



### CT Spartan wins award

*Barbara Sweeney is the recipient of this year's Gliozzo Award, p. 4.*



### Executive Board

*A report on some of the Board's recent actions, p. 6.*



### Drowning in debt?

*Free assistance to help manage debt and plan for the future, p. 7.*



# CT news

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

November 2013

## Preparing for the challenges

**M**embers made two decisions in October to prepare us to meet the challenges and threats facing us as workers and union members.

### Choosing our leadership

On October 22, 168 CTs went to the polls to elect leaders who will serve for the next two years. If only one person ran for office, a "no" option was available.

**President:** Deb Bittner 158, No 10

**Treasurer:** Jan Wallace 156, No 5

**Director** (3 positions):

\*Walt Peebles 142

\*Pam Sloan 103

\*Norma Teague 113

Sierra VanDenHeuvel 94

**Audit Committee:**

Heather Dover (1 year) 165, No 1

Stephen Stofflet (3 year) 157, No 4



October 23—Union leaders elected the day before take the oath of office at the Membership Meeting. Left to right: Audit Committee Member Heather Dover; Directors Walt Peebles, Norma Teague and Pamela Sloan; President Deb Bittner; and Treasurer Jan Wallace. Stephen Stofflet, elected to the Audit Committee, was not available and will be sworn in at a later date.

### Managing our finances

The next evening, the 64 CTs attending the quarterly Membership Meeting voted unanimously to move \$113,243.02 from the contingency fund to operations. The money represents negotiating expenses incurred since the final months of 2010. The last time we met

the 50-member quorum required to conduct union business was June 2010.

### Also on the agenda

Guest speaker Amber Paxton, Director of the Lansing Financial Empowerment Center, spoke about the services offered

**Meeting continued on p. 7**



## Grad TAs forced to fight for earnings

October 25, 2013—Members of the Graduate Employees Union and their allies rallied in front of the Administration Building before the Board of Trustees meeting.

The GEU teaching assistants are demanding that

MSU pay them more than \$120,000 in back wages.

Some individual TAs have lost several hundred dollars, which is a lot for employees making \$20,000 or less a year.

TAs claim that they are

not being paid during the time when their work overlaps between terms.

For more information and to support the TAs by signing an on-line petition go to <http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/michigan-state-university-1>.

# CTnews

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

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

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Organized and  
independent  
since 1974!

## CTU Executive Board

### President:

Deb Bittner [Deb@ctumsu.org](mailto:Deb@ctumsu.org)

### Vice President:

Kim Smith [Kim@ctumsu.org](mailto:Kim@ctumsu.org)

### Treasurer:

Jan Wallace [wallac12@msu.edu](mailto:wallac12@msu.edu)

### Secretary:

Tracy Rich [richt@msu.edu](mailto:richt@msu.edu)

### Directors:

Pamela Brock [brockp@msu.edu](mailto:brockp@msu.edu)  
Liz Owen [owene@msu.edu](mailto:owene@msu.edu)  
Willie Paulsen [paulsenw@msu.edu](mailto:paulsenw@msu.edu)  
Walt Peebles [peeblesw@msu.edu](mailto:peeblesw@msu.edu)  
Jeanette Robertson [robertso@msu.edu](mailto:robertso@msu.edu)  
Pamela Sloan [pamsloan@msu.edu](mailto:pamsloan@msu.edu)  
Norma Teague [teaguen@msu.edu](mailto:teaguen@msu.edu)

## CTU Staff

### Contract Administrators

John Klusinske [John@ctumsu.org](mailto:John@ctumsu.org)  
Dan McNeil [Dan@ctumsu.org](mailto:Dan@ctumsu.org)

### Financial Manager

Patricia Shackleton [Patricia@ctumsu.org](mailto:Patricia@ctumsu.org)

### Organizational Manager

Barb Harris [Barb@ctumsu.org](mailto:Barb@ctumsu.org)

### Communications Specialist

Cherylee Finney [Cheryl@ctumsu.org](mailto:Cheryl@ctumsu.org)

## 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.



## Come and join us

### Registrar's Office 13th Annual Holiday Bazaar

Friday, December 6, 2013  
Room 150 Admin. Bldg  
Conference Room

### Shopping Hours

7:30 to 8:30 a.m.  
9:30 to 11:00 a.m.  
11:30 to 1:30 p.m. (Lunch Sale)  
2:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Raffle drawings held throughout the entire day! Tickets are 3 for \$1.00.

Plenty of shopping, good food to eat, and lots of fun!

All proceeds being donated to "TOYS FOR TOTS!"

## CTclassifieds

### For sale:



▼ Stained glass Tiffany-style hanging lamp: 16" X 12.5", \$130. Email [dianned2009@gmail.com](mailto:dianned2009@gmail.com).

### For rent:

**Suite or individual office:** 2990 East Lake Lansing Road in East Lansing. Will

work to meet your specifications. Contact the CTU, 517-355-1903.

### 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](mailto: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.

## Membership Meetings

CTU Membership Meetings are held in January, April, July and October. The 2014 schedule will be set by the Executive Board in November and announced in the next newsletter. 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

Members welcome!



"Well, yes, you will need to work more than two days out of the year."

# What we are thankful for: THE UNION

President Deb Bittner

Looking back at a column I wrote in 2009, I started comparing what was going on then with now.

We were dealing with the fallout of 2008's tanked economy and monumental political season. Unions were under attack. There was fear, confusion and some hope. Back then I wrote:

"In this season of thanksgiving, everyone should give special thanks for unions and add on some hope that we grow stronger. . . . The truth is . . . that our society depends on union strength."

It's a sentiment worth repeating in 2013. While the economy may be better for some (the richest 10% of U.S. families received half of all income in 2012), many of us are still struggling to keep our houses, buy groceries, pay our taxes to support our communities, or put extra money into the local businesses.

It is hard enough to find work and often harder to keep a job. Many jobs are not good paying, full-time "stable" jobs. Instead, people are forced to work multiple part-time jobs that pay minimum wage or just above. Laws that protect workers are ignored as the oversight agencies are gutted. Too many workers feel powerless to improve their situation.

We all know horror stories of people "let go" for absences due to a child's illness, a relative needing the job, or a myriad of other petty issues.

This is where we have a lot to thank unions for. Unions do more than just keep good paying jobs. We set the tone for workplace consistency, rules and conduct. Historically, we have been the moving force behind laws that pro-

hibited child labor and established the 40-hour work week (and weekends!), workplace health and safety laws, the minimum wage, social security, workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, workplace anti-discrimination laws and guaranteed leave for workers to care for ourselves and our families when ill. [Nanette Costello]

## UNIONS: *As patriotic as warm apple pie*

*You think companies just "gave" benefits, job security and a living wage to workers?*



**Think again.**

So, when the union is able to secure workplace rules through a contract (Read your own CTU contract, and see page 5 for one benefit that is *not* a federal or state law like many of us think!), save a job from unfair termination, or protect wages and benefits, everyone is better off, not just the unionized worker.

CTU brings even greater value. We are partners in the community and the University. Our members volunteer their union-secured time and resources to help others. Our wages and stable schedules allow us have an impact in the community through service and donations. (It is nice when our contributions are recognized—congratulations Barbara Sweeney, recipient of the 2013 Gliozzo CT Award, p. 4.)

The current United Way Labor Challenge sponsored by the Coalition of Labor Organizations at MSU gives us an opportunity to join with other

union members who share our commitment, camaraderie, and teamwork to show what the MSU labor family can do to help others.

Labor also lends its voice and commitment to the "buy union," "buy American" and "buy local" movements—thereby helping to keep our money invested in our own economy. As we move into

the "gift giving" and entertaining season, remember to read the label or do other research so that you can be sure to buy food and products made in our own community and country. It can be done! Some ideas: buy meats from local butchers; honey, eggs, cheese, ice cream from MSU; maple syrup from local vendors; products from vendors at the MSU Union Craft Show in the first week of December at the MSU Union Building.

You can buy many USA-made products at the local stores like Goodrich's, Kroger's and Meijer's. Or you can shop on-line. CTU has a "Shopping List" on our website where we provide information and links that introduce the reader to companies and products we might want to consider. Changing our gift-buying habits takes work, but, I repeat, it can be done. And you will feel great about the wonderful and thoughtful gifts you present this year!

In this time of thanksgiving, I want to take a moment to thank those around me. I am grateful to everyone who made our election process and membership meeting such a success. On a personal note, I am grateful to continue at the helm of this wonderful organization called CTU. Together we are doing good work, and I am thankful for that.

Thanks for all you do for the MSU community, for the communities where you live and for our union community.



# CTnotables

## Long-time Spartan wins 2013 Gliozzo CT award

Office assistant Barbara Sweeney, winner of the 2013 Gliozzo Clerical Technical Award, is quite the Spartan.

Not only does she have a nearly 40-year career at MSU—all in the Department of Animal Science—but she also graduated from our venerable institution in 1974. As a youngster, she was introduced to the university through her participation in 4-H. She met her husband while they were both students here. And her siblings and son attended MSU.

In her presentation, Human Resources Vice President Sharon Butler said that she shares the sentiment behind the award: that CTs deserve recognition for being the backbone of the university.

"It's employees like Barb who really do make a difference here at MSU," Butler said.

Sweeney, who was nominated by her supervisor, was described by colleagues as "friendly," "diligent," "hard-working," "diplomatic," "patient," and "passionately committed to her mission."

Butler also lauded Sweeney's commitment to the community. She has been an active volunteer in youth and livestock organizations as well as in her church.

Admitting that she is more comfortable working "behind the scenes mak-

ing sure other people are recognized," Sweeney said that she has worked with wonderful people over the years, and that the passion and enthusiasm of new students, faculty and staff are what keep her from retiring.

"I still love coming to work every day," she said.

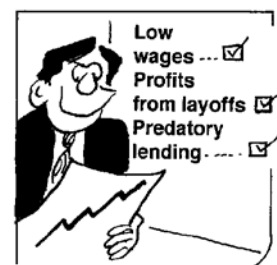
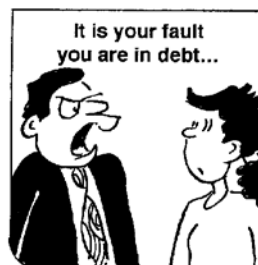


October 10—CT Barbara Sweeney receives the 2013 Gliozzo Clerical Technical Award from Human Resources Vice President Sharon Butler.

## Sometimes you gotta laugh I'm glad I didn't say that out loud



1. Never give me work in the morning. Always wait until 5 and then bring it to me. The challenge of a deadline is always refreshing.
2. If it's really a "rush job," run in and interrupt me every 10 minutes to inquire how it's going. That greatly aids my efficiency.
3. Always leave without telling anyone where you're going. It gives me a chance to be creative when someone asks where you are.
4. If my arms are full of papers, boxes, books or supplies, don't open the door for me. I might need to learn how to function as a paraplegic in future and opening doors is good training.
5. If you give me more than one job to do, don't tell me which is the priority. Let me guess.
6. Do your best to keep me late. I like the office and really have nowhere to go or anything to do.
7. If a job I do pleases you, keep it a secret. Leaks like that could get me a promotion.
8. If you don't like my work, tell everyone. I like my name to be popular in conversations. [Michele Benton]
9. If you have special instructions for a job, don't write them down. If fact, save them until the job is almost done.
10. Never introduce me to the people you're with. When you refer to them later, my shrewd deductions will identify them.
11. Be nice to me only when the job I'm doing for you could really change your life.
12. Tell me all your little problems. No one else has any and it's nice to know someone is less fortunate.



## URdistricts

If you are interested in becoming a UR, contact URCC Chairperson **Becky Sullivan** (884-3374 or [sulli306@msu.edu](mailto:sulli306@msu.edu)) or CTU Vice President **Kim Smith** (355-3784 or [Kim@ctumsu.org](mailto:Kim@ctumsu.org)).

**District 35** (Olds, Museum, Music): **Amanda VanKoevinger** has requested reappointment to the Union Representative position. If no other CTs in the district express interest in the position before November 21, she will be appointed.

## Know your contract

# No such thing as a free lunch

**A**lthough no law forces an employer to provide a lunch period, Article 7 of the contract between CTU and MSU makes it clear that full-time CTs are entitled to a scheduled lunch period at some point during a work day.

And, according to law, if that lunch is unpaid, the employee must be completely relieved of any work duties during it.

First and foremost, no one should work through lunch (or any other time) without compensation. In addition to violating our contract, for a department to require, ask, or allow a CT to work without compensation—or just be aware that a CT is doing so or has done so—is against the law. A department that does not compensate an employee for work at any time is violating the Fair Labor Standards Act. A diligent supervisor will *prohibit* employees from working without compensation.

Our contract goes beyond the law and provides further protection of our time by requiring a lunch period schedule. For most of us, that means taking an unpaid, scheduled lunch hour somewhere near the middle of an 8 to 5 shift. However, members working different shifts or alternative schedules might have very different lunch schedules. And some operating units schedule or allow lunch periods of less than an hour.

Such alternative schedules are acceptable under the contract.

What is *not* acceptable, is for a supervisor to alter a regularly scheduled lunch period without providing adequate notice—unless overtime is provided.

Under the contract, a unit can alter our lunch schedules with appropriate notice of at least one working day prior to our two consecutive days off. However, the alteration cannot be done to avoid paying overtime, which is prohibited in another section of our contract.

For example, a department might decide to establish a schedule of staggered

## Article 7. Working Hours

### I. General Provisions

#### A. Work Week

1. The normal work week for full-time employees shall consist of five (5) 8-hour days, exclusive of lunch periods, followed by two (2) consecutive days off. Office hours are normally from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.
2. A different schedule of hours and staggered shifts may be maintained in some departments.

#### B. In seven (7) day or twenty-four (24) hour operations, the work week may vary from that of other employees.

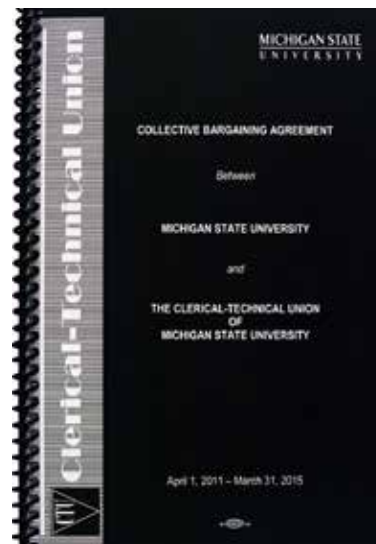
#### C. Operating units will be permitted to schedule less than one (1) hour lunch periods when this is the normal operating schedule of the bargaining unit employees of the operating unit.

#### D. Other operating units will be permitted to schedule less than one (1) hour lunch periods for individual employees by mutual agreement between the employee and the operating unit supervisor.

#### E. Operating units shall maintain a work schedule for bargaining unit employees. The schedule shall be established at least one (1) working day prior to the employee's consecutive days off.

#### F. In health-care delivery facilities where biweekly work schedules of eighty (80) hours are maintained, schedules shall also be established at least one (1) working day prior to the employee's consecutive day(s) off.

#### G. When an employee's schedule is altered without sufficient notice, the employee shall be paid at the overtime rate for hours worked outside the original schedule.



lunch periods in order to provide coverage on an ongoing basis. That would be a legitimate change in work schedule. However, once established, we have the right to depend on a schedule that cannot be unilaterally changed to avoid paying overtime as specific issues arise.

CTs can *agree* to take straight time within the same work week if we want. For example, a CT might be happy to take lunch at a different time on a particular day, or work 15 minutes into lunch and leave 15 minutes early. When we are treated fairly and with respect, we are usually inclined to work these things out.

But what if the CT is not happy with a last-minute schedule change? What if the department frequently requires the CT to cancel or alter lunch plans because “something came up” but refuses to bend

when the CT needs to make a minor schedule change? What if the situation has become unfair? [Paula Schreiner]

Then the CT can require that the department pay for the privilege of altering her or his lunch schedule inappropriately or with inadequate notice. The CT can insist on overtime for time worked outside the regular schedule.

Remember, our contract was negotiated by both the union *and* the employer. Units that refuse to follow it are in violation of university policy.

If you feel you are being unfairly pressured to alter your schedule, including your lunch period, in a way that violates the contract, get in touch with your UR (<http://www.ctumsu.org/about-the-ctu/directory/union-representatives/>) or a contract administrator (355-1903).



## Board actions

### July through September 2013

**T**he following CTU Executive Board discussions took place July through September 2013. 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.

**July 2** (cancelled because of holiday and vacation schedules)

#### July 16

Renewed \$275 annual subscription to Union Communication Services, Inc.

Renewed \$159.95 annual subscription to Clipart.com.

Agreed to transfer \$30,000 from operating savings to checking.

Discussed newsletter, union training, upcoming ratification vote on health care contract, solidarity lunch meetings, etc.

Agreed to cancel September 3 Executive Board meeting.

#### August 6

Agreed to donate \$50 to Fowlerville Relay-For-Life.

Decided to send up to four people, at \$75 per person, to the Michigan State AFL-CIO Community Services Fall Seminar.

Declined \$75 organizational membership in Michigan Women's Historical Center. [Linda Gibson]

Renewed \$40 organizational membership in National Organization of Women.

Agreed to a raffle of Lansing Lugnuts tickets to members voting in the upcoming health care contract ratification.

Discussed upcoming evening football game and its impact on campus parking.

#### August 20

Discussed necessity of getting a quorum at October membership meeting.

Agreed to pursue legal action against a member who defaulted on an educational loan.

At the request of member, donated \$100 for supplies to help build a wheelchair ramp for a UAW 2256 member.

Announced the ratification of the health care agreement by all unions.

Approved 2013 Elections Committee: Liz Owen (chairperson), Brenda Bailey, Rosie Garcia, Becky Sullivan.

Discussed schedule of upcoming CTU elections.

#### August 29 (email vote)

Agreed to purchase a \$50 gift certificate for Dawn Hecker, Director, MSU Human Resource Development, who is retiring.

#### September 3 (cancelled because of holiday and vacation schedules)

#### September 17

Contributed \$100 to the United Way.

Renewed \$65 membership in the Mid-Michigan Chapter of Labor and Employment Relations Association (LERA).

Agreed to send up to three additional people to the LERA lunch meeting on Michigan's right-to-work laws at a cost

of \$20/person.

Agreed to send up to two people to the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame 30th Annual Dinner at a cost of \$125/person.

Decided to place a \$75 business card-sized ad in the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame Program.

Contributed \$150 to the Tri-County Office on Aging fund raiser.

Agreed to pay \$115 each for CTU president and vice president to attend "Adults Only: Creating a Workplace Where Everyone Functions as an Adult" workshop.

Discussed special conference on MSU Health Team's plan to hire an outside vendor for collections.

#### September 25 (email vote)

Agreed to send two individuals to "Bras for a Cause" fund raiser at a cost of \$31 to \$35 a ticket.



"I want to help stimulate the economy, but I ran out of money."





## Money problems?

**T**he Lansing Financial Empowerment Center can help you take control of your debt, deal with debt collectors, improve your credit, create a budget, open a bank account, start an emergency fund, save and plan for your future, and much more.

It is available to anyone in Michigan who is looking for help with finances. [Paula Schreiner]

Call 211 (or 1-866-561-2500) to schedule free one-on-one financial counseling at one of several Financial Empowerment Centers in Lansing. Find them online at <http://www.lansingmi.gov/ofe> or on Facebook at Lansing Financial Empowerment Center.

## Meeting continued page 1

through her organization.

The Center offers one-on-one financial counseling to anyone in the state. Trained, professional financial counselors will sit down with you, learn about your specific situation and help you create a budget, improve your credit score, pay down your debt, access safe and affordable bank accounts, and save money for the future. It's simple: call 211 or 1-866-561-2500.

We also discussed the health care disbursement check that we will receive as a result of our recent health care negotiations. The check is scheduled to appear in the second January paycheck of members on the payroll as of January 1, 2014. It will be prorated for employees working less than full time.

Additional topics of discussion included MSU benefits, layoffs, right to work, classifications, and local elections.

President Deb Bittner spoke on the Graduate Employees Union's efforts to force MSU to pay them complete wages.

She also announced that the December holidays will be in the middle of the week this year and said that members should plan accordingly.

Door Prizes: Ruth Patino and Cindy Lou Martin won \$50 each, Julie Stoner won a CTU jacket and Linda Brandau won a gift bag of CTU spirit items.

## IRS changes will affect some CTs

**T**he *HR Source* newsletter recently reported on a change in IRS rules that will affect CTs with same-sex partners who marry outside of Michigan.

Same-sex couples who legally married in jurisdictions or countries that recognize their marriages will be treated as married for all federal tax purposes even if a couple resides in a state—such as Michigan—that does not recognize the marriage.

Until now, employers in states that do not recognize same-sex marriages, were required to treat such benefits as taxable income. [Patricia Founce]

Eligibility under the MSU Other Eligible Individual (OEI) program remains unchanged for both same- and opposite-sex employees.

For more information, please contact MSU HR Benefits at 517-353-4434 or [benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu](mailto:benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu).

Same-sex married couples may claim taxes paid in the previous three years by filing amended tax returns. Contact your tax advisor for questions regarding tax filings.



## Thank you!

Vice President Kim Smith, UR  
Coordinating Committee Liaison

**T**hank you" to the union representatives who set up Chair Massages in their districts through Health4U.

Stress relief and taking breaks are vital to our members' health and well-being. Accuracy and efficiency increases when breaks are taken away from the work area.

## Congratulations—

for a successful elections, thanks to the members who worked the polls, drove the vans and prepped and counted the ballots on October 22:

Shana Burke  
Julie Green  
Angel Loveall  
Lois Newhouse

Stacey Patton  
Judy Redding  
Tracy Rich  
Jeanette Robertson

Katie Shelton  
Stephanie Six  
Kim Smith  
Amanda VanKoevering

## Also—

Chairperson Liz Owen and the rest of the Elections Committee—Brenda Bailey, Rosie Garcia, and Becky Sullivan—who did a great job overseeing every aspect of the elections.

CTU staff members Barb Harris, Patricia Shackleton and Larene Smith who assisted in so many ways and kept everything on schedule.

And, of course, every member who contributed to our union democracy by voting.



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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

## CTcalendar

**November 19.** Executive Board meeting, C-T Union Hall, 5:15 pm. Members welcome.

**December 2.** Deadline to submit nominations for MSU's Excellence in Diversity Awards. Information available on the Office for Inclusion website at <http://www.inclusion.msu.edu/Outreach/EIDA.html>. Please direct questions to the EIDA Program Office at 353-3922.

**December 3 & 17.** Executive Board meeting, C-T Union Hall, 5:15 pm. Members welcome.

**December 24, 25, 31, and January 1.** Please note that this year's union-secured, paid holidays in December and January fall in the middle of their respective work weeks (Tuesdays and Wednesdays). Please take this into consideration when making your holiday plans.

**January 31.** Deadline to submit nomination forms for the Ruth Jameyson

"Above and Beyond" Award. The \$2,500 award goes to a staff member pursuing a post-baccalaureate degree. The nomination form and criteria are posted at [http://](http://www.hr.msu.edu/recognition/supportstaff/JameysonAward.htm)

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### Reminder:

## MSU Community Charitable Campaign

**F**or environmental and financial reasons, the MSU Community Charitable Campaign is being promoted only on line.

Donations are down.

Don't overlook this opportunity to give back to the community and/or help the less fortunate—using the option of payroll deduction if you wish

For information, visit <http://www.msuccc.msu.edu/>.

[www.hr.msu.edu/recognition/supportstaff/JameysonAward.htm](http://www.hr.msu.edu/recognition/supportstaff/JameysonAward.htm). Contact Michael Rice at 517-420-6943 with questions.



## CTU school loan

**I**t's time to register for CTU's Gerri Olson Educational Loan Program for spring semester 2014. Call or email Patricia Shackleton (432-5665, [Patricia@ctumsu.org](mailto:Patricia@ctumsu.org)) **November 18 through December 1, 2013** to register for a loan. Registrations received after December 1 will be considered as space permits.

