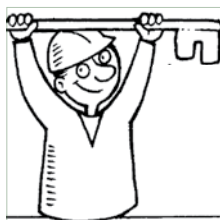


Member tip

Why we all need to be a set of eyes and ears for the union, p. 4.



Complaints about CTU?

Seeking solutions is the key to a better union and a better workplace, p. 5.



Hold the date

Our annual CTU picnic will be June 16 at Patriarche Park, p. 6.



CT news

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

March 2016

Spring Membership Meeting

Our union grows strong with membership involvement!

Agenda includes: Finances & Audit Report
Union updates
Member input
Door prizes

Thursday, April 21
Erickson Kiva
5:20 p.m.

(Doors open at 5 so come early to socialize.)



CA Dan McNeil retires after 17 years

Congratulations are in order for Dan McNeil, CTU contract administrator (CA) for the past 17 years. He announced his retirement, effective April 1, at the January Membership Meeting.

McNeil's support and representation during these years helped many CTs thrive in their jobs. Whether advising a CT about contractual rights, facilitating a job transfer, working to improve an inappropriate or hostile working environment, participating in negotiations,



etc., etc., his expertise and advocacy have been invaluable to our union.

Although we will miss him, McNeil's retirement is well earned.

His contributions to our union have been many.

For example, he has been involved since 2007 in our attempts to improve

McNeil continued on p. 4

CTU says goodbye to campus labor leader

We were shocked and saddened to hear about the death of Charlie Heckman, president of AFSCME Local 999 and chairperson of the Coalition of Labor Organizations at MSU. He died in a car accident on February 23.

The CLO relies a great deal on Charlie's skills and experience, especially during our health care bargaining. Charlie was a campus labor leader and a friend to CTU. We are going to miss him.

An educational fund for his daughter is being set up. Contact CTU President Deb Bittner for details on how to contribute.

Our condolences go out to his family and large circle of friends as well as to AFSCME Local 999.



October 23, 2015—Charlie Heckman (right) and CTU and CLO President Deb Bittner display two awards received by the MSU Tobacco Free Task last year

CTnews

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

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

2990 East Lake Lansing Road
East Lansing, MI 48823-2281
(517) 355-1903
www.ctumsu.org
ctu@ctumsu.org



*Organized and
independent
since 1974!*

CTU Executive Board

President:

Deb Bittner Deb@ctumsu.org

Vice President:

Rosario Garcia Rosie@ctumsu.org

Treasurer:

Jan Wallace wallac12@msu.edu

Secretary:

Tracy Rich Tracy@ctumsu.org

Directors:

Pamela Brock brockp@msu.edu

Sierra Matthews vandenb8@msu.edu

Willie Paulsen paulsenw@msu.edu

Walt Peebles peeblew@msu.edu

Jeanette Robertson robertso45@yahoo.com

Pam Sloan pamsloan@msu.edu

Stephen Stofflet stoffle1@msu.edu

CTU Staff

Communications Specialist

Cheryllee Finney Cheryl@ctumsu.org

Contract Administrator

Dan McNeil Dan@ctumsu.org

Financial Manager

Patricia Shackleton Patricia@ctumsu.org

Organizational Manager

Barb Harris Barb@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.

CTclassifieds

For sale:

▼ **Olympia steel pole barn:** 20'x38' with 12' eaves. Delivered free. Needs assembly. Plans available if interested. \$11,800 firm (originally \$14,300). Call 517-881-4483.

Services:



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Established 1989

"YOU GET THE MOST WHEN WE HOST"

▼ **Quality Carpet and Upholstery Cleaners:** This winter has been too crazy, too long, too cold, and too dirty. Quality Carpet and Upholstery Cleaners would love to help you ease some of your winter cleaning burden, whether you would like to spot clean certain areas from winter wear or deep clean those close-to-the-door areas where boots, kids, and animals track. We can help you with your upholstery needs as

well. Give Quality Carpet and Upholstery Cleaners a call to meet all your cleaning needs. Reasonably priced. Owner operated. Free phone estimates. Please call 517-694-0497 to make your appointment. [Gerald McKennan]

▼ **Skills assessment software:** The CTU makes the software and a workstation available to members so that they can practice for the university's skills assessment tests. This is the same software that Human Resources uses to evaluate skills in Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access and more. Call 355-

1903 to make an appointment.

▼ **Ride share:** Capital Area Transportation Authority offers a ride sharing service called Clean Commute. Options include carpooling and vanpooling with emergency rides home if needed. Contact Clean Commute at (517-393-RIDE), or get additional information on their web page (under "CATA Services" at www.cata.org).

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. Contact the CTU office at 355-1903 for questions, reservations, etc.

▼ **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. See advertising guidelines at www.ctumsu.org/news/ct-classifieds.

Membership Meetings

The remaining CTU Membership Meetings in 2016 will be held Thursday, April 21 (**Erickson Kiva**); Thursday, July 14 (252 Erickson); Wednesday, October 26 (252 Erickson). All meetings start at 5:20 p.m., but doors open at 5 p.m. 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!

Union faces challenges of change

President Deb Bittner

Always changing

As we all know, life changes constantly. Sometimes change is good. Sometimes, not so much. Some changes are downright sad. But through it all, we continue to do our work while adjusting as best we can.

CTU is facing some major changes, one of which is good for *one* of us—our longtime contract administrator, Dan McNeil, is retiring. He has been with us for 17 years, so he certainly has earned it, and we truly wish him the best. To that end, please join us in sending him off in style at our celebration event on March 31 (details on the next page).

On the other hand, this change also means that CTU needs to find someone who can fill the vacancy. We would like our contract administrator replacement to be able to “hit the ground running,” of course, and fill Dan’s shoes seamlessly. So far, this isn’t proving to be easy.

CTU has had to deal with retirements and job changes in the past, however, and we have always handled such situations. But it’s been awhile, and we have grown accustomed to having a strong, stable staff in place. Having said this, I want to assure you that we will all do our best to let nothing slip through the cracks. And we do hope (and expect) to be able to announce our new CA by the time Dan leaves on March 31. However, if you are working with Dan, please make sure to keep me in the communication loop as we make this transition.

The second change is the death of our friend Charlie Heckman, the chair of the Coalition of Labor Organizations (CLO) and president of AFSCME Local 999. The 10 member unions of the CLO relied heavily on Charlie to help us educate ourselves on health care matters and bargain labor contracts. Again, I have no doubt that we can weather this loss

and make the necessary adjustments, but we move forward with heavy hearts. We have a qualified and experienced team representing us on the Joint Health Care Committee, an organization composed of both MSU and union leaders working together to keep health care costs down and quality up. AFSCME 999 has experienced leadership who will continue to serve their members well. CTU will do our best to offer support to their organization, and I encourage you all to extend your condolences to 999’s members and offer support as well.

Preparation

Both events exemplify how important it is to be prepared to meet the challenge of change. As I discussed in the February issue, preparation is the exact project on which CTU’s leadership embarked earlier this year. We updated our mission statement, and we are now reviewing many of our processes, such as the Constitution and our election cycles.

Recent events highlight the need to also review our succession plan and many of our staffing processes—not a bad thing to do. But it is really hard when it is a sad jolt, like the death of a labor leader, that starts the process. Watch for more details and conversations as we begin these reviews.

And you can help....

We talk about the need for member involvement so much that we risk making it a cliché. But it’s true: Our union is strong only if we are involved and prepared to do the necessary work. I urge you to assess your time and energy level and find a way to participate. We could use assistance and input in the very basics. Start by checking out the union’s constitution and bylaws. You can find these on our website (www.ctumsu.org) under “About CTU.”

These documents specify when and

how our union’s meetings and elections are conducted, what committees and other structures we use to do the work, and our rights to participate in such matters as contract ratification votes, elections, etc.

In the process of trying to learn more about our union and what it does, you will undoubtedly have lots of questions. Your union representative (UR) is prepared to help members understand the union’s actions. Don’t hesitate to insist on answers that will make you a better informed “union citizen” and to offer suggestions about where our “foundation” documents need to be revised. [Suzanne Kroll]

Check out our mission statement while you’re at it. It’s an important document that states the purpose, vision and ideology of our organization. The URs and executive board updated it and the membership reaffirmed it this January.

Mark your calendar....

It is never too early to plug the very basic and most democratic way to be involved, attending our membership meetings. The next Membership Meeting is Thursday, April 21, in the Erickson Kiva. Membership meetings provide a great way to find out what’s going on with the union. Sometimes the leadership can’t discuss a strategy or some issue in the newsletter or an email because, tactically, tipping our hand would not be in the members’ best interest. However, such issues often can be discussed face-to-face in meetings.

Membership meetings also give us an opportunity to provide input to the entire group, ask questions, and make decisions about the union.

I hope to see and talk to you soon: at Dan’s retirement celebration, at our April meeting, or just in passing if we run into each other on campus.

Or, give me a call.

Update on health care disbursement lawsuit

We won!

The Michigan Court of Appeals affirmed a lower court's dismissal of a retired MSU employee's claim to a portion of money saved under our previous four-year health care contract. The CTU joins the court, other MSU unions and the university in agreement that the suit is without merit. **Because the retiree may try to appeal his case to the Michigan Supreme court, however, the money will not be disbursed until the appeals process is exhausted.** We expect a resolution in the near future.

When these monies are distributed, payouts will be to those on the payroll as of January 1, 2014, and/or January 1, 2015.



CT member tip Be a set of "eyes and ears"

We call our Union Representatives "the eyes and ears of our union," but they can't be everywhere at once, and they can't see or hear personally everything that goes on around the workplace. So part of your job as an individual union member is to be on the lookout for things that the union needs to know about, and to pass along the necessary information.

If, for example, a change is made in working conditions but too long a period of time passes before a grievance is filed, it may be much more difficult to successfully challenge the employer's unilateral action. [Jade Scott]

So it's part of your responsibility as an individual union member to be the union's "eyes and ears" in your workplace. [Joseph Stephenson]

—Adapted from *The Union Member's Complete Guide*, by Michael Mauer

McNeil

continued from p. 1

the classification system.

"Winning five level 10 and 11 positions with our last contract was a huge accomplishment for CTU, and I'm pleased to have made a contribution. We're now seeing the new upper level jobs in the postings."

Soon after he was hired, then President Barbara Reeves asked McNeil to help represent us on the Joint Health Care Committee.

"That work was really rewarding," he said. "We made groundbreaking strides by tying wages to health care costs in our contract. To this day, we have great savings in health care, good health care plans, and wage increases. I'm proud to have been a part of that."

"However," he said, "the most enjoyable part of my job was the day-to-day representation of employees, not just when we had a successful grievance but when I was able to counsel and support CTs so they could get on with their work and be successful."



December 6, 2012, State Capitol—Thousands of citizens showed up to protest the legislature's passage of right-to-work bills. Above (center), McNeil was one of the protesters blocked from attending the proceedings. [Detroit Free Press, 12/09/12]

*An invitation to all CTs
& friends & colleagues of*

Dan McNeil

Contract Administrator for
the CTU since 1999

Please join us for his

**Retirement
Open House**

Thursday, March 31
C-T Union Hall
2990 E. Lake Lansing Rd.
4-6:30 p.m.

McNeil commented on another part of his job that he loves—the variety.

"Every day on my way to work I wonder, which situation will arise today? Because you just never know."

McNeil will be moving to Bloomington, Indiana to be closer to family. As a musician, he is looking forward to the vibrant music scene in Bloomington as well as to traveling. He said that he expects to become involved in one or more projects and volunteer opportunities.

When you just aren't satisfied

Complaints about union matters?

Things sometimes go wrong even in the best of organizations. Usually, problems can be cleared up right away with a simple phone call. But if not, where does a CT turn if s/he has a complaint about the conduct of a union leader or employee?

That depends on the nature of the complaint (although every CT has a right to bring a complaint directly to the CTU Executive Board or to the members at one of our quarterly meetings). Below is a list of bodies and individuals designated to handle conflicts.

Take it to the president

Executive Board members: Complaints regarding the carrying out of officer or director responsibilities are reported to the president who puts the complaint on the agenda to be heard by the entire Executive Board. While you are welcome to attend Board meetings and raise problems yourself, it is best to get on the agenda.

Staff: CTU's president is the immediate supervisor of our staff and also chairs the Personnel Committee. Complaints about staff members should be directed to the president and addressed by the Personnel Committee. If a resolution of the problem is not reached by that body, the matter will be referred to the Executive Board.

Contacts

President Deb Bittner, 355-1903 or Deb@ctumsu.org, to get on the agenda of the Executive Board, Membership Meeting, or Personnel Committee.

Vice President Rosie Garcia, 355-9672 x273 or rosie@ctumsu.org, to get on the agenda of URCC or GAT.

Communications Specialist Cheryl Finney, 432-9580 or Cheryl@ctumsu.org, to provide input on CTU publications.

University committees: CTU recommends the appointment of CTs to various university committees including All-University Traffic and Transportation; Employee Assistance Program; President's Advisory Committee on Disability Issues; and, in conjunction with the Coalition of Labor Organizations, the Department of Police and Public Safety Oversight. Complaints about representatives will be taken by the president to the Executive Board.

Take it to the vice president

Union Representatives: Complaints regarding the carrying out of Union Representative responsibilities should go to the vice president to be addressed by the Union Representative Coordinating Committee (URCC).

Violations of the constitution: Formal charges against any member accused of violating the CTU Constitution are heard by our Grievance, Appeal, and Trial Committee (GAT), which is chaired by the vice president.

CTU publications

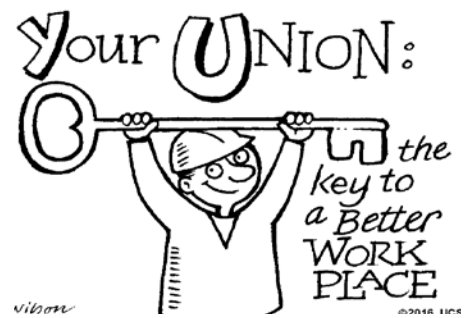
Complaints about the content of CTU publications should be directed to the communications specialist who will share them with the president and Executive Board.

Executive Board actions

There are a number of effective ways for union members to voice dissent or offer suggestions about Executive Board actions:

Use the newsletter. Publishing a letter or viewpoint in the newsletter is a great way to share concerns and to find and rally like-minded members.

Address the Executive Board (meetings first and third Tuesdays). You can just show up, but it is best to call ahead and get on the agenda.



Address the membership. Getting on the agenda at one of our quarterly Membership Meetings (January, April, July, and October) is a great opportunity to air grievances and persuade other members to take action.

Run for office. Sometimes the best person for a job is YOU.

Any of the vehicles for lodging complaints can also be used for expressing praise and encouragement. Remember, everyone likes to hear when they're doing a good job.

URdistricts

District 9 (Life Sciences): **Sarah Carapellucci** was appointed UR. Contact her at 884-8954 or scarp622@yahoo.com.

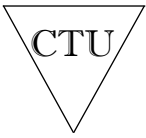
These CTs have petitioned for appointment to UR positions. If no other CT in these districts comes forward by March 18, they will be appointed:

▼ **District 1** (Administration Bldg. [Floors B, 1]): **April Moore**.

▼ **District 18** (Kellogg Center, Brody Complex): **Karen Spitz**.

District 17 (Grounds, Physical Plant, Wilson, Holden, Case, Wonders, Duffy Daugherty Football Building): **Karen Spitz** resigned her UR position in **District 17** in order to fill the position in **District 18**, where she now works.

URs are given training, support and released time to help them fulfill their duties. Contact Vice President **Rosie Garcia** at 355-9672 x273 or Rosie@ctumsu.org for more information about becoming a UR in your district.



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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

CTcalendar

March 25. "Laboring by the Rivers of Babylon: The Work, Music and Religious Culture of Psalm 137," by David Stowe, MSU Department of English and Religious Studies. An event in the Our Daily Work/Our Daily Lives Brown Bag Series. MSU Museum Auditorium, 12:15 p.m.–1:30 p.m. Free.

March 29. "Relaxing Under the Stars." Remember those summer evenings starting up at the stars? Take a break and join Health4U at Abrams Planetarium to re-capture that feeling of relaxation and wonderment. 12:10–12:50 p.m. Information at health4u.msu.edu.

March 31. Retirement Party for Dan McNeil. See page 4 for information.

April 5 & 19. Executive Board meeting, C-T Union Hall, 5:15 p.m. Members welcome. [Jeanine Whipple]

April 21. Membership Meeting. See page 1 for details.



Save the date for the
CTU Annual Picnic

2016 CTU Member Picnic
Thursday, June 16 (6/16/16)
4-7 pm
Patriarche Park in East Lansing

Come as you are! Friends and family welcome.

CTU provides the food and soft drinks.

Games! Prizes! Cakewalk!
Activities for the kids!