system caused delays, errors and frustrations in your office? If people in your area are adding to an already stressful situation by pressuring you about a system over which you have no control, it’s time to talk to your union about your hostile workplace.

Above all, if you are being disciplined or fear your evaluation will be affected by EBS, call your union. We don't have reports about this happening, and we want to make sure it stays that way.

Just about everyone has a funny, disturbing or horrific story about our very long and problematic transition to EBS. For the most part, however, CTs say that units are working together to deal with the issues. If your worksite is the exception, make sure your union is notified.

Remember, we are all in this together.



Board actions

October—December 2011

The following CTU Executive Board discussions took place October through December 2011. All expenditure decisions are included, but the list does not represent meetings in their entirety. CTUs can receive copies of complete minutes through the mail or email by contacting the CTU office at 355-1903.

October 4

Agreed to purchase two additional \$20 tickets for the October lunch meeting of the Labor and Employment Relations Association (LERA).

Approved purchase of two \$125 tickets to the Michigan Women's Historical Museum and Hall of Fame Inductees Dinner plus \$75 for an ad in the program booklet.

Agreed to continue \$480/month donation to the Michigan State AFL-CIO to support the fight against Right-to-Work.

Announced resignation of MSU Human Resources Associate Vice-President Brent Bowditch.

Received report from three attendees of the Renew America conference in Detroit.

Announced that \$8,200 has been recouped from outstanding educational assistance loans.

Discussed new union listserv.

October 18

Donated \$100 to Greater Lansing Food Bank in response to the organization's series of emergency setbacks.

Voted to send up to four people, at \$20 per person plus car rental, to Labor Notes conference in Detroit. [Ed. note: No one attended and the money was not spent.]

Renewed annual \$183.79 subscription to the Lansing State Journal.

Renewed annual subscription to The

Progressive magazine for \$15 (including 75% discount).

Donated \$100 to Old Newsboys.

Announced the purchase of domains ctu.com and ctu.org in preparation for moving our website off MSU's server.

November 15

Agreed to purchase electronic transfer fraud insurance for \$356.

Voted to purchase a \$240 table for eight at Lansing's MLK Holiday Commission program and a \$70 ad in the program booklet.

Donated \$100 for the GEU Thanksgiving food drive.

Donated \$100 to the United Way as part of the community's labor effort.

Announced CTU President's role on the search committee for an associate vice president for Human Resources.

Received report on the repair of gutters at the union hall: \$1,361.50.

Witnessed swearing in of Walt Peebles as director on the Executive Board.

Constituted Executive Board committees: Grievance, Appeal and Trial (Gray [chair], Paulsen, Roe-Darden, White, Woods); Finance (Wallace [chair], Brock, Peebles, Robertson, Teague).

Scheduled Membership Meetings for 2012: January 24, April 19, July 19, and October 24.

December 6, 2011

Donated \$150 to Haven House.

Agreed to send contract administrators to Labor Law and Labor Arbitration Conference in Chicago at the cost of \$375 per person plus lowest cost transportation.

Voted to buy an additional \$20 ticket to the January LERA lunch meeting.

Agreed to purchase \$174 ad in a special Martin Luther King edition of the State News.

Witnessed the swearing in of Roe-Darden to the Executive Board and Smith to the Audit Committee.

Reconstituted Executive Board committees so that Roe-Darden will serve on Finance and Teague will serve on GAT.

Agreed to CTU providing volunteers for a Theatre Department fundraiser.

December 20, 2011

Donated \$100 to Listening Ear.

Donated \$50 to Tri-County Office on Aging. [Amber Springman]

Donated \$100 to the Capitol Area Literacy Coalition.

Donated \$200 to St. Vincent DePaul.

Discussed buying a laptop computer for use by the treasurer and secretary.

Discussed CTU's participation in MSU events scheduled in conjunction with MLK Day.

Announced cancellation of January 3, 2012 Executive Board meeting.

Classifieds

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Free:

◆**Clerical-Technical Union 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 Cherylee 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.

Meeting

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to extend our contribution to Michigan State AFL-CIO for another three months. We have been donating \$480 per month (30 cents per member) to assist in fighting the anti-worker political agenda of many Michigan legislators. The Board can consider this guidance in deciding whether or not to continue the donation.

The lack of a quorum also prevented members from electing a new vice president, leaving the Executive Board to fill the vacancy on an interim basis.

Saving CT jobs

Contract Administrator Dan McNeil said that very few people are on layoff.

CTs described situations in their units where management seems to be handling position vacancies inappropriately.

"If the employer doesn't have the money to do the work and they stop doing the work, that's fine, said CA John Klusinske. "If they simply decide that they don't want the work done anymore, that's okay, too."

However, he added, "if they want the same work done but think they have come up with a scheme to get it done more cheaply than continuing to employ a CT in a position where a CT has been doing the work, contact the union!"

Wallace reported that the CTU picnic will be on June 7 this year.

She also directed members to visit CTU's new website at www.ctumsu.org.

Colleen Drake asked if other members are interested in reviewing our Constitution. She said that some items might need updating.

Katy Shelton and Mark Bitman won door prizes of \$50 each. Pat Chavez-

Wilson won a CTU laptop bag and Linda Krcatovich won a CTU hoodie.

New VP

Be sure to congratulate new CTU Vice President Duferia White. The Executive Board appointed her to the interim VP position at its February 7 meeting. White has been an MSU employee for 24 years and has served as a director on the Executive Board for 10. She will hold the position until we are able to elect a vice president at the next Membership Meeting for which we have a quorum or our October general election.

Former Executive Board director and current UR Kim Smith also expressed interest in the position.

The CTU wishes to express its gratitude to both members for stepping forward when needed.

White's appointment leaves an opening for director on the Executive Board that the Board plans to fill at its February 21 meeting.

UR District news

The following CTs have been appointed to UR positions:

▼ **District 34** (Agriculture Hall, Cook Hall): Reach **Pam Sloan** at 884-0692 or pamsloan@msu.edu.

▼ **District 29** (Berkey, Olin Health Center): Contact **Mary Canady-Hernandez** at 884-6503 or canadyhe@msu.edu.

District 39 (Communication Arts): **Rachel Iseler** applied for reappointment to UR. She will be appointed if no other members from **District 39** express an interest in the position before March 6 at 5 p.m.

The union representatives elected Angel Loveall to the Union Representa-

Sometimes you have to laugh

The Investment Banker's Suit

An investment banker decided to spend some of his Wall Street bonus on a new custom-made suit. He went to the finest tailor in town and got measured for a suit made of the finest fabrics available. A week later, he went in for his first fitting and tried on the stunning-looking suit. As he was admiring himself in front of the mirror, however, turning this way and that, he reached down to slip his hands in the pockets and to his surprise found that there were none.

He mentioned this to the tailor who asked him, "Didn't you tell me you were an investment banker?" The man answered, "Yes, I did." Said the tailor. "Who ever heard of a banker with his hands in his own pockets?"

—Union Communication Services

tive Coordinating Committee (URCC) on January 25. Stephen Stofflet also ran for the position. We thank both URs for their willingness to take on this task.

Loveall joins Julie Detwiler, Tracy Rich, Stephanie Six, and Chairperson Becky Sullivan on URCC, the committee that determines training needs for URs and counsels them in fulfilling their roles.

Newly appointed Vice President Duferia White will serve as liaison between URCC and the Executive Board.

For more information about becoming a UR, contact Sullivan at 884-3374 or sulli306@msu.edu.

Overtime

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modified, a change that would have affected overtime benefits significantly).

Time not lost

Under the new Contract, we still get paid vacations, sick time, personal hours, etc. And we continue to be paid for every hour of work. However, pay is at straight time until we have actually *worked* 40 hours in a week.

For example, if we call in sick on Monday, we will receive sick pay for the day. If we work or have other paid time off during the remaining 32 hours of our regular week and are required to work Saturday, we will be paid for the eight sick hours and the 40 hours of work—a total of 48 hours paid at straight time with no time and a half.

The exception is holidays. “Hours worked” for purposes of calculating overtime shall also include paid holidays provided that the employee works the regularly scheduled work day pre-

ceding and following the holiday. In other words, if a holiday falls on a Monday, we still get overtime pay if we take the holiday, work 32 regular hours and are scheduled for extra Saturday or evening hours.

(And, FYI, anyone working on a university designated holiday will continue to be paid holiday pay at two and one-half times their regular wage.) [Stacey Spees]

Note that all of these computations are based on the *work week*—Sunday at midnight until 11:59 p.m. the following Saturday. So, actions taken on a Friday do not affect overtime computations the following week.

We need to know our rights!

It is important to know how overtime works. Otherwise, we may needlessly give up important legal rights. However, the issues are frequently unique and often confusing. Union Representatives or Contract Administrators (355-1903) can answer questions or assist with supervisors who give advice that conflicts with our contract.

It is especially important to pay close attention when a supervisor decides to modify one of our work schedules.

Almost every CT has an established work schedule, usually from 8 to 5 with a one-hour lunch, Monday through Friday. To change that schedule, the supervisor must notify the employee at least one day prior to her or his two consecutive days off (for most, that’s by Thursday at 5 p.m.).

Under our contract, if we do not receive advance notification of a change, we have the right to overtime pay, even if we didn’t exceed 40



hours in that work week. In this area, the CTU contract continues to provide more than the law.

For example, if we are asked to work late on a Monday evening and told to “just come in late tomorrow morning,” we have the right to insist on being paid overtime. We can *agree* to take straight time within the same work week, but we are not required to do so.

Comp time

Comp time is a way of paying overtime. Rather than time and a half in money, however, we receive it in hours. According to article 9, section 1D, of our contract:

“Schedules shall not be altered for the purposes of preventing payment of overtime. If mutually agreed, equivalent time off may be scheduled within the work week. However, if scheduled outside the work week, compensatory time shall be taken at time and one-half.”

Compensatory time is scheduled by mutual agreement, and many members enjoy the extra time at a later date. But we shouldn’t be coerced into giving up our right to overtime *pay*.

Comp time does have some problematic aspects. Many departments just

Overtime *continued on next page*

Work Overflow Form

Have you been assigned more work than can be completed in a given amount of time?

For several years, the CTU has provided a “Work Overflow Form” that has helped many CTs in similar situations. Complete the form and submit it to your supervisor as a request to prioritize your tasks in the order of importance with an updated and reasonable completion date. Access the form at www.ctumsu.org/member-issues/documents/work-overflow-form/.

Contact your UR or the CTU office for guidance.

Best Docs

One result of the MSU unions' joint efforts with the university to ensure quality, efficiently delivered health care is the recent introduction of Best Doctors. Best Doctors is a service that can help us understand our medical situations, seek second opinions, and be aware of all options. There is no out-of-pocket expense for employees and their families to use the service.

You should have received a mailing about Best Doctors. For more information, access Best Doctors directly at 1-866-904-0910 or contact the MSU Benefits office at 353-4434, 1-800-353-4434 or benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu.

Overtime

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have too much work. Anyone who has trouble getting vacations, for example, should choose overtime pay instead of comp time. Also, using comp time actually interferes with our ability to earn hours toward overtime (because it is reported as hours paid, not hours worked). [Amy Peebles]

Giving ourselves away

Many CTs voluntarily give away their time to the University, according to reports by our URs who work with employees every day. Several URs have expressed concern about CTs staying late, coming in early, skipping breaks and lunch hours, all without overtime pay or compensatory time.

Sometimes, we give away our time because it is difficult to leave important tasks undone. Since there's no extra money in the budget to hire additional staff, we feel obligated. Other times, individuals are afraid of not keeping up. Besides, who is harmed if a CT decides to give up breaks?

The consequences of working with-



Letters

Union should foster respectful environment

I was just looking at the CT Newsletter [January 2012] and wanted to comment to you that I find the "Sometimes you have to laugh" section on Page 7 horribly distasteful.

The last sentence insinuates that it is acceptable to be disrespectful to management in that we should not believe their promises. I believe this is completely inappropriate. I have been taught to respect and honor those that I work for and to follow a good work ethic.

I would also like to add that you

should NEVER joke about Heaven and Hell. They are real places and the one thing that the article is correct about is that the devil does make things look appealing, when the reality is he is a destroyer of lives and families. Our Lord Jesus says in John 14:6 I am the way, and the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father except through me.

God Bless you Cheryl. I think the Union could spend its time doing more constructive things than putting distasteful jokes that encourage disrespect in their e-mails.

Thank you, Lisa Ann Denison
MSU Libraries

out pay are clear according to URs who work with CTs in the districts. The first thing URs usually notice is that once a CT begins to give away time, the department comes to expect it. Rather than catching up, the CT may actually receive more work.

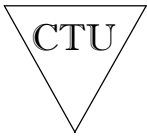
Sometimes a CT keeps his or her head down and continues to plow through. Frequently, however, the resulting stress builds resentment, decreases productivity and/or contributes to illness. Another consequence is that supervisors may start comparing coworkers to a CT who is giving away time, pressuring them to do additional work or show the same "dedication." This causes resentment between coworkers and eats away at workplace morale.

Keep in mind that "stress" is not a great defense against discipline even if it contributes to decreased productivity, increased errors or conflict.

Yes, these are management problems that supervisors should guard against

by making sure that employees work only the hours for which they are paid, that work is evenly distributed, and that employees receive all appropriate breaks. In fact, merely *allowing* CTs to work without pay is a violation of the FLSA. However, supervisors sometimes get caught up in the immediate bottom line, and we can help by making sure they know when there is too much work for the hours available. If our supervisor knows we are working overtime and does not tell us to stop, we are entitled to payment.

We need to look out for ourselves. Let's say an individual CT works without pay an extra half hour a day (part or all of lunch hour, skipping breaks, leaving late, etc.). It adds up to 130 hours a year. Subtract 20 hours to cover holidays, vacation and miscellaneous absences. Multiply the remaining 110 hours by the average CT hourly rate of \$19.31 and the CT has donated \$2,124—calculated at straight time, not overtime, rates—an unacknowledged donation that can't even be claimed on taxes.



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Calendar

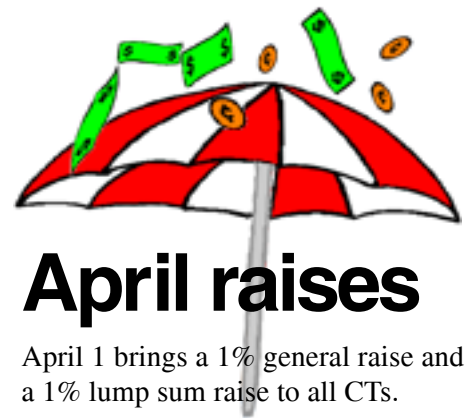
March 6 CTU Executive Board Meeting, C-T Union Hall, 5:15 p.m. Members welcome.

March 16 “When Good Jobs Go Bad: Globalization, De-unionization, and Declining Labor Standards in the North American Auto Industry,” Jeffrey Rothstein, Department of Sociology, Grand Valley State University. (Co-sponsored by the Motorcities/ Automobile National Heritage Area). Presented by LEP’s Our Daily Work/ Our Daily Lives. MSU Museum Auditorium, 12:15 to 1:30 p.m.

March 20 CTU Executive Board Meeting, C-T Union Hall, 5:15 p.m. Members welcome.

March 22 “Whites Don’t Act Like Proletariats, They Act Like Racists’: Race, Labor and the Struggle for Shopfloor Peace, 1915-1945,” Matthew Birkhold. Presented by LEP’s “Our Daily Work/ Our Daily Lives.” MSU Museum Auditorium, 12:15 to 1:30 p.m.

March 28 “Bring Out the Seafood Lover in You.” Chef John will show you how to select, store and prepare the original fast food—seafood! The \$15 presentation includes the meal. It will take place from noon until 1 p.m. at the MSU University Club. Visit Health4U at <http://health4u.msu.edu> to pay, register and get more information about this and other offerings.



April raises

April 1 brings a 1% general raise and a 1% lump sum raise to all CTs.

The general increase will first show up in our April 20 paycheck. Because the pay period covered by that check is March 25 through April 7, only one week will be reflected.

CTU has not heard back from the university as to whether the lump sum raise will appear in our April 6 or April 20 paycheck or in a separate check. Regardless, the lump sum payment will be taxed separately at the IRS supplemental tax rate of 25 percent rather than an individual’s usual tax rate. Other applicable taxes will also be applied.