

CT News



CLERICAL-TECHNICAL UNION OF
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Volume XXXVII, Issue 1

Organized and Independent since 1974!

January 2010



Dec. 23, 2009—CLO President and Chief Negotiator Wayne Cass shakes hands with Human Resources Assistant Vice President Brent Bowditch after reaching a tentative agreement at 4:30 a.m.



Jan. 5, 2010—CTU representatives attend a special evening meeting to ask questions and receive details about the tentative agreement.

Unions recommend “yes” vote on health care agreement

After months of bargaining, including a final 19.5-hour marathon session, representatives of MSU management and the unionized support staff shook hands on a tentative health care agreement at 4:30 a.m. on December 23.

The Clerical-Technical Union joins the other eight unions represented in these negotiations by the Coalition of Labor Organizations in recommending that members approve the TA.

If ratified, the four-year agreement will replace the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and establish base wages and health care benefits for unionized employees.

“Tough times”

“These were tough negotiations,” said CLO President and Chief Negotiator Wayne Cass, acknowledging that the agreement includes sacrifices that will impact support staff employees. [Karen Hagerty]

“These are tough times,” he added. “It is a reality that the country, this state and Michigan State University are fac-

ing the worst economic conditions that any of us have seen.”

Considering the extraordinary economic situation, union representatives believe that the TA represents a responsible agreement at this time. It protects our base wages while

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Ratification vote

MSU Auditorium Lobby / Farm Lane
7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
February 3, 2010

To reserve space on a shuttle, Contact Patricia Shackleton (432-5665, email ctumngr@msu.edu) on or before February 3 to schedule a ride to and from the polls. Rides are scheduled on a first come-first served basis, so register early. Reserve the whole van and come with a group of coworkers!

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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.



"And right here is where some brilliant vice president decided we didn't need union cooperation!"

CT Classifieds

For sale:

◆ **2002 Volkswagon Jetta:** Silver V4 automatic with black leather interior, heated front seats, air conditioning, power steering, power windows, power door locks, cruise control, AM/FM stereo, CD player, front and side air bags, new battery, last oil change 12/2009, mileage 118,000. Blue Book price \$4,500 OBO. Contact Carin at 517-881-6803 or carin.mcevoy@gmail.com.

a 10% discount off labor to all MSU employees. Call Brian at 517-795-9432 or email ambienthvac@hotmail.com.

Valentine's Day is not far away. So say you care with a SPECIAL Balloon bouquet from Ahhh Balloons Inc. Contact Kevin Wyatt at 517-881-3325

Services:

◆ **Ambient Heating & A/C, LLC:** The economy is being hard hit. I will give

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.

General Membership Meetings in 2010

Quarterly Membership Meetings in 2010 will be held in Erickson Hall, Room 252, on Wednesdays, January 27, April 28, July 28 and October 27. Meetings begin at 5:20, but the doors open at 5 so come early to socialize. These 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.

Ratify!

By Deb Bittner

It's health care ratification time again!

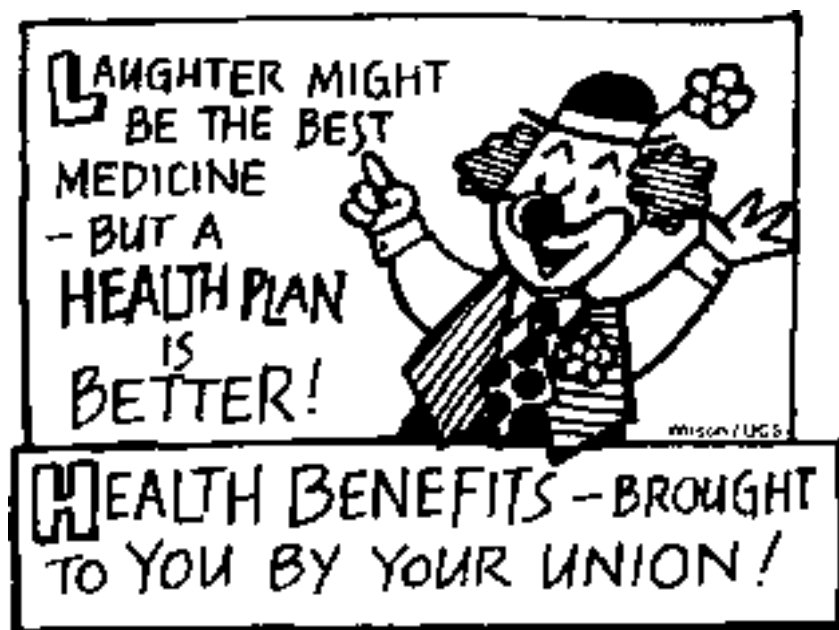
If collective bargaining agreements are the heart and soul of unions, then the CLO's tentative agreement is the blood and guts! Sounds gruesome, but after months of negotiating this health care and wage agreement between MSU and the Coalition of Labor Organizations, it sure feels like we performed surgery!

The CLO process involves bargaining collectively with eight other unions to achieve an agreement, a set of health care and wage "collected rules" and understandings between the unions and MSU.

Even though we had some "seasoned" union veterans and administrators, there were a lot of new players. And at times, it didn't feel like we could ever get an outcome to satisfy us all. However, this joint process between MSU and CLO, which was initiated 15 years ago, continues to serve us well. [Elizabeth Stanton]

The saying, "the process is the product," fits joint health care negotiations perfectly. Both sides left the table with a renewed commitment to working together to make sure the overall organization, MSU, continues to be viable in the community, State and world. Both sides "mutually agree[d]" to use our unique relationship to make smart decisions to keep MSU strong.

This tentative agreement also showcases the unions' relevance in the workplace and the value they bring to the employer.



In a 2007 editorial, I wrote about the "psychological contract" of the workplace, a concept taught by the late Dan Kruger, a professor in the School of Labor and Industrial Relations at MSU.

One of my mentors, Kruger drilled into my head the extreme importance of the psychological contract. Admitting that it was hard to put the concept into words, he said it was very simple in practice.

Basically, the psychological contract means that people believe they are important to the workplace.

People are willing to do certain work in certain ways, he said, because it is perceived as good for both the employee and the employer. Employees expect certain things like a decent working environment, positive reinforcements, benefits and payment that helps them achieve other necessities and comforts in life. Employers who meet these expectations rely on certain returns: positive workplaces, good productivity, and an understanding on the part of employees about the employer's position and responsibilities in the larger community.

Nowhere is the psychological contract

more apparent than in the process of negotiating a joint health care tentative agreement. Both sides have responsibilities to their constituents and communities. Both sides can understand the other's responsibilities. And both sides are aware of the other's hardships.

As you read the details about the tentative agreement, please keep in mind that it was indeed a *process* that produced this packaged agreement for your consideration. Both sides had agendas and both sides had directions. Both sides understood where the other was coming from. All this mixed together in an ugly economic state, nationally and in Michigan.

This agreement is remarkable because both sides weighed all of their concerns and demands . . . and then worked to find solutions.

Both sides listened, asked tough questions, explored lots of options, and then worked long into the night to find a creative way out of the box that met the needs of the employee and the employer.

As always, some things had to change; we don't live in a static world. This

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Agreement

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guaranteeing salary increases, provides for quality health care benefits, and continues our "strategic partnership," whereby we work with management on a continuous basis to monitor and improve our health care program.

Changes under the TA include dropping the matrix that has tied wages to increases in health care costs for the past eight years. Instead, base wages under the four-year agreement are set at 0% in the first year, 1% in a lump-sum payment and 1% to the base in the second year, and 2% added to the base in each of the last two years. Base wages cannot be negotiated during the unions' individual bargaining sessions.

Each union has a different contract cycle and will receive raises according to its individual contract anniversary. Under the new agreement, CTs would receive our 0% in April 2011. (CTs have yet to receive our final wage increase under the 2006-2009 MOU. Our base wage will increase 2.75% on April 1, 2010.)

10% reduction in health care spend

Recognizing the difficult economic times and the University's budgetary realities, the unions agreed to cut the health care spend by 10% and cap increases in health care spending by 5% a year.

We reached the 10% reduction through changes to our Caremark prescription drug plan earlier this year combined with TA proposals to move from PHP (which will probably be sold) to Blue Care Network (BCN), increased co-pays, and deductibles. Recognizing the hardship these changes can mean for members, the CLO kept the increased costs to employees as low as possible.

For example, deductibles of \$100 per individual and \$200 per family are considerably less than originally proposed by the University and represent the least hardship of the options that were available for consideration.

The \$100/\$200 deductibles will apply only to services that do *not* involve a co-pay, such as diagnostic services, ambulance, hospital care, home care and hospice, surgical services etc., The care most physicians deliver in an office setting will not be affected by the deductible. Medical services that involve co-pays will not be applied to satisfy the deductible.

There is no deductible applied to items covered under the annual "preventative services" category or services such as lab work, even though there is no co-pay for them.

The deductibles will not apply to the Community Blue program. However, members choosing the more expensive plan will pay the difference between the two plans, as they do now. Because of the significant decreases in the cost of BCN, the "buy-up" to Community Blue is expected to be larger than it has been in the past.

Specific rates are not available until spring. Members will have the opportunity to compare costs and plan designs



"While kissing the boo-boo may generate an increase in sexual harassment claims, it could reduce company health care costs by 40%"

ABSENTEE VOTING



Unable to get to the polls February 3? Contact Barb Harris (355-1903, ctustaff@msu.edu) to request an absentee ballot. The deadline for the request is 5 p.m., Thursday, January 28.

before making a choice during Open Enrollment.

Also, under the TA, the emergency room co-pay increased to \$250, but it would still be waived for injury, admittance, or signs and symptoms that would lead a reasonable layperson to believe there is an imminent health risk.

Possible premiums

We have had several questions from members about the 5% cap on increases in health care spending.

If the University's spend on health care were to rise over 5% for members of unions

TA continued on next page

TA

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covered by the MOU, the excess could be paid as premiums deducted from our paychecks in the following year. Keep in mind that if it appears that increases will top 5% in a given year, the Coalition can work during the term of the agreement to offset premiums by making changes in plan design.

New health care plan

The TA provides for the continuation of the labor/management Joint Health Care Committee. Both the Coalition and the University are committed to developing a new MSU health care plan during the course of this agreement. This plan would allow even greater ability to monitor and control costs. It would *not* be limited to MSU providers.

Retiree benefits

Retirement health care benefits for current employees remain unchanged.

The University has been indicating its intention to eliminate retirement benefits for newly hired employees since 1997 and, of course, they wanted to discuss it again this year. The unions avoided this change during these negotiations so this agreement does not eliminate post retirement health care benefits for new hires.

However, we did agree to meet and discuss the terms of an alternative if the University administration/Board of Trustees takes this position for all University employees by July 2010.



Other elements

After recognition of same-sex domestic partner status by public institutions was overturned by voters in 2004, the University implemented a pilot program that recognizes "other eligible individuals" (or OEIs). This program recognizes both same-sex and opposite-sex partners who meet certain qualifications. (See www.hr.msu.edu/benefits/oei.htm.) The pilot program was scheduled to end in July 2010. Under the TA, the unions would accept the University's OEI definition and policy, meaning that it would become permanent under our contract. [Elizabeth Martinez]

To continue the work that the CLO has done with the University through the Joint Health Care Committee, the University will continue to fund the full-time position of the Chair of the CLO. This reaffirms the University's recognition of the importance of the CLO and its commitment to working with us to impact health care at MSU.

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Membership meeting

We will be discussing the health care tentative agreement with members of the CTU bargaining team, CTU Chief Negotiator Nancy Pearce and CLO Chief Negotiator Wayne Cass.

Bring your questions!

Meetings begin at 5:20, but the doors open at 5, so come early to socialize. These meetings are for making decisions about the Union, asking questions and receiving updates about Union activities.

5:20 p.m.

252 Erickson Hall



Next

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Unlike earlier MOU's, this one allows us to negotiate economic issues—other than base wages—in our individual contracts. [Louanne Snider]

What happens next?

A copy of the TA was emailed on January 4 to all the members of the nine unions represented in the negotiations. It is available on the web at www.msu.edu/~ctumsu or www.clomsu.org, or you can receive a copy by calling the CTU office at 355-1903.

You should have received a mailing from CTU detailing the major points of the agreement.

Members now have the opportunity to gather information and ask questions of their representatives before voting on whether or not to accept the TA. The TA is too complicated to discuss every detail in a newsletter article, and every member will have different concerns and questions. To assist in getting out the answers, the CTU is starting an FAQ on our website, and CLO meetings are being scheduled across campus. CTs are also encouraged to call the CTU office to discuss their concerns with President Deb Bittner, Contract Administrator Dan McNeil or Communications Specialist Cheryllee

Finney, all of whom participated in the negotiations.

The January 27 CTU Membership Meeting has been devoted to a question and answer period on the new TA. CTU Chief Negotiator Nancy Pearce, CLO Chief Negotiator Wayne Cass, and several other members of the negotiating team will be on hand.

CTs will go to the polls to ratify the agreement on Wednesday, February 3, 7:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m., at MSU Fairchild Auditorium. The votes will be counted the next day, with the results of the elections of all the unions being announced on Friday, February 5.

In order to be implemented, the agreement must be passed by a majority of the members in each union.

mybcn.org

Is your health care provider included in the new Blue Care Network program?

The list of providers included under BCN expands daily. To see if your provider is included at this time, check out the BCN website.



Coffee breaks

The Union that brought you work breaks now brings the coffee and doughnuts right to your office.

And now, you can opt for bagels and cream cheese instead of doughnuts.

Submit your name to win a union coffee break with doughnuts or bagels for your unit. Contact Solidarity Committee Chairperson Lois Sieftring at 353-4911 or lois.sieftring@hc.msu.edu.

The following CTs have recently won a coffee break for their units:

- ▼ **Sally Zetzer**, MSU Health Team, October Membership Meeting
- ▼ **Tricia Bradford**, MSUCOM Development Office, December.

Ratify!

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agreement includes changes that are sure to create hardships for some people. However, the Joint Health Care Committee kept to its goal of providing health care options that include choice, quality and access for all. Neither side got its ideal agreement—which some say is a sign of a good agreement—but both sides got what they needed. And that is the best goal.

I encourage you to attend the informational meetings, to ask questions by calling me or the other members of the bargaining team, to visit the CLO (www.clomsu.org) or CTU (www.msu.edu/user/ctu) website, but most importantly, I encourage you to come out on February 3 and vote.



"This is the new economy. Instead of recruitment brochures, we hand out sample layoff notices."

UR district news

The following CTs were appointed to UR positions.

▼ **District 1** (Administration Building—Floors B, 1): Contact **April Moore** at 432-3956 or mooreap@msu.edu.

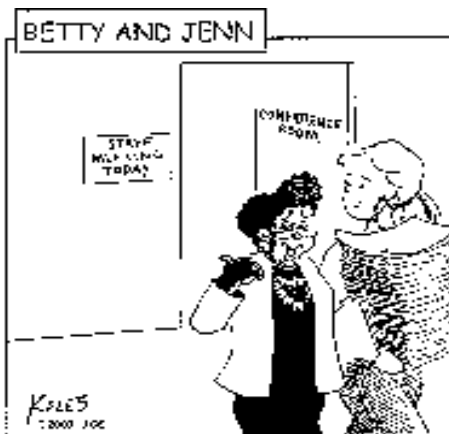
▼ **District 17** (Grounds, Physical Plant, Wilson, Holden, Case, Wonders, Duffy Daugherty Football Building): **Pamela Sloan** can be reached at 353-8670 or pamsloan@msu.edu.

▼ **District 21** (Holmes, McDonel, Hubbard, Akers, Conrad, IM East): Reach **Kim Smith** at 355-7457 or ksmith@msu.edu.

▼ **District 29** (Olin Health Center, Berkey): Contact **Mary Canady-Hernandez** at 353-8737 or canadyhe@msu.edu.

District 9 (Life Sciences): A run-off election between **Janice Sheffey** and **Stephen Stofflet** has resulted in Sheffey's becoming Union Representative in the district. Congratulations. We thank both Sheffey and Stofflet for coming forward to serve their union.

Are you interested in becoming a UR? Would you like more information about what the position entails? If so, contact URCC Chairperson Colleen Drake (884-0830 or drakec@msu.edu) or Vice President Nancy Gray (353-8632 or grayn@msu.edu).



"Our weekly staff meetings prove that there is no problem so great that it can't be made worse."

White shirt day

White Shirt Day was first celebrated on February 11, 1948 as a way to honor the men and women who participated in the 1937 Flint sit-down strike.

The activity was intended to send a message to management that "blue collar" workers had earned the right to the same respect as their management counterparts. [Patricia Hogarth]

The day is mostly celebrated in Flint, Michigan. Although originally a celebration of GM workers, the birth of the UAW has improved all workers' lives and, in appreciation, white shirt day is spreading to other workplaces.

The rules in 1948 were simple and apply equally well to any workplace today:

- Everyone wear a white shirt or blouse to work February 11.
- Don't get your shirt any dirtier than the boss gets his.
- Observe all safety rules.



- Observe all work rules, especially the rule calling for a clean work area.

Somewhere along the way, the day became "White T-Shirt Day" for some people, but its origins were with labor.

Important Note: It's not "Wet T-Shirt Day," although everyone is free to celebrate in their own way. CTU still has \$5 t-shirts, many in white, available in most sizes. Call 355-1903.

CT notables

Congratulations to **the employees of MSU's Printing Services** for the part they played in winning the Silver Customer Plus Award from the National Association of Printers and Lithographers. This award, presented to management, recognizes "printing and graphic communications companies with superior customer relationships."

We are always pleased to see the work of CTs recognized.

The following CTs have been recognized in recent months in the pages of *MSU News*, the online news source published by University Relations.

▼ **Lisa Vanwelsenaers**, Office Assistant for the Department of Student Life, September 24, 2009.

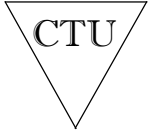
▼ **Norma Trommater**, Office Assistant for Campus Living Ser-

vices and committee member of the Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Awards selection committee, October 16, 2009.

▼ **Michael McCune**, Art Shop Coordinator at the Kresge Art Center, December 3, 2009.

Jan Wallace, Secretary for Enterprise Business Systems Projects and CTU Treasurer, was profiled in her department's online newsletter in December. Wallace's profile highlighted the contributions she has made to her union as a UR, director and, now, as Treasurer.

Do you or a CT coworker have an accomplishment you would like to share with other members of the union? If so, please contact Cheryllee Finney at ctnews@msu.edu or 432-9580.



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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Calendar

January CLO meetings to discuss the tentative agreement are being organized across campus. For an updated list of meetings, check frequently with www.msu.edu/~ctumsu and www.clomsu.org.

January 27 Membership Meeting, 5:20 p.m., 252 Erickson. See page 5 for details.

February 2 CTU Executive Board Meeting, C-T Union Hall, 5:15 p.m. Members welcome.

February 3 Ratification vote on the health care tentative agreement, MSU Auditorium Lobby on Farm Lane, 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Contact Patricia Shackleton at 432-5665 or ctumngr@msu.edu on or before **February 3** for a ride to the polls. Contact Barb Harris at 355-1903, ctustaff@msu.edu) by **January 28** to request an absentee ballot.

February 4 "Images and

Voices: 160 Years of Steel and Work," Howard Bossen and Eric Freedman, MSU School of Journalism, 12:15–1:30, MSU Museum Auditorium. LEP's Brown Bag Series. Free.

February 5 Announcement by all the participating unions of the results of the ratification votes.

February 11 "Pulling the Strings of Race: The Buffalo Historical Marionettes Project of the WPA," Peter Rachleff, Department of History, Macalester College (co-sponsored by the African and African American Studies Program), 12:15 to 1:30, MSU Museum Auditorium. LEP's Brown Bag Series. Free.

February 15 Deadline for March *CT News* submissions.

February 16 CTU Executive Board meets at the C-T Union Hall, 5:15 p.m. Members welcome.

February 25 Employment Law Update Conference, 7:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., Kellogg Center. Pre-registration required (www.lir.msu.edu/laborEd/workshops.php), \$125. Sponsored by the Labor Education Program.



"You need union representation, Bruno."