

CT News



CLERICAL-TECHNICAL UNION OF
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Volume XXXVII, Issue 8

Organized and Independent since 1974!

August 2010

July Membership Meeting

Layoffs the number one subject

Thirty-seven CTs, 13 short of a quorum, attended the Membership Meeting.



Treasurer Jan Wallace chaired the meeting.



CA Dan McNeil gave an update on the layoff situation.

ing in July. The smaller turnout was expected because we met recently, at the end of July, to discuss and make changes to the CTU Constitution.

The meeting was chaired by CTU Treasurer Jan Wallace because President Deb Bittner was on vacation.

Although no business could be conducted, members were able to engage in several productive discussions about union issues, most notably a presentation by CTU Contract Administrator



July 28 Membership Meeting—CT Lori Thomas, secretary in the Office of Study Abroad, listening to information about layoffs.

Dan McNeil about the current layoff situation. [Sally Jo Becker]

Meeting continued on p. 4

Nominations notice

Clerical Technical Union of Michigan State University

Nominations for the offices of Vice President, Secretary, four (4) Directors and a single member of the Audit Committee will be accepted.

The Vice President, Secretary and Directors will be elected to serve a term of approximately two (2) years, specifically, from their date of installation through the installation date of their replacements elected in the union's regularly scheduled election to be conducted in October 2012.

The person elected to the one open position on the Audit Committee will serve a term of approximately three (3) years, until the regularly scheduled election to be conducted in October 2013.

Written nominations will be accepted

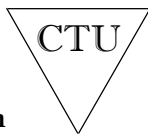
by the Election Committee or their designees, including CTU Office Secretary Barb Harris, at the CTU office from September 7 through September 14, 2010, by 5 p.m.

A nominations meeting will be held on September 14, 2010, at 5:30 p.m. at the CTU office, 2990 E. Lake Lansing Road, East Lansing, Michigan 48823. Nominations can also be made from the floor of the nominations meeting if the nominee is in attendance. The nomination period will close upon the conclusion of the nominations meeting, at 6 p.m.

In order to make a nomination, a member must be in good standing. Nominees have to have completed their probationary period and be in good standing at the close of the nomi-

nations period. Self nominations are permitted; seconds are not required. No member shall be allowed to accept the nomination for more than one position. Every nominee will be required to indicate in writing, no later than the conclusion of the nomination period, whether s/he accepts or declines a specific nomination. The names of nominees who fail to accept their nominations will not appear on the ballot.

The Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, as Amended, requires that unions use members' home addresses during the course of the election process. Members should ensure that their most recent home address is on file with the union. Any recent changes of address should be submitted as soon as possible.



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of Michigan State University**
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PUBLISHED MONTHLY

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Cherylee Finney ctnews@msu.edu

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

The *CT News* is the voice of the membership. We welcome articles from members and stories about members.

While contributions are welcome, they should be constructive and contribute positively to the welfare of our union.

We will accept no attacks on any union leader or member. We will accept thoughtful discussion of all related issues in the letters section, and reserve the right to reply to those that seem to reflect a misunderstanding of the union and its policies.

Direct ideas, letters, questions and comments to Cherylee Finney.

CT Classifieds

For sale:

◆**Norwex:** Cleaning without chemicals. Would you like to learn how to drastically reduce the amount of chemicals you expose yourself and your family to while using products that are safe for the environment? Your answer is more than likely yes! Norwex cloths are micro-fiber cloths embedded with bacteria killing silver that you can use on all hard surfaces in your home. To sample this amazing product, just contact Kim Wright at 517-525-0995 or email norwexwright@gmail.com.

◆**Furniture:** Beautiful high boy dresser, \$250; wood desk with glass top drawers and filing, \$45; mahogany rocking chair, includes pads, \$45. 517-614-5795. [Shirley Reuther]

◆**Home:** Delightful gambrel roof style home with an inviting front porch will capture your heart in South Lansing. New double hung tilt windows, new furnace with humidifier, new roof, and new wood burning fireplace. Refinished hardwood floors throughout and a beautiful dining room with quarter sawn oak paneling with built in plate rack, and buffet. Surprising sized walk in closets and built in dresser, linen cabinets, and medicine cabinets.

Close to LCC, walking distance from Ingham Regional Medical Center, and 5 miles to MSU campus. Asking \$99,999. This is a great starter home since all the major repairs have been completed. For pictures or to schedule appointments go to <http://www.cb-hb.com/pages/agentsoffices.cfm?object=10&method=viewProperty&propertyId=14538&startRow=101¤tRow=145&agentId=75>.

Services:

517-515-7912
centralmichiganlawnsnow@hotmail.com
15000 Park Lake Rd., E. Lansing, MI 48823

◆**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).

For rent:

◆**Lansing area professional office space:** Contact Riverwind Psychology Associates, Richard Dombrowski, PhD. Call 517-703-0110x11 or email rdphd@juno.com.

◆**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.

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.

October General Membership Meetings

The final Quarterly Membership Meeting will be held Wednesday, October 27, in Room 252 Erickson Hall. The Meeting begins at 5:20, but the 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.

Creating our own weather

By Deb Bittner

I would like to share with you excerpts about the weather from a column I read recently by Michigan's First Gentleman Dan Mulhern.

"What's it s'posed to be like today?" they ask. It's totally understandable why they do—in Michigan, especially in August. Summer dwindles. Most are hoping for sun and heat, and crisp and starry nights. . . . The predictions have been wrong as often as they're right. But there's a bigger reason why it matters not what they say it's supposed to be like.

"That reason comes beautifully expressed in this quote from the German writer Goethe. . . :

I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. ***It is my daily mood that makes the weather.*** I possess tremendous power to make life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration; I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis is escalated or de-escalated, and a person is humanized or de-humanized. If we treat people as they are, we make them worse. If we treat people as they ought to be, we help them become what they are capable of becoming.

"Funny, that Goethe calls it a 'frightening' conclusion. I guess some little part of us would rather leave the thanks or the blame to chance or to Willard Scott or Al Roker, rather than create our own climate. We're scared a little

of the fact that we might have that power and responsibility. But gray skies or blue, we possess the power 'to inspire . . . humor . . . heal . . . humanize [and] help [others] become what they are capable of becoming!'"

The column is from Mulhern's "Everyday Leadership" blog at <http://www.danmulhern.com/>.

There is some truth in the poetic notion that our individual choices have the power to affect something as huge as the climate. Of course, my mind immediately turns to how much we ramp up our individual power when we pool our collective will and act in solidarity.

We may or may not be able to affect the weather, but trying to bring about positive change sometimes means going out in the cold, the wind, the rain or the oppressive heat and blazing sun.

However, because we came together and formed the CTU, because we have a collective bargaining agreement, we are *protected* when we stand up for ourselves and each other in the work place.

Workers without a union do not have the same protections. For an example, see the article on page 7 in which Associate Professor Michelle Kaminski points out that there is no *legal* protection against bullying. Under our Contract and with the strength of our Union, however, neither bullying nor retaliation for reporting it is tolerated. By assisting in the creation of a more



equitable climate, our Union protections benefit not only the individual but the larger University community.

Sure, workers without a union should—and can and do—stand up for what is right. Unfortunately, they can be disciplined or terminated with little or no cause, and with no one to fight for them. Sometimes they make the decision to do the right thing anyway, but the price can be huge.

With our collective power, not only can we change the workplace on a day-to-day basis, but we have a stronger voice when it comes to achieving fairness through united bargaining, for example, by fighting off efforts to unfairly balance the budget on the backs of employees.

Having a strong Union doesn't negate the importance of individual action. In fact, a strong CTU *requires* the input and participation of members. If we, as individuals, don't stand up for what is right, if we don't even report Contract violations, then the Union will not be effective. If we don't show up to help make decisions and/or to demonstrate our collective strength we contribute to the weakening of the organization.

So, to Mulhern's question, "What's it gonna be like today?" I would add the advice, "Use your sunscreen and make sure you're covered."

Meeting

continued from p. 1

Layoffs

One hundred sixty-three CTs have been affected by layoffs since January 2009, according to McNeil, either through job elimination or bumping.

Of the 163, twenty-seven ended up out of a job.

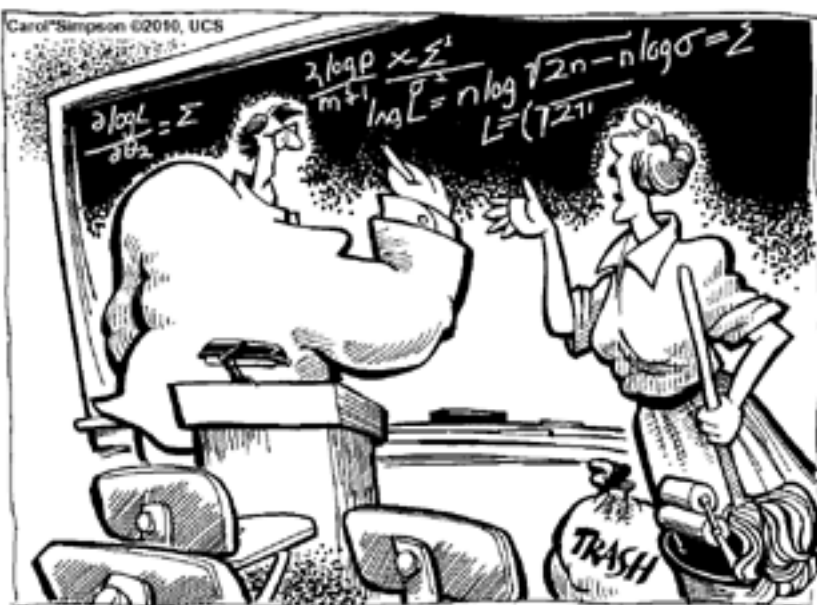
Most of these were CTs on probation or with very little seniority. However, the extraordinarily large number of layoffs has resulted in the loss of several CTs with approximately two years' seniority.

Of the remaining CTs who ended up out of a job, a few decided to retire, and one person quit because she had the lowest seniority of anyone in her grade level and did not wish to take a job at a lower level.

"The situation has been very disruptive and very difficult for many members," McNeil said.

"We have had CTs who work part-time—by choice—forced to take full-time jobs, and full-time CTs who have had to accept part-time jobs," he said.

Under our Contract, we can be forced from part-time into full-time employment. A full-time employee who lands in a part-time job, however, retains "bypass" rights. This means that the CT takes the part-time position but is entitled to be bypassed into the next full-time, vacant position for which she or he is qualified at the current level (or a lower level upon agreement). However, members on layoff or facing layoff have priority for vacant positions. In this climate, someone displaced into a part-time position might have quite a wait before a full-time vacancy becomes available through the bypass procedure.



**"You think YOUR job requires higher mathematics...
Try raising four kids on \$8.50 an hour."**

In times when we had very few layoffs, McNeil said, the CTU and MSU Human Resources could make special arrangements to help a member find a good job fit when facing displacement due to a job elimination or bump. In this climate, however, we are following the Contract to the letter.

McNeil said that a couple of longer-term CTs ended up in layoff after exhausting their bumping and bypass rights by failing two trial periods. When this happens, the laid off CT loses bypass and bumping rights but can apply for vacant positions.

Prepare

These cases underscore the need for all of us to update our skills and resumes, McNeil said. No one wants a failed trial period. And no one wants to be passed over for a position for which he or she is qualified.

We need to have our training in order, and we also need to make sure our applications and resumes completely and accurately reflect our skills. Don't assume that HR or a prospective employer will use "common sense" to

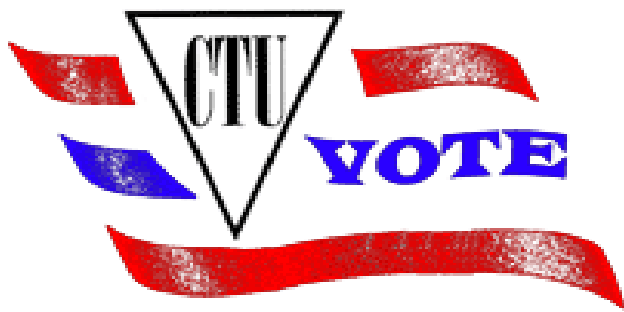
decipher your background. CTs have been overlooked for jobs because they did not specifically list certain skills.

To help avoid the problem of failed trial periods, HR uses skills assessment tests to verify the abilities of CTs, McNeil said.

Because CTs expressed concern about these tests, the CTU installed the same testing software used by HR at our union hall for people to practice. McNeil recommended that we call Barb Harris (the CTU organizational manager, 355-1903) to set up an appointment to practice and then go to Nisbet and take the tests.

The conversation then turned to the reorganization of several units, specifically, the College of Agriculture, Residential and Hospitality Services, the Breslin Center Ticket Office and Printing Services. [Joyce Gale Sepka]

We ended the meeting with a drawing for door prizes: Juli Kerr and Walt Peebles each won \$50, Sally Zetzer won a gift certificate to the MSU Dairy Store, and Chris Barden won the Solidarity Committee coffee break.



2010 CTU elections schedule

August 2010. Nomination notice distributed through the *CT News*.


September 7 through September 14. Nomination period.

September 14. Deadline of 5 p.m. for written nominations. Submit written nominations to the CTU office secretary or a member of the Elections Committee. That night, nominations will be accepted from the floor during a nominations meeting at the CTU office from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. The nominations period will close upon the conclusion of the meeting. Candidates will be given an opportunity to speak at this meeting. Upon submission of their nominations, candidates will be given a list of rules and guidelines for the election.


September 21. Deadline of 5 p.m. for candidates to submit a campaign statement/biography (up to 500 words, electronic format preferred) to the CTU office secretary for publication in the *CT News*. Photo arrangements must also be made at this time by contacting Cheryllee Finney at 432-9580 or ctnews@msu.edu.

October 4–October 22. The membership list will be available for inspection by the candidates between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Arrangements to inspect the membership list must be made by contacting a member of the Elections Committee or the CTU office secretary.

October 4. Election notice will be mailed to the last known home address of all union members.



CTU of MSU
Suite 100
3498 E. Lake Lansing Road
East Lansing, MI 48823-6219



The Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, as Amended, requires that unions use members' home addresses during the course of the election process. CTU-MSU members should ensure that their most recent home address is on file with the union. To verify and update your address go online to www.hr.msu.edu/, choose "eHR," provide your ID and password, and choose "Faculty/Staff/Retiree Address System." Direct questions to the CTU office at 355-1903.

October 1–19. Request absentee ballots from Barb Harris (355-1903, ctustaff@msu.edu) by 5 p.m. on October 20.

October 11. Approximate publication date for the special elections edition of the *CT News*. Candidate forums begin. [Carol Christofferson]

October 25. Absentee ballots need to be at the P.O. box by the end of the day.

October 26. Polling from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Absentee ballots will be retrieved from the P.O. box at 4 p.m. Official vote count begins at 6 p.m.

October 27. Officers installed at the Membership Meeting.

November 5. Deadline for receipt of election protests.

November 16. If a runoff election is required, it will take place November 16. No absentee ballots will be available in the case of a runoff election.

Elections committee

Three Union Representatives have graciously stepped forward to run the 2010 CTU elections. We appreciate the commitment of:

- ▼ Brenda Bailey, Chairperson, baileyb@msu.edu, 884-1058
- ▼ Liz Owen, owene@msu.edu, 432-6088
- ▼ Becky Sullivan, sulli306@msu.edu, 884-3374

Contact someone on the committee to submit written nominations, make arrangements to view the membership list or to ask questions or voice concerns about the elections. Committee members would also love to hear from anyone who wants to volunteer to help with the elections. Released time is available with adequate notice.



Board actions

April—June 2010

The following CTU Executive Board discussions took place April through June 2010. All expenditure decisions are included, but the list does not represent meetings in their entirety. CTs can receive copies of complete minutes through the mail or email by contacting the CTU office at 355-1903.

April 6, 2010

Renewed \$168 annual subscription to the *Detroit Free Press*.

Agreed to pay \$100 annual membership fee in the Coalition of Labor Organizations at MSU (CLO).

Decided to replace computers for Contract Administrators and President for approximately \$3,599.

Agreed to purchase Microsoft Windows 2007 software along with seven site licenses for \$422.

Decided to provide dinner before “The Sweatshop Workers Tour 2010” presentation. Staff and Board members will use the opportunity to talk with union organizers from Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Agreed to spend \$195 each for two individuals to attend “Bargaining Health Care Benefits” in Detroit.

April 6, 2010

Agreed to ask membership for a transfer of \$125,000 from the designated account to operating savings.

Agreed to request transfer of funds from designated account to operations for reimbursement of 2009-10 health care negotiations at upcoming Membership Meeting.

Renewed \$34.97 yearly subscription to *Progressive* magazine.

Subscribed to *Inside Michigan Politics*, which has lowered its price from

\$199 to \$99 per year.

Voted to send the President to “Empty Plate” Greater Lansing Food Bank fundraiser at a cost of \$125.

Decided to send up to four individuals to the Fifteenth Annual Doug Griffith Community Service Award Labor Breakfast at a cost of \$25 each.

Renewed \$119 two-year subscription to *The Nation*.

Received report on Joint Health Care Committee: CLO and MSU to begin discussions on post retirement and current health care plans.

Received report on problem that unions (IBT 580 and OPEIU 459) are having with Red Cross. The unions are concerned about safety and quality.

Announced organizers of the annual CTU picnic: Deb Bittner, Willie Paulsen, Jan Wallace.

Discussed the request of a few CTs to be excluded from receiving union information: The CTU is obligated, in some cases legally obligated, to ensure that members receive information pertinent to Union business. However, members can opt to discontinue union email of a general nature.

April 28 Conference Call

Upon request of a member, donated \$50 to the 2010 Parents Action Committee on Minority Academic Concerns (PACMAC) spelling bee.

May 4

Transferred \$25,000 from operating savings to operating checking.

Donated \$50 for the Greater Lansing Women’s Center’s annual “Dream Girl” fundraiser.

Donated \$150 to Mystic Lake Camp program, which, among other activities, educates children regarding unions.

Discussed University’s decision to provide direct deposit payroll information on its web site as part of its “Go Green” initiative.

Received report on Labor Notes event held in April.

May 18

Renewed \$135.96 yearly subscription to Clipart.com.

Donated \$50 to the Tri-County Office on Aging.

Agreed that there will be no \$50 drawing at the May 19 Special Membership Meeting.

Received report on negotiations status of Union of Non-Tenure Faculty.

Agreed to hire an individual on an as-needed basis to assist with watering newly planted trees and other miscellaneous building issues.

June 1

Moved quarterly Membership Meeting to June 29, one month earlier than

Board continued on next page

Workplace bullies

We might think we left the bullies back in the school yard—but not according to Associate Professor Michelle Kaminski, who says bullies are also common in the workplace.

“Bullying is a bigger problem than most people realize. About a third of the work force is affected by it at some point in their careers, not including those who merely witness it. It hurts individuals’ mental health, and in some cases their physical health. And it costs organizations,” Kaminski said.

Kaminski, who teaches labor relations at Michigan State University, spoke at a Labor and Employment Relations Association luncheon earlier this year and at a CTU training session in the fall.

Kaminski defined workplace bullying as a form of psychological violence that interferes with work, including verbal or nonverbal abuse or other offensive conduct that is threatening or humiliating. [Michelle Eifert]

As examples she cited screaming, yelling, talking to someone in a dismissive tone, being quick to criticize and slow to praise, socially ostracizing someone, gossiping, scapegoating and/or withholding resources needed to perform the job.

Although bullying is four times as common as harassment and abuse in regards to sex, gender, race or any of the protected classes, it is not illegal.

“Why do people bully? Mostly, because they can get away with it,” Kaminski said. “It helps them get what they want, and nobody stops them from doing it.” A workplace bully can be a supervisor, coworker or anyone with whom an employee interacts on the job.

Kaminski said that bullied individuals need to realize that they are not responsible for the abuse. Then they will be able to take steps to protect themselves.



The targeted employee should take notes about any inappropriate interactions and collect data and evidence. Supportive witnesses are helpful (and easier to get if the bully targets others in the workplace). Evidence should include any negative impact the bullying has on the employer, such as an incident that occurred in front of customers.

Many employees fear retaliation for reporting abuse, she said, an especially valid sentiment in today’s economy. However, she believes that workplace bullying needs to be reported for the health and well being of both the target and the organization.

Targets who are fortunate enough to have a union, should go there first, she said, and urged unions to negotiate specific contract language on bullying. [Article 4, Section II of the CTU Contract protects employees from bullying with the following clause: “The parties are mutually committed to promoting respect, civility, teamwork and empowerment in the work place.”]

Kaminski called on both unions and management to establish specific policies on workplace bullying, support legislation to ban it and provide training so that employees will recognize it and know what to do about it. She added that surveys could help determine the extent of the problem.

CTs who are being bullied at work or who are aware of a bullying situation should contact their UR or call the union at 355-1903.

Board

continued from previous page

scheduled. Lack of a quorum meant crucial decisions could not be made at either the April Membership Meeting or May Special Membership Meeting.

Agreed to process seriously delinquent loans from the Gerri Olsen Educational Loan Program in Small Claims Court.

Received reports on post retirement health care bargaining, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources restructuring, Peckham workers situation, Doug Griffith Labor Breakfast, and difficulties printing and distributing the newsletter as a result of Printing Services’ demise.

Agreed to voluntarily recognize three non-Teamster CTU staff members as a union. Legal counsel is clari-

fying some issues. Board will await demand to bargain.

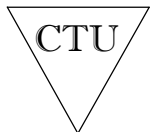
June 15

Agreed to refund union dues that MSU Payroll mistakenly charged to a CT’s parking refund upon her retirement.

Agreed to present constitutional changes proposed by the Finance Committee to members at the June 29 Special Membership Meeting.

Agreed to send the Treasurer and Finance Manager to Excel training at the cost of \$128 each.

Announced that Communication Specialist Cheryllee Finney will not be included in the new staff bargaining group. Instead, she will be recognized as a member of CTU.



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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Calendar

September 7 CTU Executive Board meeting. C-T Union Hall, 5:15 pm. Members welcome.

September 15 Deadline to submit materials for the September *CT News*.

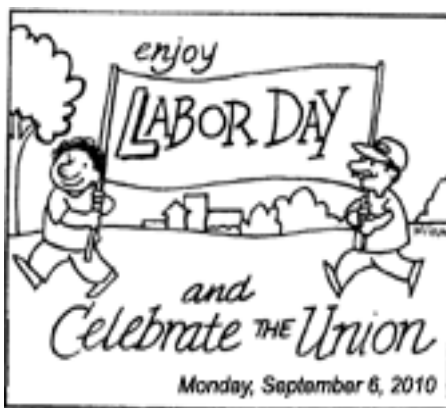
September 16 “‘A Very, Very Wide Influence, Even When . . . Dead’: The Early ANC and Black Workers in South Africa before World War II,” Peter Limb, MSU History. “Our Daily Work/Our Daily Lives” brown bag series. 12:15–1:30, MSU Museum Auditorium.

September 21 CTU Executive Board meeting. C-T Union Hall, 5:15 pm. Members welcome.

September 24 “Was There Ever a Singing Labor Movement?” Ronald Cohen, Prof. of History Emeritus, Indiana University NW. “Our Daily Work/Our Daily Lives” brown bag series. 12:15–1:30, MSU Museum Auditorium.

September 26 “Petticoat Patriots: How Michigan Women Won the Vote,” a new history exhibit exploring the suffrage movement in Michigan. Michi-

gan Women’s Historical Center, 213 W. Main Street, Lansing, 2-4 pm.



UR district news

District 4. (Biomedical Physical Sciences, Planetarium): **Rebecca Conat Mansel** was appointed UR. Reach her at 353-8916 or conatreb@msu.edu.

If you have an interest in becoming a UR, please contact Vice President Nancy Gray at 353-8632 or grayn@msu.edu.



The Coalition of Labor Organizations at MSU is participating this year in the Lansing Mosaic Festival: Saturday, September 4, Adado Riverfront Park.

The festival takes the best that Lansing has to offer from its labor force and its culturally diverse ethnic population and brings them together for one day to celebrate the City’s rich heritage.

From the music and food to the demonstrations and Red Hacker Basketball Tournament, the Lansing Mosaic Festival is family friendly, embraces Lansing’s history and looks forward to its bright future.

Volunteers are needed. Contact Deb Bitner at 355-1903 or ctupres@msu.edu.