



April '21 raise announced

Health care numbers are in. The April 2021 raise will be. . . , p. 3.



Open Enrollment

This year, even the benefits fair is virtual, p. 7.



Membership Meeting

Socially distanced, with masks, & under a tent, we get it done, p. 8.



CT news

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

Special Elections Issue 2020

Candidates vie to serve the union

Five members are running for four 2-year director positions in the 2020 elections:

- ▼ Janet Hershberger
- ▼ Shirley VanDorp
- ▼ Kristen Rule
- ▼ Jeremy Warmels
- ▼ Stephen Stofflet

One candidate is running for each of the other open positions:

- ▼ Rosie Garcia, vice president (2 years)
- ▼ Michelle Jenkins, secretary (2 years)
- ▼ Andrea Rafferty, Audit Committee (3 years)
- ▼ Bill Kelly, Audit Committee (2 years)

Especially during these unsettled times, it is important that we consider and choose our leadership wisely. To that end, the candidate's statements have been provided starting on page 4 of this issue.

Zoom meetings are also being arranged so that we can "meet the candidates" before voting. Because this will be our first electronic election, and because of what we learned from the furlough vote earlier this year, we will begin voting on Monday, October 26, and continue through Election Day, Tuesday, October 27. This should give us ample time to work out problems that individual voters might experience.

When it is time to vote, members will receive an email with a link to the ballot. If you have trouble

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Rosie Garcia, vice president



Michelle Jenkins, secretary



Janet Hershberger, director



Kristen Rule, director



Stephen Stofflet, director



Shirley VanDorp, director



Jeremy Warmels, director



Andrea Rafferty, Audit Committee (3 years)



Bill Kelly, Audit Committee (2 years)

CT news

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

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Organized and
independent
since 1974!

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Editorial Policy:

The CT News is the voice of our union. It is our vehicle for communicating, on a regular basis, the issues that confront us as workers. Through this newsletter we explain union policies, show how dues are spent, and explain the views and actions of the elected leadership for evaluation by the members.

The CT News is the voice of the membership. We welcome articles from members and stories about members.

While contributions are welcome, they should be constructive and contribute positively to the welfare of our union.

We will accept no attacks on any union leader or member. We will accept thoughtful discussion of all related issues in the letters section, and reserve the right to reply to those that seem to reflect a misunderstanding of the union and its policies.

Direct ideas, letters, questions and comments to Cherylee Finney.



Former Director Stacey Patton, Vice President Rosie Garcia, and President Deb Bittner at our 2019 picnic at East Lansing's Patriarche Park.

A member of the team moves on

First, we want to acknowledge the contributions of Director Stacey Patton. She stepped down from her union position recently after deciding to move on from MSU. We appreciate the work she did for our union and wish her our best in all of her future endeavors.

Second, you can still purchase a CTU TEAMWORK! apron.



Membership Meetings

The October 28 Membership Meeting will be held in an open tent (with social distancing and masks) in the CTU parking lot at 2990 East Lake Lansing Road. The meeting starts at 5:20 p.m., but (distanced) socializing starts at 5 p.m. so come early. Membership Meetings are for making decisions about the Union, asking questions and receiving updates about Union activities.

Executive Board Meetings

Board meetings are regularly held twice a month on first and third Tuesdays, but changes in dates and times may occur. Call about attending.

Members welcome!

CTclassifieds

For sale:

▼ **CTU Teamwork Aprons:** Full length (24x34 inches), made in the USA. Easy-wash, stain-resistant, polyester/cotton twill with two pockets, long waist ties, and an adjustable neck strap. \$15 each. Available now. Call 355-1903.

Services:

▼ **Quality Carpet and Upholstery Cleaners.** Most of us are spending a lot more time at home these days, and our furniture and carpets are getting an unexpected workout! For a fresh and sanitized home, call Quality Carpet and Upholstery Cleaners to help you with your cleaning needs. We take every precaution to ensure your safety, including the use of masks and gloves. Owner operated, free phone estimates. Give Quality Carpet and Upholstery Cleaners a call today at 517-694-0497.

▼ **Arbonne's 30 Days to Healthy Living & Beyond.** This is a holistic approach to healthy living with plant powered nutrition. We educate, equip and empower you to make better choices for better health. Support provided. No meetings to attend. Simple daily changes, DRAMATIC results. NOT A FAD. NOT a trend. NOT a diet. This is a PROVEN, lasting LIFESTYLE CHANGE. For More information, contact Karen Spitz, Independent Consultant. Call or text: 517-712-2571 or email karensplitzatarbon@gmail.com.

▼ **Skills assessment software:** Make an appointment with your union (355-1903) to access the same skills assessment software used for HR's skills evaluations. 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. Send the ad copy to Cheryl@ctumsu.org. See the guidelines at www.ctumsu.org/news/ct-classifieds.

It's a good thing we have a union

President Deb Bittner

Something I've heard from many of you and repeat to all who will listen: Because we have a union, the employer must talk with us before making working condition changes. A union contract stops the employer from unilaterally changing salaries, benefits, and negotiated protections. So because we have a union and a contract, *both parties must reach an agreement* on changes that impact our contractual language and us. Make no mistake—*without the union and this contract, the most poorly paid and vulnerable workers are the most easily targeted.*

The furlough agreement is a great example. Working in solidarity with other campus unions, we negotiated an agreement that protected the unionized workforce *AND* gave the employer a tool to help the university. We were flexible, and we worked hard to be a part of the solution by providing a means to help and protect CTs as well as the university.

As the pandemic continues, we expect to be (and have been) approached with additional proposals from both the university and individual units and colleges. As some of MSU's most devoted supporters, CTs know that we do not succeed if MSU fails. We work hard to keep MSU working and educating our students. But that doesn't mean that the costs of the pandemic should be unfairly balanced on our backs or that we should be held accountable for the employer's inaction, poor planning, or unwillingness to use the tools we have negotiated.

Pay raise

Another example of what working together and what a union can do is our joint health care arrangement. This partnership between eight unions and MSU through the Joint Health Care Committee has a proven track record of benefiting both employees and the

employer. Our upcoming pay raise illustrates the payoff of teamwork and great union involvement—a true collaboration.

We are scheduled to receive a 2.75% general pay increase in April 2021. *We earned this raise* under our health care memorandum of understanding by limiting last year's health care cost increases—to a remarkable **negative 2%**. This is what happens when we work together to solve a problem. Because we have a union and a contract, the university cannot unilaterally decide to cancel this raise. Don't let others try to shame us by saying that we haven't sacrificed. We have earned this raise because we have been working to keep health care costs low for years, changing, adapting and taking the risk of sharing in the good times and bad in the health care world.

Our resilient union

Speaking of adapting and changing, the pandemic is forcing a lot of that! I've written several columns over the years about the resiliency of our union, but I never imagined it would be tested so thoroughly by something like a long-term pandemic. While we used email and other electronic communication before the pandemic, we have always prioritized face-to-face interactions as the best way to represent CTs and keep members involved.

Now we must factor social distancing into our need for two-way communication with members who are working from home, reporting to the work site, *and* waiting for recall from temporary furloughs. Although some of the face-to-face stuff has taken a temporary hit, we



are working hard to sustain and nurture our great resource—member solidarity—through electronic communication and creativity.

We have had many, many meetings, “town halls” and even union training via zoom. We are working to hold a few “zoom” election forums so you can meet the CTU candidates before our election. But there is one thing we cannot do over the airways, and that is our membership meetings. So we got creative and had our very first parking lot Membership Meeting in July. We had over 50 members join us! [Kimberly Hambleton]

Increasing our reliance on electronic communications, voting, and other interactions during this emergency, however, has exposed some shortcomings in our basic rules and procedures. For example, our constitution does not address some of the ways that strictly electronic meetings might impact our formal democratic processes. Expect to hear more discussions about a constitutional review in the near future that could lead to a membership vote on updating our governing document.

We have scheduled the next Membership Meeting for October 28, the day after the CTU Election and this one will

Union continued on p. 7

Candidate statements 2020

Officers on the Executive Board

1 candidate for each position

Vice President: Rosie Garcia

It has been a privilege serving as your Vice President (VP) for the past five years. This year, with our university/state/country in a pandemic, I am even more committed to continue serving as Vice President. I consider it a privilege and an honor. [Monique Mireles]

We live in a world that continues to change, and our Union continues to grow stronger and more committed to our members. Without our Union to protect us, we would each be considered an “at will” employee, meaning that we would not have rights to bargain for our healthcare, retirement, and many other benefits. Because of our Union, we were protected earlier this year when the pandemic caused budget shortfalls and decreasing workloads in some areas of the university. Instead of balancing the largest part of the problem on the backs of some of the lowest paid employees, our union required the employer to bargain with us. As a result, our Union came together and voted to approve a furlough package that both helped the university and protected us.

Part of my duties as VP is to work with our Union Representatives (URs). I want to take this opportunity to say that

Secretary: Michelle Jenkins

Hello and Happy Fall! My name is Michelle Jenkins and I have had the pleasure of serving as the Secretary for the Executive Board for the last three years. I have been on campus for almost nine years and involved in a leadership role with CTU for most of that time.

Having grown up in a home with a dad who was a member of the UAW leadership, I was drawn to serving CTU in some capacity and joining the board was one of the best decisions I could have made. When I look at what CTU represents not only at MSU but across its surrounding communities, I cannot help but be proud to be an active part of that.

I thank you for allowing me to be in this role and look forward to continuing to serve my fellow CTs.

we have districts that need you to represent our members. If you are interested in becoming a UR, please contact me. As VP, I am an officer on the executive board and liaison to the URs, I chair the Grievance, Appeal and Trial Committee (GAT), and I work alongside our contract administrators. I am proud to be an active Union Member since 1997.



Audit Committee

1 candidate for each position

Andrea Rafferty, 3 years

I have worked on campus for 12 years and have been in Biomedical Laboratory Diagnostics for almost 10 years of that time. I became a Union Representative about three years ago and I absolutely love it. We have a great union and I want to become more involved in CTU. I served on the Audit Committee for a one-year term and want to continue with this Committee for the three-year term. I enjoy helping our Union and thereby serving you!

Bill Kelly, 2 years

My name is Bill Kelly and I have lived in the Lansing area for nine years. I started at MSU in 2019. I was an accountant for many years and feel I would be a great fit for the Audit Committee. I performed daily audits as an auditor at FireKeepers Casino in addition to preparing financial statements in other previous positions. I would love to have your support to be on the CTU Audit Committee. In my spare time I enjoy kayaking, fishing, camping and hiking with my wife Amanda, our son Vincent, and our cat Ladybug. I have unionism in my blood as my grandfather was a proud member of the UAW for many years.



Elections materials, information, and updates will be posted under

“Elections 2020”

on our website at

www.ctumsu.org

And be sure to check out and “like” the CTU facebook page at

www.facebook.com/CTUofMSU

Director on the Executive Board

4 positions / 5 candidates

Janet Hershberger

Dear Fellow CTs,

It is with great hope that I ask you to consider me for a position of Director in our union. I served CTU for over a decade: first as a union representative for eight years, and then as a Director for four. After taking a several year hiatus, I would like to again be of service to my fellow union members.

We all know we are living and working in more challenging times than many of us have experienced up to now. Of course, ALL times in history are unprecedented, but with a global pandemic, economic downturn, and growing political polarization, the future seems even more uncertain than it “normally” does. We are all concerned more than ever about our health, the health of our loved ones; will we have health insurance, will we be put on furlough or even laid off.

I feel my past experience in CTU will

Hershberger continued on p. 6

Kristen Rule

Dear Members of CTU,

I have worked for MSU for 20-plus years in the Department of Medicine-Hematology/Oncology clinic. I am proud to say that I have been a dues-paying member since I was hired. I believe in unions and I believe it is our duty as members to support our union, both financially and by upholding our contract.

As I was able, I began to get more involved by attending meetings and serving as a union representative for District 40 which consists of some of the off-campus clinics. I enjoyed being a union rep and working with the members in my district. I attended union trainings and events and learned a lot about the behind the scenes work our union really does.

Last year, I was able to join the Executive Board as a Director to fill a one-year term. This next level of participation helped me see how the union really

Rule continued on p. 6

Stephen Stofflet

Greetings. My name is Stephen Stofflet, and I'm running for re-election to the Clerical-Technical Union's board of directors. I am a proud father to three adult children (one of whom recently got married) and have been married to Katie Gibson-Stofflet for the past 17 years.

In today's world, we are facing a new, and very challenging atmosphere. While the general public has a much higher opinion of unions today, have no doubt—we (unions) are under attack.

CTU has a long history of standing up for their members, while working with the university in a manner that will benefit both parties. It is a fine balancing act, and I believe experience that I have had the good fortune to acquire while serving on the board, will provide the background needed to resolve difficult issues facing our members.

My personal experience with the

Stofflet continued on p. 6

Shirley VanDorp

Greetings Fellow CTs!

It has been a privilege to serve as one of the Directors on the CTU Executive Board. For the last eight years, I have been a CT member working with MSU Surgery as a health care assistant. I have served as a union representative for three years in District 40 which included the Sparrow Professional Building, and Breslin Cancer Center. Being a union rep was a great experience. I learned a lot about labor relations and gained valuable experience working with members in my district and the CTU staff and board. I was proud to support them through some challenging issues.

In 2018, I was elected to the Executive Board and a director. I was ready to take the next step in serving our union. I was able to be part of the last negotiating team where we bargained another successful contract. This really opened my eyes to how our union works! We spent many hours after work and on weekends preparing and bargaining for new and stronger language. At the table, we worked hard to keep what we have. It was great to be part of this team. I did all of this while balancing family and work responsibilities but I feel it was worth it so we could keep our union rights and our contract strong.

It is my passion to fight for the rights of those workers who are often overworked and mostly under-appreciated. I feel it

VanDorp continued on p. 6

Jeremy Warmels

To my CTU family,

It has been a true honor to serve as a Union Representative for District 3 over the last few years. I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunities and challenges I have encountered in my efforts to assist my fellow CTs in making sure they are treated fairly in the workplace. Through this experience I have heard from many of you about what you would like to see changed in our contract, and what issues you are passionate about. Though I am grateful for these experiences and the opportunity to work with some of you on union matters, I want to do more. I want to begin advocating for those changes and working towards making our union better. I want to be the person you can rely on to fight for your rights as a CTU member. I have been told that I am annoyingly persistent, and I don't disagree. When it comes to fighting for the things you believe in and for your benefits and protections, I promise to be just that—annoyingly persistent.

This year we have all been faced with challenges due to COVID 19 and I know I have been so thankful for the job security I feel as a union member, especially a member of CTU. I have also felt secure knowing that if I were furloughed, CTU ensured that I would not lose my health benefits and fight to make sure that I keep the benefit of our strong contract. I am ready to step up to the next level of fighting from the Executive

Warmels continued on p. 6

Director statements continued

Hershberger

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serve you well for the challenges that face MSU; and all of our fellow employees, but of course, especially the CTs. I have worked on campus over twenty years, so I am familiar with many of the ins and outs of MSU. When I served as a UR, I was also an officer for several years in Mid-Michigan Labor Employment Relations Association (LERA), as secretary, vice-president, and eventually president of that organization. During my four years on the board, I participated in contract negotiations, which was one

of the most educational events of my whole service.

I became a union rep because someone suggested it to me, and I became involved with LERA and the Board in exactly the same way. Working with my union taught me leadership skills I probably wouldn't have picked up any other way, and I would like to again use them in service to my fellow union members. I would be honored to again serve you, and ask that you vote for me in the CTU Election. Thank you for your consideration.

Rule

continued from previous page

is involved with keeping our rights as workers and protecting us in the workplace every day. We work hard to make sure we are keeping our union strong while doing the difficult work to solve problems with MSU, and sometimes by taking a tough stand.

I am asking for your support to allow me to remain as Director on the Executive Board. I want to continue being a part of the organizational team. I believe we need to elect those individuals we believe will provide the leadership to sus-

tain and obtain the goals of the union. I like being a part of the Board and trying to make a difference every day.

Although, it has only been a short time that I have been involved at this level in the union, I have had the pleasure to experience the strength and unity of our Clerical-Technical Union. I know I have a lot more to learn and know I will rise to the challenge and do my best for you. I look forward to the opportunity to continue to serve.

In solidarity, Kristen Rule

Stofflet

continued from previous page

union grew out of a negative situation with a faculty member. CTU went to bat for me, the situation was successfully resolved. It was then that I made the choice to become an active part of our union, as a Union Rep for Life Sciences A, B and C buildings on south campus.

My first year on the board was 2015, when I assumed a partial, one-year term. This was followed by two additional terms. While a board member, I've been active in a variety of areas and projects: Audit Committee, union contract negotiations, website support, and

development of new CT classifications.

Currently I serve as Chair of the President's Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (PACDI), where I have just begun my second year.

I've had the opportunity to sit in on many challenging employment issues, learning how to read people and situations, how to approach differences, and how to address them in a constructive way.

I believe you (CTs) have taught me well, and I would consider it an honor to continue my efforts on behalf of members across MSU's campus.

VanDorp

continued from previous page

is my duty to speak up and be the voice for the ones that cannot or are afraid to speak up for themselves. I have grown in leadership skills and gained invaluable experience in defending the language of our contract. I know that without our union to protect us, we would each be considered an "at will" employee with no rights in our workplace. I believe that CTU is truly the backbone of this University and am proud to play an active role.

I know there is always more to do and to learn so I am asking you to vote for me to continue on the Executive Board as a director. I look forward to continuing to serve our members and the University. Thank you for allowing me to serve another term.

Always in Solidarity, Shirley VanDorp

Warmels

continued from previous page

Board to keep you all protected as well.

Another thing I am passionate about is continuing education. I have started to go back to school to finish my bachelor's degree in business management, I should have all my credits completed by December of this year! So, trust me when I say that I understand how important our contractual benefits are when it comes to educational assistance and I hope to be a part of improving these.

In 1964, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said "*I have the audacity to believe that people everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits.*" I love this quote, to me this speaks so much to what our Union is about. These are the rights I want to ensure each CTU member has. I will work hard on your behalf. I know I have a lot to learn and I look forward to that as well as being your voice on the Executive Board.

So, I ask for your vote for CTU Executive Board Director to allow me the opportunity to fight for you.

In Solidarity, Jeremy Warmels

Union continued from page 1

again be in our parking lot. Because the weather in October can be “iffy,” we will have the meeting in a large, open-air tent that allows social distancing and some cover. Masks will be required.

Elections 2020

The CTU October elections process is definitely impacted by the pandemic. Voting is a huge part of remaining a member-driven and resilient organization but this year, it will be a bit different. This issue of the newsletter provides information about the election, including new procedures for voting online. Expect a lot of emails with details as we roll out the new process.

That other election

Unlike many unions, CTU seldom endorses candidates in national, state, and local elections. I’m reminding you, however, to vote for your “labor” interests. Please take time to read about candidates and

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Elections continued from p. 1

with the process, immediately contact Cheryllee Finney at 517-355-1903 or Cheryl@ctumsu.org.

If you cannot vote electronically and want a paper ballot, make arrangements with Organizational Coordinator Tiffany Westendorf at 517-355-1903 or Tiffany@ctumsu.org.

Votes will be counted starting at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, October 28. The results will be announced at the Membership Meeting that evening.

Any comments, questions, or challenges concerning the election can be directed to a member of the Elections Committee:

- ▼ Co-chair Brenda Bailey
bailey@msu.edu
- ▼ Co-chair Judy Redding
redding5@msu.edu
- ▼ President Deb Bittner
Deb@ctumsu.org
- ▼ Communications Specialist
Cheryllee Finney Cheryl@ctumsu.org
- ▼ Organizational Coordinator Tiffany Westendorf Tiffany@ctumsu.org



Sign up for 2021 benefits October 1 - 31, 2020

Open Enrollment 2021

Every year we learn of employees who missed the October 31 deadline and had to pay out of pocket for the health care premiums of a spouse or other eligible individual (OEI). If you wish to continue health care coverage for your spouse or OEI—who is NOT an MSU benefits-eligible employee or retiree—you must complete a **Spouse/OEI Affidavit every plan year.**

To continue or update a Flexible Spending Account (FSA), *you must also go through open enrollment.* FSAs do not renew automatically.

Some benefits do renew automatically, e.g., health or dental insurance, life or accidental death and dismemberment insurance, and certain voluntary benefits. You will need to participate in Open Enrollment, however, to enroll, change, or cancel coverage in these benefits.

For enrollment details and additional information, refer to the 2021 Open Enrollment Guide for staff at <https://hr.msu.edu/open-enrollment/>.

The Retiree 2021 Guide is available on the same site. [McKenna Purves]

Some highlights:

- ▼ The premium health care threshold for spouses and OEIs has increased to \$1,500. If your spouse or OEI has access to health care coverage through their current or former employer that costs \$1,500 or less

for single-person coverage, they must purchase it to remain on your MSU policy. The MSU health care coverage will be secondary.

- ▼ Note that Best Doctors is now called Teladoc Medical Experts. Great news: Teladoc Medical Experts introduced a new support option called Mental Health Navigator. (Teladoc Medical Experts can be accessed at any time and is not tied to Open Enrollment.)

Blue Care Network remains the lowest cost health care plan in 2021, which means that premiums for all levels—single, two-person, and family—are fully paid by the employer (with zero premium contributions from the employee). Premiums are prorated for part-time employees. [Caitlin Miller]

The monthly premiums paid by employees who opt for Community Blue rose slightly: single \$284.64, two-person \$597.75, and family \$711.60. Premium costs are prorated for part-time employees.

Virtual Benefits Fairs will be offered October 12–16, with MSU HR staff and benefits vendors available to answer questions live via chat on Thursday, October 15 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Friday, October 16 from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Any questions or problems with Open Enrollment should be addressed to SolutionsCenter@hr.msu.edu, or call 517-353-4434 or 800-353-4434.



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Politics continued from p. 7

where they stand on labor issues. What we win at the bargaining table can be taken away with legislation. Remember right-to-work? That's the 2012 law that unilaterally removed the union security clause of our contract, without bargaining. All of the races, from the president of the United States, to our Big 3 governing boards (Wayne State, University of Michigan, and especially MSU), to County Commissioners, all of the offices for which we vote, impact our daily lives, including our negotiated benefits and the security of our jobs. Voting is a right in our country and a privilege that is not shared around the world. In this year of honoring the right of women to vote, it is even more important to get out and do so. OR make a plan to vote absentee and get your ballot to an official drop



Some attendees of the July 19, 2020, Membership Meeting held in the CTU parking lot.

October Membership Meeting
Join our Big Tent Membership Meeting
Wednesday, October 28, 2020
5:20 p.m. (distanced socializing starts at 5)
Parking lot at 2990 East Lake Lansing Road

We will hold the October 28 Membership Meeting in our parking lot under a big, open tent to provide for social distancing and protection from the weather. Masks are required—and will be provided.

The agenda includes the announcement and swearing in of October 27 elections winners, a discussion of finances, a discussion of work- and union-related issues, and door prizes. Membership card or picture ID is required.

box. Women and men fought hard for the right of everyday citizens like us to vote. Many died in the struggle. Do not take this election lightly. [Teresa Janecke]