

CT News



CLERICAL-TECHNICAL UNION OF
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Volume XXXVIX, Issue 3

Organized and Independent since 1974!

March 2012

Politicians target union workers

GSRA unions outlawed

Graduate student research assistants at the University of Michigan were prepared to hold an election to determine if they would have union representation.

Pending a decision by the Michigan Employment Research Commission (MERC) as to whether or not graduate student employees are actually “employees,” the outcome of an election, it seemed, was likely to be posi-

tive—over half (55%) of the 1,200 GSRA had signed a petition requesting a vote. [Erin Johnson]

We will never know how the election may have turned out.

Over the protests of UM’s Board of Regents, a bill outlawing unions for GSRA was rushed through the legislature and signed into law by Governor

Politics continued on p. 4

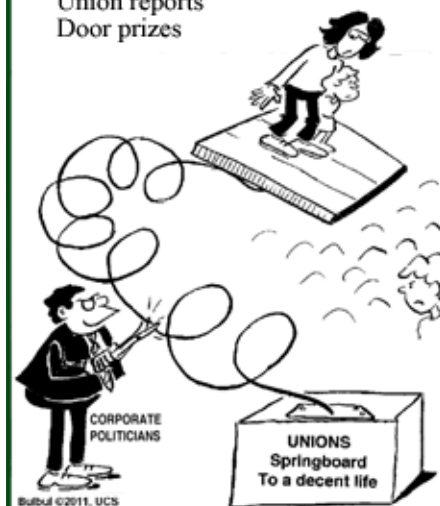


Membership Meeting Spring 2012

Thursday, April 19
252 Erickson
5:20 p.m.

Agenda

Budget & audit report
Election of vice president &
director (with quorum)
Health care discussion
How CTU is joining labor’s
fight in Lansing—discussion
Union reports
Door prizes



New director appointed

The CTU Executive Board appointed Tracy Rich to the interim Director position at its February 21 meeting.

Rich has served CTU as a Union Representative for 2½ years and was serving on the Union Representative Coordinating Committee at the time of her appointment. Rich has worked on elections for many years and was a member of the Election Committee last fall.



New Director Tracy Rich takes the oath of office at the February 21 CTU Executive Board Meeting.

She will hold the position until we are able to elect a director at the next Membership Meeting for which we have a quorum or our October general election.

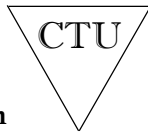
On Equal Terms

Artist Susan Eisenberg combines realistic and fanciful works of art with personal testimonies to bring visitors into the experience of women who work in the construction industry. The installation will be at the MSU Museum through May 12.

Eisenberg entered the construction industry in 1978. “Stella,” the life-sized figure on the ladder in the diamond hardhat, wears the same Carhartt coveralls the artist wore while working during the Boston winters. The tags attached to Stella were filled out by tradeswomen and bear the names the women have been called on the job.

Be advised that this installation contains some strong language and images.

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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:

◆ **Own a piece of the rock:** Drummond Island. Six acres on a paved county road yet close to State land and trail. Great potential for building a cabin or year-round home. Land contract available with good terms. Please call to inquire 517-290-2058 or email moserk6@gmail.com.

For rent:

◆ **Tent Event Rentals, LLC:** Reserve our tents, tables, chairs for your open house and summer events. Tent Event Rentals, LLC also has staging, dance floors, large BBQ grill on trailer. Competitive pricing and excellent customer service. Call 517-819-2659.

◆ **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.

◆ **Cottage on Drummond Island:** Privacy and space! This 2 bedroom, 1 bath log cabin on the south shoreline has everything you need for a cozy getaway. Beautiful spot for swimming! Rare white sandy beach! Secluded, ranch style, waterfront cabin. Wood fire-



place, VCR with some movies, DVD player, charcoal grill, and 2 kayaks. Launch from your private beach and explore one of Drummond's best kayak routes! Available May 1–September 30. Email moserk6@gmail.com.

Services:

◆ **Ride Sharing:** 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).

◆ **Pampered Chef Consultant:** To order any products, or book a party, contact kellikolasa@gmail.com.

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.

2012 General

Membership Meetings

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

Our health care benefits

By Deb Bittner

No premiums & a raise

Congratulations to us! We managed to keep increases in health care costs below 5% in the past year, meaning we will continue to have a high quality health care insurance option without out-of-pocket premium sharing. This really shows our commitment to being smart health care consumers.

Costs 2012-13

Blue Care Network (BCN) came in with lower rates than Community Blue (CB) again this year. Therefore, it remains the base plan for the upcoming year. Because we were able to keep increases in the cost of health care below 5%, CTs and other support staff members covered by the Memorandum of Understanding will pay no premium if they choose BCN.

On the other hand, CB premiums have increased by 10.5%. Employees choosing this option will pay:

Single rate	\$149.14/month
2-person	\$313.18/month
Family	\$365.31/month

Note: Employees cannot switch coverage from one plan to the other after Open Enrollment.

Anyone making changes in coverage—such as adding or removing a dependent, switching health or dental care plans, or changing life insurance options—must participate in Open Enrollment. **Staff members who wish to continue coverage for a spouse or OEI must participate by filling out the affidavit.**

Our April pay increase, albeit small, combined with a comprehensive (and increasingly rare) health care insurance package, leaves us doing okay on total compensation, especially compared to the cutbacks and concessions about which we regularly hear. I know this brings a lot of peace of mind to many of us. [John Shutt]

Unfortunately, as more people choose Blue Care Network (the option without a premium), Community Blue has become more expensive. MSU once saw its employees spread about fifty-fifty across the two plans. Now it's closer to about three-quarters in BCN. More people are expected to migrate to BCN with this year's 10.5% increase in CB's premiums. This is a tough decision for many of us.

Benefits fair

Benefits vendor representatives and MSU Human Resources Benefits staff members will be available at the Michigan State University Benefits Fair. The dates and locations of the Benefits Fair are:

Tuesday, April 24, 2012

MSU Union
Parlors B & C (Second floor)
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Wednesday, April 25, 2012

Nisbet Building
First Floor
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Thursday, April 26, 2012

International Center
Spartan Rooms B & C
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

One recent improvement in our health care coverage is the introduction of Best Doctors. This new program is a great example of putting good health care ideas into practice. Advocating for the right diagnosis early and the right treatment overall, studies show, can cut health care costs and improve employees' satisfaction with their benefits. Best Doctors can help us understand our medical situations, seek second opinions, and educate us on all medical options. There is no out-of-pocket expense for employees and their families to use the service. For more information, access Best Doctors directly at 1-866-904-0910 or contact the MSU Benefits office. Please take time to review this new benefit and use it.

Equal benefits

Talking about health care, I want to take this opportunity to discuss "cafeteria" plans. We've had inquiries over the years, a couple recently, from CTs who wonder why we don't pursue plans that give members the ability to pick and choose among specific options. I've been asked, for example, why a member can't substitute full dental coverage for prescription cov-

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Health care open enrollment

Open Enrollment for health care benefits is April 16 through May 7 for the 2012-2013 plan year beginning July 1.



Find additional information and enroll through the EBS portal.

Women are not worth less

The Michigan Equal Pay Day Coalition has announced that Tuesday, April 17, is this year's day to recognize the continuing pay gap between women's and men's wages. The day symbolizes how far into 2012 women must work to earn what men earned in 2011. Tuesday is the day of the week on which women's wages catch up to men's wages from the previous week.

Supporters of equal pay for women are urged to wear red on Equal Pay Day and attend a rally to acknowledge the discrepancy in wages.

Equal Pay Day Rally
April 17, 2012
State Capitol in Lansing
Noon to 1:00 p.m.
Capitol Building Rotunda

For links to more information, visit the CTU website at www.ctumsu.org.

Bills to strengthen Michigan's laws about pay equity were introduced in 2011, including the Wage Transparency Act, which would help employees compare wages and determine if they are being discriminated against in their paychecks.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor statistics, women who work full time earn 77 cents for every dollar men earn. Because of the wage gap, since 1960, the real median earnings of women have fallen short by more than half a million dollars compared to men. Women of color face an even larger wage gap.

In an economic recession with high unemployment in which more women than ever before are the sole or primary sources of household income, the wage gap is seriously undermining families' economic security. It is time for the disparities to end.

Politics

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nor Snyder on March 13. The law terminated the MERC process and ended the possibility of an election.

The law affects university *research assistants*, not *teaching assistants*. TAs are organized at several Michigan universities including UM and MSU.

GSRAAs argued that they are employees. Unlike other students, they work for the university, receive W2s, pay state and federal income taxes and are required to sign an oath of allegiance to the Michigan Constitution—an act required of public employees but not of enrolled students.

This is just one example of the war that corporate backed politicians in Michigan are waging against workers and their collective bargaining rights.

Another anti-worker bill

On March 16, the Governor signed a

bill that prohibits public K-12 schools from using payroll deduction to collect union dues.

Like everyone else, public school administrators are facing a lot of problems in this economy and political environment, but the collection of union dues isn't one we've heard voiced. In fact, the Michigan Association of School Administrators and Michigan Association of School Boards said the legislation was completely unnecessary. The House Fiscal Agency said the legislation will not save school districts any money.

Under the new law, dues will still need to be paid. Payroll deduction—a process that is bargained by both the workers and employer as the easiest and most efficient way to collect them—is outlawed. [Bunny Lane-Patenge]

“Politicians in Lansing are consider-
Organize *continued on next page*

Equal

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“I hope that Stella—and the exhibit as a whole—conveys the contradictions of being both armored and vulnerable, welcomed and assaulted, alone and in community,” wrote the artist on her website at <http://susaneisenberg.com>.

“In 1978, the federal government enacted policies that opened construction jobs and apprenticeship programs to women. Had those policies been enforced beyond the initial years,” Eisenberg wrote, “the construction workforce would likely now be roughly 25 percent female. Instead, women today hold less than 3 percent of building trades jobs. Questions raised by that discrepancy—between policy expectation and outcome—inspired the installation.”



The installation is sponsored by MSU's Labor Education Program. Both CTU and the Coalition of Labor Organizations at MSU are cosponsors.

Sometimes you gotta laugh



"... And replace that glass ceiling with something more modern."

Organize

continued from previous page
ing at least 80 bills that are designed to weaken the middle class and won't do anything to create jobs for Michigan workers and their families," according to Karla Swift, President of Michigan State AFL-CIO.

Fighting back

To quote Joe Hill, "Don't mourn, organize!" [Hazell Feldpausch]

Tired of the relentless attack on workers' rights, union members have launched a petition drive to amend the Michigan constitution to protect jobs and collective bargaining rights.

Michigan families created the middle class. The amendment will protect basic collective bargaining rights and help rebuild Michigan's middle class, grow Michigan's economy and help

Michigan small businesses create jobs.

Collective bargaining gives all workers a voice, and the ability to come together to bargain a fair contract. Collective bargaining protects jobs, wages, benefits and safety. Without these protections, CEOs can arbitrarily fire Michigan workers, cut wages and benefits, and outsource jobs.

Workers need to collect over 322,000 valid signatures by July to put a proposal on the November election ballot. Visit the CTU website (www.ctumsu.org) for links to the petition and other information about how to help fight the attack on Michigan's working families.

Information for this article came from the American Federation of Teachers Michigan and Michigan State AFL-CIO.

Bright idea

How many CEO's does it take to change a light bulb? CEO's don't know how to change a light bulb, so they just change offices.

Union wishes

A union negotiator was walking along the beach when he found a lamp. Upon rubbing the lamp a genie appeared who said "I am the most powerful genie in the world. I can grant you any wish you want, but only one wish."

The union negotiator pulled out a map and said "I'd like there to be a just and lasting peace among the people in the Middle East."

The genie responded, "Gee, I don't know. Those people have been fighting since the beginning of time. I can do almost anything, but this is beyond my limits."

"OK," the negotiator said, "Well, I'm a union negotiator; please make every one of our members happy with the contract proposal, and let the bosses make reasonable requests."

The genie considered this and then said, "Uh, let me see that map again."

—Union Communication Services



Quote: "Politics is what we create by what we do, what we hope for, and what we dare to imagine."

—Former Minnesota Senator Paul Wellstone

UR District news

District 39 (Communication Arts): **Rachel Iseler** has been appointed UR. She can be contacted at 432-3676 or rachel@msu.edu.

District 40 (Sparrow Building, Breslin Cancer Center, Lansing Medical Office Center, Downtown/Misc): **Suzanne Good** has resigned. We

thank her for her years of service to the CTU and wish her the best in her future endeavors.

Vision care open enrollment

Open enrollment for the voluntary, employee-paid vision care program is available through May 31. Benefits begin July 1, 2012. The program is sponsored by the Coalition of Labor Organizations at MSU.

rates for the MEBS vision plans, effective July 1, 2012, are available on our website at www.ctumsu.org.

Direct questions, concerns or requests for assistance regarding vision care to MEBS at 1-800-968-6327 (select option 6) or email billingmail@mebs.com.

Enrollment information and current

The following CTs have applied for reappointment to their UR positions. If no one from their respective districts steps forward by April 10, they will be appointed.

▼ **District 5** (MSU Detroit Medical Center Campus): **Wendi Winston**.

▼ **District 19** (MSU Macomb University Center Campus): **Simone Wesley**.

▼ **District 38** (Vet Medical Center-2): **Liz Owen**.

On February 27, Union Representatives re-elected Stephanie Six to a two-year term on the Union Representative Coordinating Committee (URCC), the committee that determines training needs for URs and counsels them in fulfilling their roles. They also elected Wendi Winston to fill a one-year vacancy on the committee that became available when Tracy Rich was appointed to the Executive Board.

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

*Gerri Olson
Educational Loan
Program*

It's time to register for the CTU's Gerri Olson Educational Loan Program for summer semester.

Call Patricia Shackleton (432-5665) April 16 through 27.

Registrations received after April 27 will be considered as space permits.

CLO at MSU Voluntary Vision Program

	NVA Network**	Vision Care Network**	Non-network Benefits
Vision exam	every 12 months	every 12 months	every 12 months
Refractive surgery exam	\$5 co-pay	\$5 co-pay	\$40 N/A
Lenses	every 24 months*	every 24 months*	every 24 months
Single vision	no co-pay	no co-pay	\$32
Bifocal	no co-pay	no co-pay	\$49
Trifocal	no co-pay	no co-pay	\$62
Lenticular	no co-pay	no co-pay	\$80
Progressive	upgrade charge	upgrade charge	upgrade charge
Frame allowance	every 24 months	every 24 months	every 24 months
	\$100	\$100	\$45
Contact lens allowance	every 12 months	every 12 months	every 12 months
Elective	\$105	\$105	\$95
Medically necessary	\$250	\$250	\$175

*12 months if prescription changes .50 diopters or required by doctor.

**Non-network benefits are the same for NVA, Vision Care Direct.

Premiums	Effective 7/01/12	Effective 7/01/12
Employee	7.97	\$11.81
Employee plus one	14.73	\$17.63
Employee plus family	\$22.74	\$27.62



Michigan Employee Benefits Services, Inc.

3809 Lake Eastbrook Blvd.

Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Ph: 800-968-6327

Fax: 616-458-3884

For provider listings, please visit **Vision Care Direct (VCD)** at www.vcdplans.com or **National Vision Administrators (NVA)** at www.e-nva.com (group sponsor number for NVA is 10751080).

Health

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erage that may seem to be of little or no use to that employee. Or, why someone without a spouse/partner/kids can't get a cash payout so that the benefit would be "equal."

Part of the answer, I believe, lies in understanding the meaning of the term "health insurance":

April 1 raise reminder

April 1 brings a 1% general raise and a 1% lump sum raise to all CTs. According to Article 8, Section I of our Contract:

Effective April 1, 2012, each employee shall receive a 1% (one percent) lump sum payment to be calculated on her/his March 31, 2012 base hourly rate times 2080 hours. This payment will be prorated based upon employment status as defined in Article 2, Section VII of this Agreement.

Also effective April 1, 2012: 1% wage increase. The minimum and the progression maximum of each grade level shall be increased by 1% (one percent).

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.

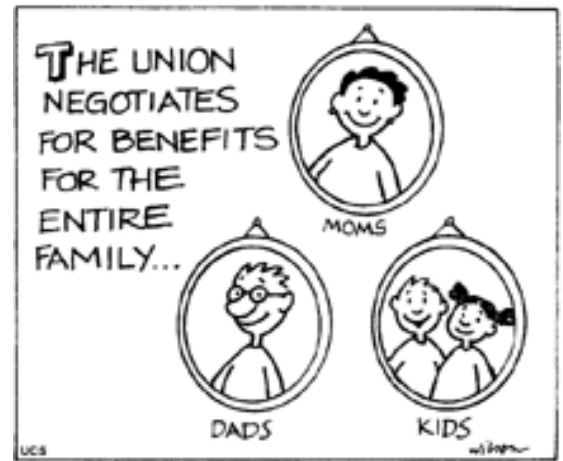
The University has not informed the CTU as to whether the lump sum raise will appear in our April 6 or April 20 paycheck (probably April 20). The lump sum payment will be taxed separately at the IRS supplemental tax rate (as high as 25%). Other applicable taxes will also be deducted.

Health insurance is insurance against the risk of incurring medical expenses among individuals. By estimating the overall risk of health care expenses among a targeted group [or pool], an insurer can develop a routine finance structure, such as a monthly premium or payroll tax, to ensure that money is available to pay for the health care benefits specified in the insurance agreement. —Wikipedia

In other words, a large pool of subscribers, with various levels of health care needs, will cost less to insure overall than one that contains only the sickest or oldest subscribers and family members. If we shrunk the pool to allow employees to give up certain benefits one year to pick something else, not only would it increase administrative costs, in our case to the university, which is self-insured, but it also puts employees at risk if that benefit is needed. Then these costs would be passed on to us one way or another, in higher costs directly to the plans or indirectly to us, meaning we would get less actual health care for our dollars.

Additionally, I don't believe the current system disadvantages any members. After all, a big reason for having health insurance is in case of unforeseen medical issues. It is in our best interest to have as many people covered as we can. You probably already know that if someone cannot pay for emergency care, care cannot be denied but there still are costs. All points of service and insurance plans build in this cost and pass it on to employers and those with insurance. So we all benefit when we have good health and good health care insurance coverage.

Health care is part of our total compensation, but it's different from wages—it helps keep our whole com-

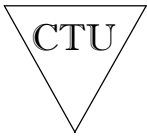


munity healthy. This isn't being "parental," it is good common sense.

For more than a decade, we have worked to keep health care costs down. As members of CTU, we have supported our union in joining other support staff unions in the CLO to bargain health care coverage as a group. The CLO meets with the University on an ongoing basis through a structure known as the Joint Health Care Committee (JHCC) to investigate, discuss and make decisions that help keep high quality, affordable health care coverage for the MSU support staff.

Through JHCC, we continually evaluate all options in order to have the best benefits possible while keeping the University competitive. Therefore, it is important to continue contacting the union about health care coverage. We're a big group and individuals won't always agree, but we can often help find solutions to individual problems. At the very least, we can guarantee an environment in which all of our concerns and suggestions about health care and health care coverage are well received and seriously considered.

Attend the Benefits Health Fairs to get all the information you need to make your health care insurance selections, and participate in Open Enrollment if necessary. Remember, once Open Enrollment ends, you cannot switch your plan until next spring.



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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Calendar

April 3. CTU Executive Board Meeting, C-T Union Hall, 5:15 p.m. Members welcome.

April 13. "Exploring Power and Place: The Enrico Fermi Atomic Energy Plant and the Workers of Downriver Detroit," Lisa Fine, MSU History Department. An "Our Daily Work/Our Daily Lives" presentation from MSU's Labor Education Programs. 12:15 to 1:30 p.m., MSU Museum Auditorium.

April 16–May 7. Health Care Open Enrollment. See page 3 for details.

April 17. Equal Pay Day. Rally at the Capitol Rotunda in Lansing at noon. See page 4 for details.

April 17. CTU Executive Board Meeting, C-T Union Hall, 5:15 p.m. Members welcome. [Suzanne Faivor]

April 19. Quarterly Membership Meeting, see page 1 for information.

April 26. Take our Daughters and Sons to Work Day. Check the Women's Resource Center website (*wrc.msu.edu*) for information.

April 27. Deadline to apply for a CTU educational loan for summer semester. Details on page 6.

May 1. University Service Recognition ceremony, 4:30 p.m. in the Spartan Club, Spartan Stadium Tower.

MSU Community ReUse Days

MSU Surplus Store & Recycling Center will host MSU Community ReUse Days for students, faculty, staff and alumni **April 16 through 20**, 7 a.m. until 3 p.m. each day.

They are accepting:

- ▼ E-waste and household electronics such as personal computers, keyboards and mice, TVs, monitors, telephones, cell phones, laptops, VCRs, printers, scanners, microwaves, copy machines and small items such as coffee makers, vacuums and toasters
- ▼ Good, usable furniture (no mattresses)
- ▼ Sporting goods including bicycles and exercise equipment
- ▼ Books, magazines, DVDs and CDs

- ▼ Scrap metal
- ▼ Appliances
- ▼ Holiday decorations
- ▼ Knick knacks and trinkets
- ▼ Kitchen items

Not currently accepted: hazardous waste, polystyrene, alkaline batteries, chemicals, cleaning supplies, mattresses, clothing, modular furniture panels

ReUse Days are for personal use only. Unloading assistance and free paper shredding will also be available.

Proceeds from re-sellable items will support the Center's continuing increase of materials collected from campus and the community.