

President's corner

Moving forward: CTU President Deb Bittner presented a letter to the MSU Community before the Board of Trustees on April 12. We have republished the letter on page 3.



Congrats

Congratulations to MSU Service Award recipients and retirees, pp. 4-5.



Join us for lunch

CTU Solidarity Lunches open to all members, p. 7.



CT news

The voice of the Clerical-Technical Union of Michigan State University

April 2013



Michigan State University Administration Building, March 27—"We made a statement and had fun doing it," said CTU President Deb Bittner. CTU joined our voices with others of the MSU labor community to protest the March 28 implementation of right to work in Michigan. MSU's Graduate Employees Union (GEU/AFT) organized the lunchtime event, which consisted of singing traditional labor songs. GEU plans to hold similar Labor Notes Chorus events in the future.



Negotiations handshake

March 11—Our two support staff members, Barb Harris and Patricia Shackleton are members of Teamster Local #580. Along with their chief negotiator, Business Representative Lynne Meade, they are shown here (left to right) shaking hands with their employer—CTU—after successfully negotiating a new contract. On the right side of the table are President Deb Bittner and Director Norma Teague from the employer's team. The new contract expires December 31, 2023, and includes changes to overtime rates and establishes wage and benefits reopens.

Right to work now law in MI

And more anti-worker legislation proposed

Over 80 anti-worker bills have been proposed—many of which are now law—in the last couple of years, culminating in the passage of the controversial right-to-work bills in December 2012. [Patricia Balsley]

Although several court cases are pending which oppose right to work, the laws went into effect on March 28. The CTU

Legislation continued on p. 5



Lansing Capitol, March 28—Several protesters wore tape over their mouths to symbolize the silencing of Michigan workers.

April showers bring the

Spring CTU Membership Meeting

Agenda:

- 2013 Budget
- Remembering Fallen Workers
- Negotiations Update
- Legislative Update
- Workplace Issues
- Announcements
- Door Prizes

Thursday, April 25
252 Erickson
5:20 p.m.

Come early to socialize!

CTnews

The voice of the Clerical-Technical Union
of Michigan State University

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

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Organized and
independent
since 1974!

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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.

CTclassifieds

For sale

▼ **White metal bunk beds:** Twin over full, no mattresses. Excellent condition. \$200. Located in Williamston. For photos or if interested, contact Sherye Robitaille at 517-655-6433 or ssroby@frontier.com.

▼ **2008 Gulfstream Innsbruck Supreme travel trailer:** Excellent condition. Model 30TBR. \$14,000. For more info, contact 517-899-8992 or thensley68@yahoo.com. For more info or for pictures, search "2008 Innsbruck" on Craigslist.

For rent

▼ **Sublet:** Light and airy 2-bedroom apartment from May 1–July 28, 2013 (3 months). Very convenient to MSU campus—just west of Brody Complex, right off Michigan and close to Frandor. Lovely apartment with 2 large bedrooms, a living room, dining room and kitchen, 1 bath. Very clean and quiet building. Carport. All for \$750 per month (negotiable). Call Nora at 420-4308 or carrn@msu.edu. [Angela Kimmel]

▼ **Suite or individual office:** 2990 East Lake Lansing Road in East Lansing. Will work to meet your specifications. Contact the CTU, 517-355-1903.

Membership Meetings

Meetings for the rest of 2013 will be held in 252 Erickson Hall on Thursday, April 25, Tuesday, July 23 and Wednesday, October 23. 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.



"Oh, I'm not blaming myself. That's why I hired you."

Services

▼ **Photo booth:** Are you planning a special event: prom, birthday, reunion, corporate gathering, open house, graduation party, or wedding? Consider renting the latest craze, a photo booth! It is fun for your guests and easy for you. You leave all the details to us. We provide a professional open air photo booth with an attendant, props, and free prints for your guests. Wedding packages starting at \$600; birthday parties for adults, \$400; or children, \$300; reunions and proms, \$500. Check out the details at our website, www.lookingglassphotobooth.com. If you don't see a package that fits your needs, please ask. We can work out the details. Contact Kris, info@lookingglassphotobooth.com, or phone 517-626-6200.

▼ **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 on the web (www.cata.org/cleancommute/index.html).

Free

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

▼ **Advertise** to your colleagues in the *CT News*. Contact Cherylee Finney at Cheryl@ctumsu.org. We accept ads from CTU members on items for sale and/or services provided by CTU members and/or their household family members.



Clerical-Technical Union

of Michigan State University

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April 2013

Dear MSU Community:

This is an open letter to the members of MSU and the surrounding community. In the aftermath of right-to-work laws and with all of the easy-to-spout anti-union rhetoric we hear these days, I think we need a reminder about the value that unions bring to the workplace and the community at large.

People have all kinds of opinions about unions. But it is important to recognize the impact unions have on the communities where union members live and work. Union workers tend to make more take-home pay than the average non-union worker, a fact used in both anti-union *and* union rhetoric. What we need to keep in mind, however, is the value those extra dollars add to a community. Many union members spend those extra dollars supporting local businesses, buying Michigan and U.S.A.-made products even when they cost a bit more, sending our children to local higher education institutions and donating to charities. Unions are at the forefront of realizing that we create communities by supporting them—both financially and through our volunteer efforts. Unions are at the forefront in the “buy local” and “buy American” movements. And unions are in the forefront of improving all of our lives through collective community actions that support local causes and build resource networks. Studies have shown that charitable giving is even higher where there are more union members.

In our own community, I believe MSU is more successful due to our loyal unionized employees and our positive relationship with our employer. Through the years, we have come to understand that when we work together and strive for creative solutions, we thrive. Just looking at what we have accomplished with health care over the past 15 years is proof enough, but there are many, many other examples. Union employees work hard every day to help students succeed. We do extra duty on university committees. We take on extra responsibilities even though we know the chances of winning any awards or getting merit pay are remote. We do it because we care about our work and our work environment. Unions are not the villains and not the cause of economic downfalls. Quite the contrary, unions are partners in solving problems when they are allowed to be full participants and are treated as allies. We work hard to understand what MSU needs to be successful. Then we evaluate how we can achieve those needs as well as our own.

This is the key to our success. Even when we disagree, even when it is the most chaotic, working together is the way to go. It is this process that moves the University forward and creates sustainability with loyal, productive and educated employees. And if we are to survive these next difficult years ahead, this is the only proven process to get us through. We just need to allow the process to work and not be micromanaged or politically manipulated. We need to be bold, maybe bolder, and stand up for what we know works. We need to be brave as we move ahead.

So, back to the right-to-work law. Will it change us and how we work together? It shouldn't—not if we stay true to our missions and our work. We understand that MSU is constrained somewhat in their political activities. However, it is helpful and gratifying when we hear MSU's leadership speak publicly about their good relationship with organized labor and the value that collective bargaining brings to the institution. Let's make sure it continues and we work to be creative problem-solvers as we tackle our next crisis or two.

Sincerely,

Deb Bittner, President

Congratulations and best wishes

Our congratulations and best wishes go out to the CTs being honored this year for retirement and years of service to Michigan State University.

MSU's University Service Recognition ceremony will be held Monday, April 22, 2013, 4:30 p.m. in the Spartan Club, Spartan Stadium Tower.



Forty-five years

Ninfa Caillouette
Lillian Fox
Keitha Kasel

Forty years

Mary Faloon
Joy Mulvaney
Brenda O'Malley

Thirty-five years

Erlinda Colon
Kimberly Crain
Julie Detwiler
Diana Eitnienar
Cathy Estrada
Kathy Ganser
Debra Greer
Cecelia Highstreet
Ann Lamar
Debra Lecato
Marcelle MacDonald
Elizabeth Martinez
Sherry Mulvaney
Laura Murchison
Karen Patterson
Lois Siefring
Nancy Smock
Richard Thomas

Thirty years

Karla Bellinger
Dawn Brown
Karen Ellerhorst
Cindy Garrison
Daurice Lewis
Melody Lundeen
Dennel McCarrick

Darlene Mennare
Karen O'Connor
Ann Rebman
John Stone
Irene Unkefer
Patricia Walters
Debra Waters
Lori Young

Twenty-five years

Dawn Autio
Sarrah Baraily
Tamela Boone
Blair Bullard
Linda Craig
Joyce Crandell
Betty Crowell
Rose Curtis
Katherine Dimoff
Shauna Dock
Katrina Dodson
Martha Duarte
Susan Dysinger
Julie Foster
Deborah Gillett
Karen Gray
Steven Grice
Karla Hague
Donna Henning
Lori Hoisington
Lisa Hurley
Quintella Jackson
Linda Jacques
Andrea James
Katherine Jernigan
Trudy Jodway
Phyllis Kacos
Christine Keyes

Debra Kolk
Kathleen Luce
Janice Masarik
Mary McAuliffe
Tonya McFadden
Deborah McMillan
Judith McNeil
Laurene Meyer

April Moore
Kristine Mulder
Kathy Mullins
Lisa Myers
Linda Oesterle
Nancy Perkins
Phyllis Pettit
Patricia Phelps
Debra Pizzo
Ophelia Powell
Julie Pozega
Phyllisia Pryor-Taylor
Cynthia Sanford
Julie Schafer
Phyllis Shance
Pamela Sieb
Anne Simon
Nancy Smith
Elaine Striler
Cindy Lou Taphouse
Patti Toivonen
Lisa Vanwelsenaers
Victoria Walker
Robin Walter
Kelly Weiler
Patricia Wright

Twenty years

Reva Coats
Jean Cochrane
Colleen Drake

Mary Hill
Mary King
Pat Thelen
Sally Zetzer

Fifteen years

Judy Allen
James Andrews
Marion Benac
Joanne Bennett
Heather Brown
Michelle Brown
Esther Burruss
Laura Carter
Michelle Coleman
Nanette Costello
Deborah Davis
Nancy Devers
Susan Dies
JoAnn Estell
Diane Faust
Rosario Garcia
Kaye Gardner
Ann Gobeski
Marcia Hanson
Lori Holuta
Denise Huguenot
Antoinette Jones
Ernestina Lamb
Kay Lockwood
Jane Lovall

Judith Madsen
Sunita Mahdavi
Kelly Malloy
Lori Mann
Tobin Mellberg
Dawn Meredith
Denise Miller
Aida Montalvo
Joelle Mulder
Cheryle Nelson
Jennifer Nelson
Stephanie
Opatrny-Smith
Deann Pierce
Deborah Pintarich
Roslyn Riddle
Michelle Ross
Brenda Samson
Nancy Sanchez
Joyce Scepka
Debra Scherer
Susan Schmidtman
Dennis Shubitowski
Jill Simon
Diane Smith
Genia Smith
Leesha Stuber-Powell
Sarah Ward
Gary Wilkes
Hope Wolcott
Danielle Woodbury

Retirees

In addition to those being honored for their years of service to MSU, we also want to congratulate and wish the best to members who retired this year.

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Joann Janes, 50 years | Merry Dodos, 28 |
| Charlotte Wilks, 41 | Linda Tallman, 28 |
| Dale Dadd, 41 | Kathleen Fettinger, 27 |
| Gloria Garcia, 40 | Charlotte Lake, 27 |
| Carol Cocozzoli, 39 | Thomas Peters, 27 |
| Donna Nevins, 38 | Judy Fogle, 27 |
| Terrie Hayes, 37 | Harley Seeley, 27 |
| Deborah Kelley, 36 | Lori Phelps, 26 |
| Dawn Everts, 34 | Janet Davenport, 26 |
| Betty Caldwell, 34 | Karen Ellis, 26 |
| Jacqueline Campbell, 34 | Gloria Bateman, 26 |
| Carl McFarland, 33 | Deborah Misiak, 25 |
| Kay Bongard, 33 | Debra Pizzo, 25 |
| Teresa Abbey, 33 | Ellen Acker, 25 |
| Jackie Bennett, 32 | Christine Keyes, 25 |
| Patricia Allen, 30 | Judith McNeil, 25 |
| Leah Worthington, 30 | Lori Hoisington, 25 |
| Irene Unkefer, 30 | Bonnie Stewart, 25 |
| Celia Seniff, 30 | Christine Brown, 25 |
| Christine Medeiros, 28 | Debra Gleason, 25 |
| Tamara Walker, 28 | Patricia Wright, 25 |



- Tracie Blakely, 25
 Rebecca Manty, 25
 Rebekah Hanson, 23
 Diane Smith, 22
 Connie Demars, 22
 Linda Krause, 18
 Sarah Ward, 16
 Carol Baker, 16
 Kay Lockwood, 15
 Jane Lovall, 15
 Nancy Devers 15

URdistricts

District 17 (Grounds, Physical Plant, Wilson, Holden, Case, Wonders, Duffy Daugherty Football Building): **Karen Jakus** is seeking appointment as union representative. If no other members in District 17 express an interest in the position before May 2, she will be appointed.

District 21 (Holmes, McDonel, Hubbard, Akers, Conrad, IM East): **Karen Jakus** has resigned as UR in District 21 to seek an appointment in District 17.

We now have 19 districts without a UR. If you are interested in becoming a UR, contact URCC Chairperson **Becky Sullivan** (884-3374 or sulli306@msu.edu) or CTU Vice President **Kim Smith** (355-3784 or Kim@ctumsu.org).

Keep in touch with your union

Members of the Clerical-Technical Union who are approaching retirement don't need to worry about losing contact with the union they helped build. Just email Cheryl@ctumsu.org with a request for a free subscription or call 517-355-1903. Include your name and address with your request. We're also available on line at www.ctumsu.org.

Legislation continued from page 1

contract, with our union security clause, remains in effect until it expires on April 1, 2015.

CTU: No contract extension

In order to meet the March 28 deadline, many unions worked with their employers to secure new or extended contracts that would protect their union security clauses for years into the future. Most of those organizations had contracts that were already expired or due to expire in the near future.

The CTU received several inquiries from members wondering why we were not pursuing this option.

Because it would help secure the strength of our union, the CTU did investigate several possibilities for extending our union security clause. The caveat was that no current protections

or benefits—already secured under our current contract until April 1, 2015—could be put at risk. In this political and economic climate, opening the contract seemed a possibly perilous gamble. In addition, the legislature was threatening public employers who entered into such agreements, and MSU—including CTs—could lose a lot in the long run.

The leadership decided, therefore, to continue to fight right to work in other ways.

War on workers continues

Considering how much damage the Michigan legislature has visited upon the working families of Michigan, one would think a reprieve is in order. No such luck.

A bill has been introduced that would violate first amendment rights by prohibiting political activity by school em-

ployees. HB 4043 is so broadly written that a teacher talking politics at lunch in the teachers' lounge would be breaking the law.

HB 4172 and SB 0157 repeal the prevailing wage act.

Another, HB 4201, would prohibit unions from using public equipment, supplies and facilities even when they are available to other groups.

HB 4249 and SB 0173 would limit leave time to what is available under state or federal law. It is meant to stop municipalities from enacting paid sick leave policies like we enjoy under our contract. [Dorothy Soliz]

CTcomments

We can help lower health care costs

Maybe because I did physician billing for years, or perhaps because I have had elderly parents, I can't really say, but I have noticed something very important about health care costs.

Let me start from the beginning.

A couple of years ago I was admitted to the hospital overnight. Our health care coalition had informed us how vital it was to help keep health care costs down.

The first step is to eat right, exercise and remain healthy.

The second is, apparently, to pay attention to the bill. After I was home from the hospital, I reviewed my bill, which I always do, and noticed charges for things that I had not received. My insurance had paid the bill, of course, but I was rather unhappy to see payments for things that I did not receive.

The bill stated that I had been given medication that was \$250 a pill. Now mind you, I take these pills every day and they are by no means \$250 each. As a matter of fact, they are \$12 for a bottle of 90.

So I called the hospital and asked why they were charging this amount. They replied that this is the fee that they charge. I then called patient billing and told them that I did not receive this medication or any medication on the list. I shared that I had taken my own medication out of my purse because the nurses never came in and offered it to me. They said they would have to look into it and get back with me.

Well, I had heard this before so I asked the hospital's quality control/quality assurance department to review my case. I explained that I never was issued the medications billed and I was upset my insurance company was billed for them. Again they told me they would look into the matter, and I told them I was calling my insurance company to initiate a review of my claim on their end.

I called my insurance company and explained my story to them. The insur-

Sometimes you gotta laugh



Joke is on the boss

The boss returned from lunch in a good mood and called the whole staff in to listen to a couple of jokes he had picked up. Everybody, except one woman, laughed uproariously.

"What's the matter?" grumbled the boss. "Haven't you got a sense of humor?"

"I don't have to laugh," she replied, "I'm leaving Friday."

—Union Communications Services



©2008, UCS
**"Time off to attend a funeral?
Good grief, Bob, they can
cremate someone now in
nothing flat!"**

We are looking for funnery, work-related stories, graphics and photos for publication in the *CT News* "Sometimes You Gotta Laugh" section. Contact Cheryl@ctumsu.org or 517-432-980.

ance company said they could not do much unless I had proof that they were billed inappropriately. So I called the quality assurance department at the insurance company and told them my story. They promised to look into the matter. I was satisfied that at least I was being heard.

In the meantime I added up the error in billing and the medication that was being charged—it came to a total of \$1,200. Since our raises were based directly on our healthcare costs at that time, I was determined to make this right and to correct the billing so it reflected the truth, which should have changed my overall health care costs for this visit.

A few weeks later I got a letter from both the hospital and the insurance company indicating they had adjusted the total amount and removed the charge

for medication during my stay.

I was very pleased with the outcome. And in light of the fact that I did my small part in keeping health care costs down, I felt that I was truly making a difference.

It's a small amount overall and may not make a large difference, I know, but imagine if we all reviewed our bills and charges and made sure any necessary corrections took place. Whether health care savings directly impact our wages (like they did then) or keep our premiums in check (as now), it is still important to check out our bills and statements from the doctors' offices, hospitals, labs, and healthcare vendors. I believe every little bit helps. So remember to take a few minutes to review those bills. You never know what you might find.

—Mary Metler, Member, CTU

Quote: "When we talk about equal pay for equal work, women in the workplace are beginning to catch up. If we keep going at this current rate, we will achieve full equality in about 475 years. I don't know about you, but I can't wait that long."

—Lya Sorano, Author

Gossip & Rumors



CTU Solidarity Lunches

Our opportunity to meet, break bread & develop working strategies for a hostile environment

Defending the Contract



In keeping with our ongoing efforts to stay in the forefront of changes that affect our union, let's get together to share lunch (on the union) and information.

Heard any rumors about the job? Share them with the rest of us so we can get the real story.

Legislation



Wondering how right-to-work laws affect you? Come find out.

Dealing with a difficult work situation? Let's try to solve it.

Getting together in a less formal setting will allow us to share our problems and our ideas in a more immediate and timely manner—just what we need in this highly volatile environment. To facilitate this exchange of ideas, the CTU Executive Board is pleased to present:

Stress & Overwork



An Opportunity to Discover Solutions



CTU Solidarity Lunches

Free / Members Only

Attend any of the meetings, or one near you.

Meetings will be scheduled on an ongoing basis.

Times and locations will be announced via the CTU listserv and on our website at www.ctumsu.org.

Reservations appreciated but not required.

To request a meeting in your area, contact your Union Representative or CTU Vice President Kim Smith at Kim@ctumsu.org.

CTs come from many backgrounds and do a lot of very different jobs in vastly diverse workplace situations, which could pose a challenge to our solidarity. However, we turn our diversity into strength when we get to know each other, when we understand the challenges faced by other members, and when we accept that every one of us has something to offer that could benefit our union.

Join us in solidarity!



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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

CTcalendar

April 23. Deadline to register for MSU Women's Resource Center (WRC) Annual "Women Matter" Luncheon with June Pierce Youatt, Acting Provost. Details and registration (\$18) at <http://wrc.msu.edu> (click on the "Events" tab).

April 25. Take Our Daughters And Sons To Work Day. Go to the WRC website and click on "Events."

April 25. CTU Spring Membership Meeting begins at 5:20. Doors open at 5, so come early to socialize. 252 Erickson.

May 1. Lugnuts vs. MSU in the Cross-town Showdown baseball game (rescheduled from April 11). Family friendly. Prizes. 7:05 at Cooley Stadium. Tickets are \$10 each from Deb@ctumsu.org (355-1903).

May 7. CTU Executive Board meeting. C-T Union Hall, 5:15 pm. Members welcome. [Cheryl Norton]

May 15. Deadline to apply for the

Family Fund Scholarship, awarded to 10 children or grandchildren of eligible MSU employees or retirees. The application is available at http://admissions.msu.edu/documents/family_fund_application.pdf.

May 21. CTU Executive Board meeting. C-T Union Hall, 5:15 pm. Members welcome. [Lori Thomas]

June 3. Deadline to submit nominations for the 2013 Clerical Technical Recognition Award (the Gliozzo award). Information and nomination forms under the HR News section at www.hr.msu.edu.

June 13. Save the date for the CTU Annual Picnic.

Gerri Olson Educational Loan Program

It's time to register for CTU's Educational Loan Program for Summer Semester 2013.

Contact CTU Financial Manager Patricia Shackleton April 21 through May 3. Registrations received after May 3 will be considered on a space available basis.

CLO Vision Care

Open enrollment is available through May 31 for the MEBS voluntary employee-paid vision care program offered by the Coalition of Labor Organizations. (This program is different from the MSUBenefitsPlus program.) Visit www.ctumsu.org for links and more information.