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Statements

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CT news

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

October 2017

No contest means no election

None of the positions up for election were contested this year.

A constitutional amendment passed by members in 2016 states that there is no reason for an election under these circumstances. As per Article IV, Section 9 of the constitution:

“When there is only one nominee for every position, no election will be necessary and the candidates will be affirmed by acclamation of a majority of the members at the first Membership Meeting following the scheduled election if there is a quorum. This procedure will be used only when the number of open positions equals the number of candidates running for those positions. In the event that there is no quorum at the first Membership Meeting following the election, the outgoing Executive Board will convene at the Membership Meeting and, in the presence of the members, accept the candidates to constitute the new Executive Board and Audit Committee.”

Although we will forgo the stress and



Fall Membership Meeting

Wednesday, October 25
1310 Anthony Hall
5:20 p.m.

The agenda includes:

- ▼ the installation of new officers
- ▼ a discussion of union finances
- ▼ a discussion and vote on transfer of negotiations expenses
- ▼ reports on issues affecting members
- ▼ door prizes (including a \$100 drawing if we have a quorum)

Doors open at 5, so come early to socialize.

expense of an election this year, the candidates for each position have submitted their statements for publication (starting on p. 5), giving us an idea of what they have to offer as leaders of our organization. [Ashley Parks]

The candidates for the Executive Board will each serve for a two-year term until October 2019. They are:

President	Deb Bittner
Treasurer	Tracy Rich
Directors	Carmen Elliott
	Pam Sloan
	Jan Wallace

Audit Committee Candidate
Stephanie Six will serve a three-year term ending in October 2020.

Members will have a chance to affirm the candidates by acclamation at the Fall Membership Meeting on Wednesday, October 25 (1310 Anthony Hall, 5:20 p.m.) If there is no quorum, the members in attendance will witness the outgoing Executive Board's acceptance of the candidates and the swearing in of the new leaders.

This will be the final Membership Meeting of 2017.

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

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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 Cheryllee Finney.

CTclassifieds

For sale:

▼ CTU T-shirts:

Get your U.S.-made v-neck CTU tees in charcoal or heather charcoal. Only \$5 each while supplies last. Contact Organizational Secretary Barb Harris at 355-1903 or Barb@ctumsu.org.



Services:

▼ **Dog daycare:** Let your dog run, play and wag while you are gone all day. Adam Scheidt, founder and dog enthusiast, has studied dog body language, play style, safe set-ups, fight prevention and more so your pal can have a stimulating day free from stress! Only four minutes from campus. Visit www.facebook.com/MiMuttHut for more information and call 517-648-9244.

▼ **Skills assessment software:** The CTU makes the software and a work station 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 final 2017 CTU Membership Meeting is scheduled for October 25 in Room 1310 Anthony Hall. The meeting starts 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.

Membership Meetings for 2018 will be announced in November.

Executive Board Meetings

1st & 3rd Tuesdays at 5:15

CTU Office

Members welcome!

UNION-MADE HALLOWEEN

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Hershey's Kisses | 6. Kit Kat |
| 2. Jolly Ranchers | 7. Rolos |
| 3. Thin Mints | 8. Ghirardelli Chocolate |
| 4. Nestlé Crunch | 9. Clark Bars |
| 5. Cadbury Royal Dark Chocolate Bars | 10. Mary Janes |

go.afficio.org/UnionMadeHalloween
for a full list

Tying medical cost increases to raises

Sick CTs aren't to blame

Communications Specialist Cheryllee Finney

The article, "Health Care Win for MSU Workers," on the first page of the July/August CT News requires further discussion.

A member pointed out that portions of the article appear to blame employees with serious medical conditions, either themselves or their families, for our lack of a general raise in April 2018.

"I found a section of the article to be particularly offensive," she wrote in an email, "and the wording, if not the sentiment, very cold-hearted."

Specifically, she objected to the language: "All the numbers are not in, but a handful of cases increased our health care costs significantly in the year ending June 30, 2017," and "... these huge increases in medical costs are expected to result in a 0% general wage increase for all MSU employees represented by the MOU." (The MOU is the health care

Memorandum of Understanding between MSU and the Coalition of Labor Organizations.) [Kara Richardson]

"Babies born with congenital handicaps, children with cancer, CTs with catastrophic illnesses and terminal diseases are not 'cases' or 'costs' or 'increases,'" she added, "and any reference to CTs or their families with that type of inflammatory wording should be struck from your explanations in future articles discussing the fact that our CT wage increases have been tied to a contract that rewards the use of less health care."

Our member said that article appears to blame individuals for the situation rather than focusing on a flawed health care system that negatively impacts masses of people.

"Health care costs are out of the average consumer's hands," she wrote. "Families that have experienced the trauma, anxiety, stress, financial hardship and grief of ill-health, disability, and death, do not need to be reminded that their lives have cost 'all MSU employees' their wage increases."

Our engaged and eloquent member made several important points. As the person who wrote that article, I apologize for implying that those with the greatest need for health care are the problem. That was not my intention.

Instead, I meant to show that this past year's health care experience is expected to be an anomaly. Tying increases in medical costs to wages continues to provide good, affordable health care and, for the most part, raises. Overall, the process has been a success. And, I believe, we do need to explain the circumstances under



which increased medical costs resulted in our upcoming 0% raise.*

However, there are better ways to present the information.

President Deb Bittner, for example, was far more eloquent at our July Membership Meeting. She emphasized that the utilization of our good, affordable, accessible health care benefits actually proves how important they are to us. Obtaining and keeping these benefits is a testament to our success in bargaining.

As for the idea that people having the greatest need for medical care are costing us our raise?

"What if it were you?" Bittner asked. "We all know that our health care benefits are important, but can you imagine how important these benefits will be if or when you face a catastrophic illness or other extremely expensive medical situation? Or someone in your family? Your spouse? Your child?"

She helped members see that we are in this together.

That's what is important and what needs to be included in every conversation on this topic

*The 0% raise on April 1, 2018, was determined by the formula in our current contract (2014-2017). Please note that under the terms of our next health care contract (2018-2021), we do not take the same risk. Raises are still tied to increases in medical costs, but we are guaranteed a minimum 1% lump sum addition to our paychecks if health care costs soar unexpectedly as they did in the past year.

URdistricts

The following members have been appointed UR in their respective districts:

▼ **District 7** (East and West Fee, Hannah Tech Building): Contact **Stephanie Six** at 353-1998 or six@msu.edu.

▼ **District 29** (Olin Health Center, Berkeley): Contact **Lucy McClees** at 884-6559 or mcclees@msu.edu.

Interested in becoming a Union Representative? Contact Vice President **Rosie Garcia** at 355-9672 x7-7273 or garcia@msu.edu for additional information.

You don't need a cape and mask to

BE A HERO!

The 2017 MSU Community Charitable Campaign has begun! The official kick-off is October 31, but pledges are being accepted now until March 2018. Go to msuccc.msu.edu/pledgeform.htm for a paper pledge and assistance on submitting an online pledge.

In keeping with our union's commitment to the community, the CTU supports and encourages members to participate in the Campaign.

The Campaign raises money for local charities through the assistance of the Capital Area United Way. The pledges of MSU employees to the campaign have totaled more than \$6 million in the past 14 years and helped support more

than 120,000 people yearly in the mid-Michigan tri-county area of Clinton, Ingham, and Eaton counties. This Campaign provides an opportunity to help local charitable organizations enrich our community.

Labor's leading role

CTs and other members of the MSU community take advantage of the Campaign to pool our resources and make a huge difference in the lives of children, families, and others in need in our local communities. Last year, MSU raised about \$323,038, including \$92,832 from support staff workers. CTs pledged \$7,533 of that.

Our donations may be small, but when pooled together, our impact can be enormous. The important thing is just to participate and give what you can.

Every year, CTU members, our families, our friends and our neighbors benefit from these programs, especially when one of us falls on hard times or has an emergency need. And we all benefit when our communities are healthier, when the children in our neighborhoods have access to high quality after-school programs, and when families receive the support needed to stay strong and stable.

Labor has always made a big difference in the community through service and donations.

Recognizing that CTs work in unity with other union members who share our commitment, camaraderie, and teamwork, MSU's Community Charitable Campaign reports what the MSU



Fighting for the health, education and financial stability of every person.

PLEASE GIVE.



Donating online

Making donations to the Community Charitable Campaign through the EBS system is easier than ever:

1. Login to EBS.
2. Click on the box "MSU CCC Pledge Form."
3. Fill out the form.
4. Click on "Submit Form."
5. A confirmation screen will appear. You will also receive a confirmation email, sent to the email address displayed for you.

Forms for retirees, printable forms, and instructions for donating online can be found at www.msuccc.msu.edu/pledgeform.htm.

labor family does to help others. The donations of CTs are reported as a group along with the donations of other labor groups on campus.

Also, a statewide "Labor Leads" registry is published each year that provides various levels of recognition for United Way labor donors who make leadership pledges to their respective United Ways in amounts of \$250 or more per year.

Choices

MSU has an open campaign, meaning donors can choose the non-profit organizations to which they wish to contribute. Gifts may be directed to a specific service area, to a specific listed agency, or any IRS approved tax exempt organization. Check out msuccc.msu.edu/givingoptions.htm for information on designating your contribution.

The gift may be given in one lump sum or increments through payroll deduction (taken from paychecks twice a month). Payroll deductions will start in January 2018.

Direct questions or concerns to Jeff Brodie, Human Resources, 884-0136, brodie@hr.msu.edu.



The candidates

The lack of a contested position in our scheduled October election means the following candidates will take office without going through the election process. Their candidate statements are provided here to give us some insight as to why they stepped forward to serve.

President

Two-year term to end October 2019

Deb Bittner

While I think our constitutional change that eliminates elections when none of the positions are contested is a good one, it feels kind of strange to not be “auditioning” for the job of CTU president. And even though we are not running an actual election, I like the idea of having access to “candidate’s statements” in the October newsletter. It lets us meet the leadership, or in the case of myself and a few others, get reacquainted.

I have been president of CTU for quite a few years now. I’m not sure if that is because no one else wants this job or if the results are so good that a replacement isn’t needed. I am hoping that it is the latter! I hope that you see the good work we do together. I hope you see how we defend our contract as the foundation of our work life, and how we insist that this document—which was signed both by our union and management—be respected and valued by both sides. I hope you see how we participate at MSU as a partner for solutions rather than as a problem. I hope you see us taking on the difficult tasks, such as health care bargaining where we secured quality, accessible health care for over 6,000 MSU employees. And I sure hope you see how we continue to build relation-

Bittner continued on next page



Treasurer

Two-year term to end October 2019

Tracy Rich

I have served as the Board Secretary since 2012 and have been a part of the union since I started on campus in 2005. I am proud to represent the members of the Clerical-Technical Union. This fall, when our long-time treasurer, Jan Wallace, decided to step-down and take a break from the

Rich continued on next page



Audit Committee

Three-year term to end October 2020

Stephanie Six

Being raised in a GM household, I was brought up with a strong belief in the power of unions. Following in the footsteps of my father, grandfather, and several uncles, I decided to be an active member in my union as soon as I entered the workforce. Prior to accepting employment with



Six continued on next page

Director

Two-year terms to end October 2016, three open positions

Carmen Elliott

Hello, my name is Carmen Elliott and I have worked for the Student Affairs Office at the College of Education for the past 19 years. It

Elliott continued on next page



Pam Sloan

I came to MSU in April 2002 after successfully organizing McLaren Medical Management and ratifying their first contract. Since then I have actively involved my-

Sloan continued on next page



Jan Wallace

As a CT with 32 years on campus, I have had the opportunity to work in several different



Wallace continued on p. 7

Bittner

continued from previous page

ships with MSU and other community players to make our part of Michigan better for everyone.

Sure there are days, when the erosion of unionism, the struggle to defend our jobs, and the high risk/high stress stakes of our world today make the work of the CTU president seem overwhelming. But then I remember for whom I work—the good members of CTU. You all help me remain optimistic so that I can continue this work and make a difference in a positive way. Together, we make sure CTU still is seen as a labor force to be reckoned with. Together, we prove our value to MSU and the larger community. We are our very own branch of “Spartans will!”

While we may not win every disagreement, we are always in the fray, chipping away at workplace bullying, negative stereotypes, anti-union rhetoric, the devaluing of CT work, and all the other threats that come our way.

As I said two years ago, together, we “walk the talk.” And we must continue to look ahead and plan for the future, even on the days it seems hard just to hold our heads above water.

I am grateful to have had the honor to serve as your president, and I proudly look forward to my next term. I commit to give my best each day to strengthen your leadership team and identify new leaders, to keep CTU and labor valuable, and to work hard on the future path of CTU. [Holly Remacle]

Rich

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responsibilities of the office, I resolved to take this opportunity to further my knowledge of the union. I have served alternately on the Finance Committee and the Grievance, Arbitration, and Trial Committee, stepping in to serve where I was needed most. I believe my experiences on the committees have given me the knowledge necessary to step into the role of treasurer.

I would like to continue serving the membership by fighting to keep our con-

tract strong to ensure our members are treated with respect and dignity. I will continue to promote unity and solidarity among our members and do the best I can to make sure financial decisions positively affect our members. As the treasurer, I will strive to uphold CTU's strategic direction of “maintaining CTU's sound financial base through a prudent investment program and budget planning based on achieving organizational goals and objectives.” Additionally, I will continue to assist the organization with negotiating and defending a strong CTU contract with fair wages, benefits, and working conditions; be an effective and sensitive representative of members; and help to encourage members to be active and involved.

I would like to urge each member to attend the quarterly membership meetings. These meetings are an opportunity to learn about your Union, meet other CTs and the CT leadership, talk about issues in your area, exchange ideas, and make proposals. Member input is essential for the Union to continue to grow and move forward in positive directions. If you ever have questions or concerns, please contact me personally.

When you become an active member, you can learn how to effectively use your power in your workplace. As unions in general continue to face obstacles and criticism, it's crucial we come together to keep our own Union strong and carry on as an example for others. Please allow me to continue to represent the Clerical-Technical Union in a new role as treasurer.

Six

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MSU, I held a variety of positions on the MEA LCC-ESP Executive Board for over 10 years, including Building Representative, Secretary and Vice President. During that time, I also worked closely with several trade unions assisting in the coordination of their apprenticeship programs. I have been an MSU CTU Union Representative for almost 11 years and was a member of the CTU Union

Representative Coordinating Committee for at least five of those years. I believe that my strong belief in the solidarity that unions can bring to the workforce, my extensive background with unions, my work experience with finance, and a master's degree focusing on non-profit and higher education administration will be great assets for the role of Auditor. I truly appreciate the opportunity to serve the members of CTU.

Elliott

continued from previous page

has provided me with opportunities to work with students, faculty, state entities, and the public. I am interested in running as a Board Director for CTU because I want to be involved more in-depth. I became a UR a year ago and have enjoyed being a part of this union. I want to learn more on labor relations and would like this opportunity to provide a new perspective to our current board. We are stronger when we work together and I believe that when we work towards a common goal we can attain compromise. I look forward to being a part of this already great team!

Sloan

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self with the CTU, serving as a Union Representative in several districts and in more recent years as a Director on the Board. In the past I have ended my candidate statement with the following quote. This Year I am starting out with it.

Solidarity does not assume that our struggles are the same struggles, or that our pain is the same pain, or that our hope is for the same future. Solidarity involves commitment, and work, as well as the recognition that even if we do not have the same feelings, or the same lives, or the same bodies, we do live on common ground. (Sara Ahmed, 2004, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, p. 189.

Sloan continued on next page

Sloan continued from previous page

Recently I was handed a letter that stated I was going to be laid off due to reorganization of my department. When I started asking questions my superiors were told to leave the room. I was left standing in a room with strangers, essentially all alone. I was told I would be put on administrative leave and then I was taken by the elbow and escorted out of the building. I felt like a criminal. What had I done? It was humiliating. I was very frightened and confused. I was nearly in a panic. But I knew what to do first. My first phone call was to the union, where I was treated with kindness and reassured that every thing will be alright. As I reflected on the events of that day I was reminded of the above quote. How many times had I dismissed the struggle that someone was going through because they received a layoff notice?

Wallace continued from page 5

units. This has allowed me to observe and understand multiple processes and some of the complexities of the university. I have experienced the stress of layoff and I'm grateful for my Union's strong contract language that protects us in a layoff/bypass or bumping situation. It also provides us with the opportunity to change jobs campus-wide without sacrificing our seniority. I am proud to have helped advance and strengthen our contractual protections by participating in two negotiations in 2012 and 2015. [Curtis Lownsbery]

I am asking for your support as I take on a Director position on the Executive Board for the CTU. Previously, I served as the Treasurer for over six years and as a Union Representative. My experience helped me obtain more of a working knowledge about our members and our Union and my service proves both my level of commitment and my qualifications for the position in which I wish to continue.

For the majority of my life, I have been involved with unions. My father was involved in a union, and now my daughter and I myself are union

Do you realize that the one thing that our Union fights for each and every time our contract comes up for negotiations is our layoff language? Do you know how hard we fight to keep our contract strong? I was comforted by the words of our staff in the office. But it was our contract that gave me hope! It was our contract that gave me peace of mind. I put my name in the hat to again run for a Board position so that I could help insure that CT's in the future will also have the peace of mind that I got by making just one phone call. I have always been proud to name MSU as my employer, but I am even prouder to say that I am a CT at MSU.

I would like to thank you for allowing me to continue serving on the Executive Board of the Clerical Technical Union of Michigan State University.

members. We truly realize the importance and benefits of being involved in organized labor! I am so proud to be a member of CTU. It is my goal to see it thrive and increase in strength. I believe whole heartedly in the concept of solidarity and our CTU membership working together to obtain the best workplace for all of us.

I will continue to work hard and be as effective as I can to improve the quality of employment for all CTs. It is worth the time commitment and all the hard work to make sure we stay strong and united. Every day that we go to work, use our health care, take a paid vacation, use a sick day, or take advantage of one of our many benefits, we are exercising rights that were won by the members we elected to represent us at the bargaining table, rights we defend each and every time we enforce our contract.

I am asking for your support as our union moves into the future. With your help, I will be able to continue my goal of obtaining the best that I can for members!

Show your support by attending the Membership Meeting on Wednesday, October 26. See you there!

ATTENTION **Benefits enrollment**

Open Enrollment will be available through the EBS portal and must be completed **October 1 through October 31.**

Who needs to enroll? Anyone registering a spouse or Other Eligible Individual **must** complete the health care affidavit even if the person is currently on your plan. If you don't, your spouse or OEI will lose coverage. Anyone adding or making changes in coverage, or adding or removing eligible dependents must also enroll. This is also the time to enroll or change life insurance, accidental death and dismemberment coverage, voluntary benefit options, and Flexible Spending Accounts.

Insurance premiums will continue to be zero for full-time support staff employees opting for insurance under Blue Care Network, prorated for part-time employees.

Those opting for Community Blue will pay: Single, \$268.19; Two-person, \$563.20; and Family, \$670.47. These premiums are also prorated for part-time employees.

This year's Open Enrollment introduces several changes. To learn more, view the employee and retiree Open Enrollment guides and other detailed information at www.br.msu.edu/open-enrollment/index.html.

A Benefits Fair will be offered at the Breslin Center on three different days during Open Enrollment. The Fair lets you learn about benefits options and ask questions of plan representatives and MSU Human Resources staff:

- ▼ Tue., Oct. 17, Noon to 5
- ▼ Wed., Oct. 18, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.
- ▼ Thu., Oct. 19, 7 a.m.–3 p.m.

Direct questions to the *SolutionsCenter* @br.msu.edu, or call 353-4434 or 800-353-4434 (toll free).



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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

CTcalendar

October 1–31. Benefits Open Enrollment. Go to hr.msu.edu/open-enrollment/index.html. For questions, contact SolutionsCenter@hr.msu.edu, or call 353-4434.

October 17, November 7, and every first and third Tuesday. Executive Board meetings, 5:15 p.m., CTU office.

October 23. “A Foretaste of Hell” in Minnesota: Work and Rebellion on the Iron Range, 1916.” Allyse Freeman and Gary Kaunonen, Minnesota Discovery Center. LEP’s Our Daily Work/Our Daily Lives Brown Bag Series. MSU Museum Auditorium, 12:15–1:30. Free.

October 25. Membership Meeting. See page 1. [Patricia Galvin]

October 25. Deadline to nominate a support staff member for the Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award. Find nomination forms at www.hr.msu.edu/recognition/

supportstaff/DistStaff.htm.

November 10. “Working on Great Lakes Freighters in the 20th Century.” Frank Boles, Clarke Library, Central Michigan University, author of *Sailing Into History: Great Lakes Bulk Carriers of the Twentieth Century and the Crews Who Sailed Them*. LEP’s Our Daily Work/Our Daily Lives Brown Bag Series. MSU Museum Auditorium, 12:15–1:30. Free.

January 26, 2018. Nomination deadline for the Ruth Jameyson “Above and Beyond” Award, an annual \$2,500 award given annually to recognize one support staff member who is pursuing a post-baccalaureate degree while also performing “Above and Beyond” in the scope of their duties at MSU. Visit www.hr.msu.edu/recognition/support-staff/ruth-jameyson-award.html.



You are invited to register for CTU’s Gerri Olson Educational Loan Program for Spring Semester 2018.

Contact CTU Financial Manager Patricia Shackleton, November 6 through 17. Registrations received after November 17 will be considered on a space available basis.

This interest-free loan allows members to pay for classes up front and repay the loan after being reimbursed by MSU.