

Relax!
We all need to use our contractual vacation rights, p. 3.



Elections 2014
Yes, it's that time
again. Consider
a run for office &
make sure to vote,
pp 4&5.



More money Because of our solidarity and hard work, we will be taking home more money, p. 7.



August 2014

# **CTs rally in July**

ur quarterly meetings are always informative and inspirational, and July's was no exception. As we enjoyed tasty frozen treats, President Deb Bittner presented the financial report (Treasurer Jan Wallace was on vacation.) and led us in a discussion of several issues that affect us as CTs.

The first topic was an unprecedented and increasing level of discipline on the part of the employer for mistakes that might have warranted a warning in the past.

The union is also taking action on the reclassification of several CTs to AP positions in Human Resources even though the duties remain within the scope of CT work. We've filed a grievance and submitted a demand to bargain on this issue.

Several CTs reported on the incorrect and contradictory

Prepare continued on p. 7



July 17, 2014—CTs enjoy frozen treats and catching up on workplace developments before the July Membership Meeting. Membership Meetings start at 5:20, but the doors open at 5 so that those arriving early can socialize.

# **Nominations Notice:**

### **Clerical-Technical Union of Michigan State University**

ominations for the offices of Vice President, Secretary, four (4) Directors and a single member of the Audit Committee will be accepted September 2 through 9, 2014.

The Vice President, Secretary and Directors will be elected to serve terms 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 2016.

One person elected to the Audit Committee will serve a term of approximately three (3) years, until the regularly scheduled election to be conducted in October 2017.

Written nominations will be accepted by the Election Committee or their designees, including CTU Organizational Manager Barb Harris, at the CTU office from September 2 through 9, 2014, by 5 p.m.

A nominations meeting will be held on September 9, 2014,

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 6:30 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 nominations 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 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

#### **Vice President:**

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### **Treasurer:**

Jan Wallace wallac12@msu.edu

### Secretary:

Tracy Rich richt@msu.edu

### **Directors:**

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### **CTU Staff**

**Contract Administrators** John Klusinske John@ctumsu.org

### Dan McNeil Dan@ctumsu.org **Financial Manager**

Patricia Shackleton Patricia@ctumsu.org
Organizational Manager

Barb Harris Barb@ctumsu.org

### **Communications Specialist**

Cheryllee Finney 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 Cheryllee Finney.



"WE BUILT THAT!"

# **CT**classifieds

### For sale:

**▼2010 HHR-LT Chevrolet:** 82,000 miles for \$7,900. Call 517-881-4483.

▼ Maytag refrigerator: 33 inches wide, 33 inches deep, 66 inches high; like new; \$450. Kenmore washer and dryer: Washer like new, dryer older but runs well, \$450 for both. Small table: White with black legs, \$20. Three bookshelves: One horizontal, \$30; two vertical, \$40 each. Pictures upon request. Contact Sharon at 517-881-2317.

### **Services:**

**▼** Quality Carpet and Upholstery

### **Membership Meetings**

The final Membership Meeting of 2014 will be held in 252 Erickson Hall on Wednesday, October 29. The meeting begins 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 Members welcome!

**Cleaners:** It is a great time now to start to think about scheduling an appointment to get your carpets and upholstery cleaned before the Fall rush and before the busyness of getting the kids back to school. You can be one of the first to get a jump start on your fall cleaning. Quality Carpet Cleaners would love to be your carpet and upholstery cleaning service. We are reasonably priced, owner operated, and will do a great job for you. Please give us a call for a free phone estimate at 517-694-0497.

### 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 Cheryllee Finney at Cheryl@ctumsu.org. The CT News accepts ads from CTU members on items for sale and/or services provided by CTU members and/or their household family members.

### President's corner

# Relax. And prepare!

President Deb Bittner

'm excited to be heading out for a week's vacation at Lake Michigan next week. (Note to would be house burglars: I'll be back before this newsletter is distributed.)

Right now, of course, I'm extra stressed about packing and making sure that everything is set up at the office so that others can cover my absence. Then, there's the driving, the gathering of vacation supplies, the return to an onslaught of urgent tasks at work. . . . You all know how this goes! I have to ask myself, "Is it worth the trouble"?

And then, we've all had those "interesting" or "exciting" vacations where the Michigan weather or family "together

-ness" isn't ideal and getting back to work seems like the actual break.

Then I think about walking on the beach, watching the dog play in the waves, spending time with family, reading books and not emails, and finally, even if only for a few days, actually relaxing. Yes, it is definitely worth it!

Studies show that when people go on a relaxing vacation, they tend to return happier and more rested, which, in turn, improves their attitude and efficiency and benefits everyone around them.

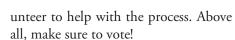
In other words, not only is it good for each of us to take a vacation. Out of



pure self-interest, we should encourage our coworkers and supervisors to do the same.

Relax and rest are the operative words of course. So stay away from

office email and block work calls on your cell phone. In fact, turn that phone off. Enjoy those paid hours away from work that your union and other unions fought so hard to get and put into collective bargaining contracts! If you have problems taking your contractual right to a



The upcoming elections raise another issue. We spend a lot of time and a significant amount of money every single fall running candidates for half the Executive Board. While we love the solidarity

and visibility that our elections highlight, having one every year doesn't seem to make good sense. I think we

should consider whether this disruptive practice ties up too many of our resources and if there is a better way.

For example, this year we need to start preparing for negotiations because our contract is up March 31, 2015. However, we won't know who will be on the negotiating team until after October's election. We can—and will—start preparing anyway, but it's problematic.

At the same time, we will be spending a lot of time and energy on making sure the elections are properly conducted.

In the past, preparation for bargaining could begin in January because the union and the employer could agree to keep the current contract in effect if we ran over the term of the agreement.

HB 4152, passed in the final days of our 2011 negotiations, changed all of that. The law prohibits the employer from paying for any increases in wages or benefits "after the expiration date of a collective bargaining agreement and until a successor collective bargaining agreement is in

**Prepare** continued on p. 5

# "If you have problems taking your contractual right to a vacation, contact your union."

vacation, contact your union.

We need everyone to be on their game as we gear up for the rest of the year. There is much to do.

There are an increasing number of opportunities to volunteer in the community. Many of the online registration problems for participating in "Project 110: The Yearlong Spartan Service Challenge" have been addressed. Connect to the project under Project 60/50+40 on our website (ctumsu.org). A current project is the annual "Fill the Bus" event that collects school supplies for any child in the community who needs them. Look on our website for how you can assist in this cause and for how CTU is partnering on this project. Let's show the community what we already know—that Spartan CTs give!

Then, of course, are the upcoming union elections. In this issue of the newsletter, you will find a lot of information about the elections and the positions on which we'll be voting in October.

Please consider a run for office or vol-

# Leadership duties

he terms of our vice president, secretary, four directors and one Audit Committee member will be up this October.

To help us decide who to support, or whether or not to run, it's important to know the duties of the position.

The duties of officers on the Executive Board are laid out in Article V of the Constitution (http://www.ctumsu.org/about-the-ctu/constitution-of-the-ctu/or call the office at 355-1903 if you don't have internet access).

In order to fulfill those duties, elected officials are expected to take on many responsibilities. Those expectations, along with the duties of Audit Committee members, are detailed on this page.

### Vice president

The Vice President of the CTU is expected to fulfill all of the responsibilities listed for Directors and officers.

In order to fulfill the Constitutionally mandated responsibilities of the Office, the Vice President also is expected to:

- serve as the Executive Board liaison to the Union Representatives and the Union Representative Coordinating Committee;
- substitute for the President, as necessary;
- chair the Grievance Appeals and Trials Committee;
- serve as authorized signatory of the Union;
- use 25% released time from MSU position in order to fulfill duties.

### **Directors and officers**

In order to fulfill the Constitutionally mandated responsibilities of any position on the CTU Executive Board, those elected are expected to:

- carry out and honor the oath of office;
- commit the time required to serve the Union including some day, evening or weekend hours;
- •support unionism;
- uphold the Union mission and direction as set by the Executive Board and the CTU Constitution;
- make decisions and create policy;
- •use input/data from membership, experts, and staff when time permits;

- serve on either the Grievance, Appeals and Trials or Finance Committee;
- •represent the CTU at all times;
- attend some labor functions as a CTU representative;
- attend Board meetings, UR meetings, regular and special membership meetings (attendance mandatory);
- •when possible, work in conjunction with URs on membership issues;
- •keep URs informed and in the loop;
- •be able to work as part of a group of people;
- •honor issues of confidentiality;
- •control rumors/misperceptions.

### **Audit Committee**

This description of the Audit Committee and the duties of its members is taken from Article VI of the Constitution:

- The Audit Committee shall consist of three members. They shall be elected for staggered three-year terms with said election held at the same time and under the same rules as apply to the Executive Board. Members of the Audit Committee may not be members of the Executive Board.
- The Audit Committee shall make or cause to be made at least a yearly audit of the Union's finances and shall report to the membership the result of such audit.
- The Audit Committee shall monitor normal operating expenses and shall serve as an independent communications channel between the members of the Union and the custodians of the Contingency Fund for verification of withdrawals from that fund.

### Secretary

The Secretary of the CTU is expected to fulfill all responsibilities listed for Directors and officers. In order to fulfill the Constitutionally mandated responsibilities of the Office, the Secretary also is expected to:

• oversee maintenance of the current

membership list;

- stay informed of new members, including information they receive from the Union;
- conduct New Member Orientations;
- take minutes at Board and membership meetings.



Elections materials, information and updates will be posted under "Elections 2014" on our website at www.ctumsu.org.

And be sure to check out and like the CTU facebook page at www.facebook.com/CTUofMSU.



# 2014 CTU elections schedule

**August 2013.** Nomination notice distributed through the CT News. [Alison Marie Gjidoda]

**September 2 through September 9.** Nomination period.

September 9. 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 process.

**September 16.** Deadline of 5 p.m. for candidates to submit a campaign statement/biography (up to 500 words, electronic format preferred) to CTU Organizational Manager Barb Harris for publication in the CT News. Photo arrangements must also be made at this time by contacting Cheryllee Finney at 432-9580 or *Cheryl@ctumsu.org*.

October 13–24. 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 CTU Organizational Manager Barb Harris.

**October 13.** Week of publication for the special elections edition of CT News. [Nancy Jo Smith]

October 20. Candidate forums begin.

**October 22.** Deadline to request absentee ballots from Barb Harris (355-1903, *Barb@ctumsu.org*) by 5 p.m.

**October 27.** Absentee ballots need to be at the Post Office box by the end of the day.

October 28. Polling from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Official vote count begins at 6 p.m.

**October 29.** Officers installed at the Membership Meeting.

**November 7.** Deadline for receipt of election protests.

**November 18.** Runoff election if required.

# BUS TOURS PONNE

"A vacation is good medicine, but there's a bad side effect -having to return to work!"

# Prepare continued from p. 3

place" and prohibits benefits from being applied retroactively. So, CTs would not receive anniversary increases or any other increases not covered under the Health Care MOU while we are negotiating.

Of course, if it's in our best interest to keep negotiating after the deadline, the CTU will do so. Your negotiating team takes every necessary measure to present the best agreement possible to members.

But you see the dilemma.

Maybe it's time to talk about alternatives. At the July Membership Meeting, we started the conversation about what alternatives to the annual election process would look like and the CTU Constitutional changes that would have

to accommodate any new process. A lot of unions have elections only every two or three years and elect all officers at one time. There may be other ways to elect our officers as well. Any ideas and/or feedback you would like to share on the CTU elections process, please send them to me at *Deb@ctumsu.org*. The Executive Board will be reviewing these and making a recommendation to the membership. If we do make changes, we will vote on them at the October 2014 election. The new process would not be implemented until the October 2015 elections.

As always, we have a lot going on and a lot we are participating in. Enjoy the remaining summer days. See you this fall!



### **Board actions**

### April through June 2014

he following CTU Executive Board discussions took place April through June 2014. 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 1**

Renewed annual subscription to the Detroit Free Press for \$252.02 per year.

Received report that the All University Traffic and Transportation Committee voted to recommend a \$12 per year parking fee increase. CTU's representative to the committee and others voted "no."

Discussed issues raised concerning the employer's new employee orientation.

Announced Picnic Committee members: Jan Wallace, Liz Owen, Pamela Brock, Tracy Rich, Barb Harris, Patricia Shackleton, and Deb Bittner.

Received update on parking lot: Rieth-Riley, a fully unionized contractor, will be here in April to give an estimate; work cannot begin until May because of frost laws and seasonal load laws.

### **April 15**

Agreed to accept Rieth-Riley's \$44,600 bid to replace the parking lot and repair/rebuild the drains.

Approved 2014 budget.

Decided to send president to the Detroit Labor and Employment Relations Association (LERA) meeting for \$40.

Received report on the healthcare stipend lawsuit: costs increasing as we move through the litigation process.

Agreed to increase MSU Department of Theatre donation to \$250 for each of the next three years. With this donation, CTU will be featured on the wall of donors, a permanent structure.

Approved up to \$150 to purchase seed packets for Take Your Child to Work Day participants.

Received report on the Joint Health Care Committee meetings between the CLO and MSU.

Announced that CT Evette Chavez is a winner of the Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award

### May 6

Donated \$100 to the 26th annual Parent Action Committee on Minority Academic Concerns Spelling Bee.

Donated \$200 to the Tri-County Office on Aging.

Declined to donate to the Ingham County Animal Control "30-Hour Adopt-A-Fest."

Donated \$50 to cover five attendees to the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement/Michigan State AFL-CIO Greater Lansing Chapter Scholarship Breakfast.

Agreed to send up to four people at \$25 each to the 19th Annual Doug Griffith Community Service Award breakfast.

Reported that because of a conflict with the Membership Meeting, two CTU board members had canceled attendance at the Labor Arbitration Institute conference in Chicago. Registration fees are being applied to a future conference.

Received report on a speech by Karla Swift, president of the Michigan State AFL-CIO. One of the main points was that politicians are playing for keeps and trying destroy the labor movement.

### May 20

Declined request for donation to the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame picnic and requested more information before considering a corporate sponsorship of the organization.

Agreed to reinstate an annual subscription to *Labor Notes* for \$30.

Donated \$100 to the American Cancer Society for its general research fund.

In lieu of a monetary donation, decided to publicize volunteer opportunities with the Capital Area Humane Society. Will also publicize opportunities to assist with Ingham County Animal Control and take up a collection for ICAC at the annual membership picnic.

Discussed our opposition to sick leave policies of Residential Housing Services. CTU believes the policies are arbitrary and violate our contract.

Discussed our efforts to establish appropriate procedures for payroll deduction of dues under right to work.

### June 3

Agreed to become an organizational member of the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame for \$75.

Discussed CTU's plans to oppose the arbitrary and inappropriate reclassification of CTs in the HR Solutions Center.

Announced that CT Kristine McClintic will donate her photo booth services for our picnic.

### June 17

Discussed request by the MSU Office of Inclusion for CTU to provide refreshments for a Project 60/50 Summer Cinema for Community Conversations event. Will get more information and ask CLO to cosponsor.

Discussed the search for a printer that can provide a more predictable publication schedule for *CT News*.

### June 23 (email vote)

Approved up to \$4,500 for additional repair work to the CTU parking lot.

# **CT**defense

### What has my union done for me lately?

ood news on wages and health care: Keeping increases in health care costs under control means we're going to get more money in our pockets. [Kathy Riel]

CTs' next general salary increase—on April 1, 2015—will be at least 2.3% as determined by the formula in our current health care agreement. The formula bases our raises on increases in health care costs. The lower the increase in costs, the higher the raise.

Keeping health care

costs low during the term of our *previous* contract also paid off and will result in a lump-sum disbursement in January 2015 to benefits-eligible employees on the payroll as of January 1, 2015 (pro-rated for part-time employees). The amount of the payout is unclear at this time, partly because of a lawsuit brought against the Coalition of Labor Organizations (CLO) and MSU by a retiree claiming that former employees should receive a share of the health care savings disbursements.\*

The January 2015 disbursement represents money saved by keeping increases below a 5% cap in the final year of our previous four-year agreement. We received a disbursement from the first three years in January 2014.

Both provisions—the formula for raises and the lump-sum disbursements—were negotiated by union representatives in the CLO and ratified by union members in the summer of 2013.

"Although the final numbers aren't in, the formula shows that a 2.3% raise is the *least* we can expect in the first year of our new agreement," said Charlie Heckman, CLO Chairperson.

CTU President Deb Bittner said that these results prove that organized labor and management at MSU can work together with mutually beneficial results.

"Employees at MSU have worked hard to keep health care costs below national and state trends. We saved money for MSU and for taxpayers. Sure, we all have

> made sacrifices, but the unions made sure those sacrifices didn't come solely from support staff like at most other workplaces," she said.

> "Instead, the unions partnered with management to put pressure on the insurance companies and providers to keep health care costs down while holding on

to a high-quality plan," she said.

\*Until the issue is decided by the court, a portion of the disbursement is being held back. CTU agrees with other unions in the CLO that the lawsuit is without merit, and we are working to ensure that the wage and health care agreement is enforced as ratified by our members. We will continue to keep you updated.

**Members** continued from p. 1 information they and their units have received when calling HR in the last few weeks. Bittner replied that it might have something to do with the reorganization and turnover in that unit.

Bittner requested volunteers to serve on our Elections Committee and to perform other tasks in conjunction with the elections. Vice President Kim Smith reminded everyone that released time is available for those helping on the election during working hours.

Director Willie Paulsen led attendees in an original rap song. She wrote the piece using comments by union representatives and board and staff members at the July union training session.

The winners of July's door prizes: Jeanette Robertson and Katie Shelton,

### **UR**districts

- he following members have been appointed to Union Representative positions.
- ▼ **District 5** (MSU Detroit Medical Center Campus): **Wendi Winston** can be reached at 313-578-9624 or *winst106@msu.edu*.
- ▼ District 31 (North and South Kedzie, Bessey, Computer Center): Kathy Kirby can be contacted at 432-6701 or kirbyk@msu.edu.
- ▼ **District 39** (Communication Arts): Contact **Rachel Iseler** at 432-3676 or *rachel@msu.edu*.

The following URs have resigned their positions. We thank them for their valuable service and wish them the best in their future endeavors:

- ▼ District 29 (Olin Health Center, Berkey): Mary Canady Hernandez.
- ▼ **District 13** (Anthony, Meats Lab, Engineering): **Mary Mroz.**

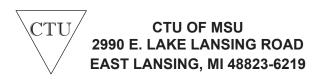
If you are interested in more information about being a UR—or you would like to suggest someone in your district who would be great at the job—contact Vice President **Kim Smith** at 355-3784 or *Kim@ctumsu.org*.

\$50 each; Pam Sloan, glass CTU mugs; Amanda Van Koevering, glass CTU mugs; Laurene Meyer, CTU computer bag; Courtney Meddaugh, CTU lunch bag; Liz Owen, four Lugnuts tickets; Amanda Kelly, two Lugnuts tickets.

Twenty-nine members attended the meeting.



"Next on the agenda: How can we crush workers' spirits, while appearing to care?"



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

# **CT**calendar

August 29. Sign up deadline to participate in the Capital Area United Way's "Days of Caring," an opportunity to help complete projects that benefit people and the community. The events take place from 1 to 5 p.m. on September 12 and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on September 13. For information, including project sites and a sign-up form, visit www.micauw. org/volunteer-2014-days-caring or call Pat Hemingway at 203-5022.

**August 29.** Volunteers for MSU's "Fill the Bus" giving event are needed! If you're able to assist with sorting and distribution of donated items, please give a hand! Sorting of donations begins at 8 a.m. at the MSU Auditorium. Sign up at servicelearning.msu.edu/news/19.



**September 1.** Enjoy your union-secured, paid holiday.

**September 2.** Executive Board meeting, C-T Union Hall, 5:15 pm. Members welcome. [Norma Teague]

**September 2–9.** Nomination period for CTU Executive Board positions and Audit Committee member.

**September 5.** "Good and Sufficient Reason to Rebel': Detroit, the Briggs Manufacturing Company and the People who Created the UAW," presented by Author Bob Morris. MSU Museum Auditorium, 12:15–1:30 p.m. An LEP "Our Daily Work/Our Daily Lives" brown bag lunch. Free.

**September** 7 (and the first Sunday of every month). Vegan Potluck sponsored by VegMichigan (the state's largest vegetarian organization) and CTU. Meet fellow herbivores near you! Enjoy delicious *vegan* meals, share your favorite vegan recipes, and make new friends. Veg-

ans, vegetarians, or just veg-curious are welcome. Meet at the C-T Union Hall, 6–7:30 p.m.

September 11. "The Charleston Hospital Workers' Strike of 1969: A Women's Movement," presented by Jewell Debnam, MSU History Department. MSU Museum Auditorium, 12:15–1:30 p.m. An LEP "Our Daily Work/Our Daily Lives" brown bag lunch. Free.

**September 16.** Executive Board meeting, C-T Union Hall, 5:15 pm. Members welcome. [K. K. Springsteen]

October 1–31. Health Care Open Enrollment for plan selections effective from January 1 through December 31.

If you see your name in brackets in these pages, you have won a union prize! Give us a call at 355-1903 to claim your prize.