

CT news

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



CTU Members Attend Picnic at Potter Park Zoo

Members of the CTU and their families attended one of the "Celebrating 50" events at the Potter Park Zoo on Saturday, September 8. This event was free for the CT Member and 3 guests and included admission to the zoo, parking, food, ice cream vouchers, "explore the zoo" quiz with prizes, a photobooth, member gifts, and guest gifts.



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PROUD
to be
UNION

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 CTU News is the voice of our union. It is our vehicle for communication, 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 view and action of the elected leadership for evaluation by the members.

The CTU 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 do 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 can be sent to Theresa Stevens.

CT Classifieds

Welcome back Classifieds! After a short hiatus, the CT Classifieds have returned. If you would like to advertise to your colleagues in CT News, send your ad copy to ctu@ctumsu.org. Please visit www.ctumsu.org/news/ct-classifieds to review the guidelines for submitting an ad.

Bunn Coffee Pot Available

CTU has a Bunn Coffee Pot available to a good home. If you are interested, please send an email to ctu@ctumsu.org.



Membership Meetings

Meeting Notice

Membership meetings are for making decisions about the Union, asking questions, and receiving updates about union activities. The next Membership Meeting will be Wednesday, October 23, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom. Pre-registration is required. Look for an email with the link.

Congratulations CTU on our 50th Anniversary!

In mid 1968 a small group of CTs who were dissatisfied with the treatment they received from the University began meeting to build an organization to bargain for wages and working conditions. By September 1969, the group had garnered enough support to adopt bylaws and elect officers. The MSU Employee's Association was officially born on September 17, 1974 which became Clerical-Technical Union of MSU (CTU of MSU) in 1982. MSU's clerical and technical employees have proven that a strong, independent, predominantly female union could not only survive, but could become a leader in the fight for dignity, equality, and economic security. We will continue to serve our members and their families, the MSU and local community along with the labor movement as a whole.

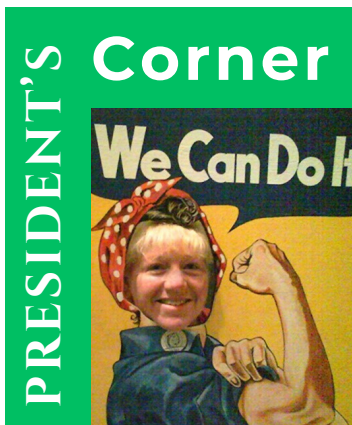
To view a timeline of a few highlights, visit <https://www.ctumsu.org/about-the-ctu/history/>.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Clerical-Technical Union of Michigan State University (CTU) is committed to the empowerment and dignity of the individual; democracy; diversity; and social justice through pursuit of fair wages, safe and humane working conditions; and the right to have a voice in decisions that affect CTs' lives.

CTU's mission is to empower its members to exert control and choice over their own lives. To do so, it develops leaders who direct CTs' collective resources and power to achieve the aims of the membership.

These aims are based on a foundation of values which include the affirmation of human dignity, respect for diversity, and promotion of social justice.



A message from President Deb Bittner

We honor our heritage when we protect our rights

Fifty years!

For fifty years the Clerical-Technical Union of MSU has secured fairness, recognition, and a voice for CTs in the workplace. The union has been through a lot since our formation, and we are proud to be in a position to celebrate our successes.

Most CTs had never been part of a union before 1974, and many considered management's lack of consideration and fairness to be "part of the job." Dissatisfied with the employer's dismissive treatment in incident after incident, a small group of clerical and technical workers at MSU began meeting in 1968 to build an organization that could negotiate for wages, benefits, and working conditions. The straw that broke the camel's back, so to speak, was when the university reneged on an expected 5¢ per hour annual raise in 1972. Without even a basic grievance procedure, CTs had no legal standing to make the employer live up to its commitments. The word "union" rang across campus, and within two years our organization was officially recognized and became a certified bargaining agent – a union.

Initially, we called ourselves the Michigan State University Employees Association, but in 1982, the members voted to change our name to the Clerical-Technical Union of Michigan State University (CTU of MSU) in 1982. Our logo changed too. The inverted pyramid logo with the workers at the top of the organization was voted on in 1995 to reflect our service model. Our contract changed as well as we secured new language that kept strengthening our rights and benefits. We bought a building for our permanent home and a place for members to use. We joined other campus unions in an innovative way to keep health care benefits and we continued our work through partnerships with MSU and the community.

Looking back, we most certainly owe a debt of gratitude to the union's organizers. Those early days must have been exciting—and sometimes scary—meeting coworkers from across the university to discuss concerns and formulate solutions, reaching out for assistance, fighting for recognition, and securing the first contract. Some even donated their own money to get legal assistance and working capital. And remember, they did it all without union protection.

A perusal of early union newsletters reflects hours of work by many CTs merely to develop a structure. In the beginning, working without the internet, without even a clean list of the clerical and technical employees working in scattered campus units, CTs had to start from scratch. They leafleted with actual paper, handing out information and posting on bulletin boards! They made phone calls. They met and talked to each other. They quickly created a democratic structure that made us the most accessible and informative labor organization on campus.

Since becoming a union, we have faced many hurdles including economic downturns, political attacks, and management attempts to redefine the university in ways that would diminish recognition of our work, both as individuals and as a union.

But we persevered. When forced to strike in 1988, we made huge financial gains, and just as importantly, we gained respect in the community and in the workplace. When we could, we partnered with the university for our mutual benefit. We watched administrators come and go, including an almost wholesale turnover in recent years. We weathered a global pandemic. We supported and relied on other unions, and it worked. We are still here, still fighting the good fight.

President's Message cont.

Using my favorite quote from Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." It is the same with CTU. It all started with a group of CTs decades ago. We might not have a union today if it weren't for MSU clerical and technical workers, rising to protest another indignity, channeling their frustration into a very practical and effective response: they chose to organize a union. Those early union organizers fought and secured the legal right for employees to address workplace issues. Our founders had their own issues and could not have foreseen many of ours. They did, however, give us the tools to address issues that arise.

Without those tools and a union contract to define our pay, benefits, and working conditions, we would now be "at will," meaning our employer could discipline, dismiss, or treat any one of us, or all of us, unfairly without needing to show just cause. But our early group of employees laid a strong foundation for us and gave us one of our biggest life assets – job protections.

CTs have nurtured this asset—our union—for five decades, and we are not about to squander it now. So, how do we honor this great legacy? In part, that is a question for the next 50 years. But the answer lies in solidarity, in supporting each other through our union, in staying informed, and in participation.

The answer lies with each of us. We still believe "unions are the vehicles by which ordinary people can achieve extraordinary things."

Here's to the next 50 years! Cheers!

Deb

A Few History Highlights of CTU of MSU

1969

Michigan State University Employees Association (MSUEA) is formed.

1982

MSUEA becomes Clerical-Technical Union of MSU (CTU of MSU)

1999

CTU celebrates 25th anniversary

2006

CTU moves to current location

2024

CTU celebrates 50

New Communications Person



We are pleased to announce that Theresa Stevens has joined our office as the new communications person. She will be working part-time helping us to maintain our website, some graphic design and producing our monthly newsletter. Theresa recently retired from United Way as their Branding and Public Relations Director. In her free time, she enjoys gardening, cross-stitching and spending time up north in Ludington with her husband Mark.

Welcome Theresa!



Candidates Statements

Vice President: *Andrea Rafferty*



My name is Andrea Rafferty, and I am an Office Coordinator in the Biomedical Laboratory Diagnostics Program (BLD) within the College of Natural Science. I have worked at MSU for over 15 years and have worked in a few departments prior to landing in BLD. In 2010, I was one of several employees who were bumped from their positions, which was hard, but I eventually landed in BLD where I have been for the past 13+ years.

CTU has helped me many times over the years, and I am dedicated to its success. I became a Union Representative (UR) in 2018 prior to being elected to the Executive Board. I have worked in the education field for 24 years from K-12 schools to higher education and have experience working in different fields and with diverse cultures. I believe the experiences I have gained throughout my life have prepared me to be in leadership in our Union. I have learned so much by being a UR and serving on the Board and wish to continue working to serve the members of CTU. I am proud to serve a second term as a Vice President on the Executive Board. Thank you.

Secretary: *Michelle Jenkins*



I have served as the Board Secretary for the last seven years and as a UR for several years prior. Growing up in a union household, I knew my place was somewhere within CTU when I joined campus. It has been an honor to be a voice for our members both within the board room and outside of it. I'm proud of the work we have accomplished and look forward to what is still to come. Not only am I proud to be a member of the CTU, but I'm proud to represent us across campus and in the greater community.

Director: *Barbara Breedlove*



Greetings. My name is Barbara Breedlove, and I have served on the CTU Board as a director for the last couple of years. I have also lived in the Lansing area almost all my life. Next May, I'll be celebrating my 25th year at Michigan State University, which is hard to believe. I started at Academic Computing & Technology Services, now IT Services, and worked there for over six years. After being laid off from that position, I have been at the College of Osteopathic Medicine for over 18 years. I am thankful to the CTU union for this smooth transition. My union has stood behind me during the hardest times in my life. I believe that is what unions are for. I love where I work now. That is why I am a dues-paying member and have been throughout my employment with the university. I've enjoyed working as a Director in the Union and being able to help people.

I just recently got one of my co-workers to become a paid member, and it is such a good feeling. I am deeply grateful for the support and opportunities CTU has provided me, and this gratitude fuels my dedication to the union.

Helping people is what I love to do. My life experiences, particularly growing up in a single-parent household and being the oldest of four girls, have deeply influenced my work ethic and drive to advocate for others. These experiences have instilled in me a strong sense of empathy and a commitment to fairness. With much determination, I also succeeded in becoming a first-generation college graduate. I have a loving husband of almost 27 years and three children, ages 26, 22 & 14. My strong work ethic has helped me consistently balance professional, personal, and community responsibilities. I am very active at my church, serving in multiple capacities. I also support the Associate Dean of Diversity and Campus Inclusion to lead Inclusive Excellence efforts in our college, the university, and the state of Michigan. I am also currently in the process of finishing up my MBA at Davenport University.

As this political climate becomes more interesting every day, making life more difficult, we need the union to act on behalf of its members more than ever. Families are having a hard time making ends meet. Employers are losing workers left and right. Even university staff are struggling like never before. It's time for us, as a union, to come together and do something that'll make a difference in the years ahead.

All my life, I've had a passion for fighting for the voiceless, and through this position, I'll continue the fight. I'm so happy to have been a part of CTU negotiations last year and to be able to fight for the union members. I would like to do what I can to keep the legacy of those who have paved the way before me.

Candidates Statements cont.

Director: *Rosario R. Garcia*



In the past, I have also served as on the Executive Board of Directors and as a Union Representative. We still 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 the right to bargain for our healthcare, retirement, and many other benefits. Because of our Union, we were protected during the pandemic which caused budget shortfalls and decreasing workloads in some areas of the university. Unfortunately, we still see this happening today after 2 years back to work at our workplaces.

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. Part of my duties as Board of Directors is to work with other boards of directors and look at policies that the department wants to place in the workplace that contradict our contract. Make sure our voices are heard. I am proud to be an active Union Member since 1997.

Director: *Janet Hershberger*



Dear Fellow CTs,

In this 50th anniversary year for Clerical-Technical Union, I am honored to again be able to serve you in the position of Director in our union. The past two years have brought many changes to MSU. I am excited to be able to work with my fellow board members and officers to help all of us CTs as much as possible! Last year, your bargaining team negotiated a very hard-won contract with the university management, in which we were finally able to obtain paid parental leave for our members. In addition, your union was able to maintain our important bypass provisions in the contract, which management would love to see go away. We were able to preserve valuable existing benefits and add a new one! I appreciate the support of all of you. I am proud to be part of this union, and glad to be of service to it.

Director: *Stephen Stofflet*



I am excited to serve again as a Director on the Executive Board of the Clerical-Technical Union at Michigan State University.

Back in 2013 I discovered, first-hand, the benefit of being a union member. Due to a very unpleasant series of events in my department at the time, the CTU stepped in - and up - for me. Without them, I would have been at a complete loss - no idea of how to defend myself against false statements made by a supervisor. This could have taken a very dark turn if not for the light shown on the true issues at play - a light provided by a strong union representative that stood up for me and helped me to challenge and defeat the falsehoods that had been spread about me.

I immediately investigated becoming a Union Rep and spent a couple of years assisting co-workers in their challenging interactions with their departments. A strong union is the foundation of fair treatment for workers - they can provide you with the knowledge, the solidarity and the strength to ensure you are treated fairly and equitably in the workplace.

One of my areas of concern today is the potential for employees who are at (or past) their primary retirement age, being pressured to move on. The advent of new technology and the potential effect on older workers is a large area of concern for me; with the plethora of new systems in play at the university (Campus Solutions/ SIS, Slate, new financial aid software and more) I've seen instances where these advances in technology may be providing an opening to apply pressure to older workers.

Personally, by the time this is distributed, I will have become a grandfather for the 3rd time (Bryn-3, Monroe-1, and the new girl as of 10/05 or so). Grampa day-care isn't something I ever saw myself doing: now, I can't imagine not doing it. I'm married to Katie Gibson-Stofflet, located in Fee Hall/ COM Emergency Medical Specialties - who is an amazing partner that makes me thank my lucky stars every day.

Candidates Statements cont.

Audit Committee: Carolyn Hughey



I'm Carolyn. I am a mom of 4 and I love adventures & Dogs. I'm excited to serve you all on the Audit Committee.

[Editor's Note: Carolyn began work at MSU in 2023 and works in Residence Education.]

Candidates chosen by acclamation at October Membership Meeting

Because we had only one member vying for each open position, this fall's candidates will be chosen without a written vote—by acclamation—at our Membership Meeting on Wednesday, October 26. Please mark your calendars to join the meeting and acclamation vote.

The meeting will be held via zoom. Each candidate provided the statements above for us to find out a little about their background and why they volunteered to fill these critical union positions.

Gerri Olson Educational Loan Program

General Information	How it Works
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eligibility for the loan follows the Educational Assistance (Article 14) in the Clerical-Technical Union of Michigan State University contract.• The educational loan is for tuition only.• We will work only with institution for which MSU will reimburse.• We may assist a member who wants to attend a school of higher learning but is not eligible for reimbursement from MSU. Make an appointment with CTU for more information.• If a loan is not paid by the original deadline, the member will not be eligible for assistance at any other time. Appeals must be made to the Executive Board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eligible CTs may sign up at the CTU office or by phone, fax, or email. Please contact our Organizational Coordinator, Tiffany Westendorf, at 517-355-1903 or at tiffany@ctumsu.org for more information.• The CT will sign a Promissory Note and will receive a copy for record-keeping.• An authorization letter is sent to the college/university for CTU to be 'Third-Party Billing' agent.• The college/university will then invoice CTU. A confirmation letter is sent to CTU with a copy of the invoice.• CTU sends payment to the college/university.• CTU fully replays the principal amount of the loan on or before sixty (60) days after the last day of class of the semester.

Questions? Contact Tiffany at 517-355-1903 or tiffany@ctumsu.org



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Important Dates

Benefits Open Enrollment	October 1 - 31, 2024
Student Fall Break	Monday, October 21 - Tuesday, October 22
Halloween	Thursday, October 31
Don't Forget to Vote	Tuesday, November 5
Thanksgiving Break	Thursday, November 28 - Friday, November 29
Holiday/Winter Break	Tuesday, December 24, 2024 - Wednesday January 1, 2025