Promotability: Keeping the ladder stable

According to our Contract, “The University agrees to the principle of career development of its employees.”

Sometimes, however, climbing the career ladder at MSU means that employees need to take special care to insure that all of the equipment is up-to-date and in good working order.

**Pop quiz**

When job seekers showed up for an interview in the Undergraduate University Division recently, they were given a test to determine their familiarity with Excel.

Two CTs, familiar with their rights, contacted the Clerical-Technical Union about the violation.

Departments cannot blindside applicants (often already nervous about the interview) with unexpected tests.

It is the job of MSU Human Resources Staffing Services to determine whether or not a CT meets the minimum standards for a position before putting the employee on the interview list. HRSS has several methods for deciding whether or not an individual meets minimum standards. For example, they look at the educational and/or work history on an applicant’s résumé or application. Applicants can also have scores considered from tests taken at HRSS.

During the interview, a hiring unit might determine that an individual referred by HRSS does not meet the minimum standards for the position. If this happens to you, contact your union.

When the CTU informed HRSS about the violation, HRSS put a stop to it and made a commitment to improve communications to avoid similar situations in the future.

**Maintenance**

“This is an excellent example of CTs reporting a violation and keeping our Contract strong,” said CTU Contract Administrator John Klusinske.

CTU’s CAs monitor the postings and applicant lists for each CT position offered at the University. But it is the CTs who apply for the positions and go on the interviews who are in the best position to spot violations that make it more difficult to climb that career ladder.

*Promotability continued on p. 7*
CT News

Clerical-Technical Union of Michigan State University
2990 East Lake Lansing Road
East Lansing, MI 48823-2281

Phone: (517) 355-1903
Fax: (517) 353-3284
Website: www.msu.edu/user/ctumsu

CTU EXECUTIVE BOARD
President:
Deb Bittner ctupres@msu.edu
Vice President:
Nancy Gray grayn@msu.edu
Treasurer:
Jeannine Lee jeannine@msu.edu
Secretary:
Willie Paulsen paulsenw@msu.edu
Directors:
Suzy Peacock, peacock1@msu.edu
Walt Peebles peeblesw@msu.edu
Jeanette Robertson robertso@msu.edu
Norma Teague teaguen@msu.edu
Jan Wallace wallac12@msu.edu
Duferia White whitedu@msu.edu
Jenn Woods woodsj@msu.edu

CTU STAFF
Contract Administrators
John Klusinske ctuca2@msu.edu
Dan McNeil ctuca1@msu.edu
Office Manager & Financial Secretary
Patricia Shackleton ctumgr@msu.edu
Organizational Secretary
Barb Harris ctustaff@msu.edu
Communications Specialist
Cherillee Finney ctnews@msu.edu

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 Cherillee Finney.

CT classifieds

For sale:
- Gas stove: White, in great condition, $200; Microwave: Over/range hood style, white, in great condition, $100; Dining room table with 6 chairs: great condition, $200. Call 517-485-0193 or email anmm-4@hotmail.com.
- Property: Drummond Island, MI acreage (6 acres +/-), lot dimensions 247.5 x 1155'). Easily accessible yet close to State land, trails and public sand beach. Great potential for building a cabin or year-round home. Private with pine trees. Possible land contract terms. Short term, interest negotiable. Call 517-290-2058 for details after 5 pm or email kmoser_2001@yahoo.com.
- Infant car seat: Evenflo Aura style with 2 bases, matching stroller, used for 1 baby, great deal at $125.
- Round table: Chrome with glass top, 4 navy padded chairs, very nice, hardly used, bought in '06, selling for $75.
- Couch: Soft leather, navy, double re-clining, new in '06 will let go for $500. Call 517-899-5574.
- Dark cherry wood dining room table (43 x 30), four chairs, one extension piece: $100. Call 517-281-0093, ask for Jodi.

FOR RENT: Waverly home, 7 miles from MSU. 2 bedroom, ranch style, full finished basement (with space for 3rd bedroom), 2 fireplaces, newly decorated bedroom and master bedroom, hardwood floors/carpet in 2 rooms, sun room with slider out to a nice patio in the fenced back yard, attached garage. Within walking distance to schools. Refrigerator, stove, dishwasher, washer and dryer included. Nice, quiet neighborhood, close to Meijer and shopping off of Saginaw, Lansing Mall area, West side of Lansing. Rent negotiable. Please call 989-224-0476 & leave message if no answer. Immediate occupancy.

FREE: Advertise to your colleagues in the CT News. Contact Cherillee Finney at ctnews@msu.edu. The CT News accepts ads from CTs on items for sale and/or services provided by CTs and/or their household family members.

Correction

Election: Our apologies go to Jenn Woods, who was inadvertently left off the list of members who assisted with the October 2007 elections. We are grateful to all of the members who came forward to help.
President's corner

Add “CTU” to your 2008 goals

My New Year's Resolutions for 2008:

- Eat healthy (Less chocolate?)
- Exercise more (Especially walk the dog more!)
- Get more sleep (always need more)
- Organize files (Can it really be done?!)  
- Clean out the closets/basement (Didn’t I do that last year?)  
- Do more “educational” things  
- Review past (Good year? Bad year?)  
- Set goals for new year (Do something to improve my community.)  
- Be more involved with my union (Do __________?)

By Deb Bittner

Are the holidays really over? Is it really 2008 and almost the end of the first month at that?

We are done with Christmas decorating, shopping, wrapping, “relating” and feasting. It is back to the daily work we do to pay for all of our fun and celebrating, back to the routine of regular life with schedules, car pools, activities, causes, projects and more.

It seems like just yesterday that we were in the middle of 2007—ratifying our new Contract, making decisions about our union finances, and planning to attend Union Family Day at the fair. Now we have rung in a new year.

How long until our next paid holiday off from work?

This is also a time when we reflect on the year that just closed and look at the new, promising, clean slate of the coming year. We dream of improving and building. We dream of embarking on new adventures. We dream of economizing in ways that will allow us to fulfill our goals or, at the very least, keep us from living paycheck to paycheck. We dream of mastering mundane tasks and grand ambitions. So, we make lists and anticipate checking off items with a flourish.

But making those dreams come true is a lot harder than writing them down on a list. It takes time, commitment and hard work—especially for those of us who can’t do magic.

As CTs, I am asking that we add one more item to our list of “to do’s.” I’m asking that we take the dream of that small group of our founding mothers and fathers and keep it going. I am asking that we do something this year for CTU, or if already involved, we do one more thing. I am asking that each of us commits to making our union better and then work toward that goal.

This one thing could be to talk positively to someone about the benefits of working at MSU and being able to be in a union. As we know, this is not something to be taken lightly. We need to be vigilant in keeping our rights.

Maybe we stand up for our rights in the workplace by saying “I’m taking my break today” and then going out for a walk. We do this every day until coworkers join us, and then we can check TWO things off our list!

Maybe we call the union and say that we saw an event in the newsletter and want to help. “Oh, and I’m bringing a few friends with me.”

Maybe we just stop by the union hall to see the building that everyone is always talking about, the building that we own. And, while there, meet the staff and talk about issues that need some clarifying.

2007 was a good year for CTU. We successfully negotiated a strong contract and enforced that contract every single work day. We sponsored several great events and assisted many organizations, causes and people. New faces showed up to volunteer, and several members stepped up to become Union Reps and Board members. We educated ourselves and put new knowledge and skills to use in improving our organization.

But they were tough times too. We lost more members, increasing workloads and stress for the rest of us. Our standards of living were threatened by harsh economic times, causing many of us to struggle with the basics, let alone save for rainy days. We saw new laws implemented that undermined our society’s progress toward equality and fairness.

What will 2008 bring? Who knows for sure, but what we do know is that by standing together we are each other’s best advocate. We know that our collective efforts will sustain us in the daily fight to uphold our contract and improve our community.

This is a great time for us to shape our checklist and to mark off our accomplishments. Will you add CTU to your resolutions for the new year?

Hope to see you around...
Board actions

August 2007—December 2007

The following CTU Executive Board discussions took place August 2007 through December 2007. All expenditure decisions are included, but the list does not represent meetings in their entirety. CTs can receive copies of complete minutes through the mail by contacting the CTU office at 355-1903.

August 7
Donated $50 to the Michigan AFL-CIO to pay for the lunch of CTU Board members and staff attending the Right-to-Work (for less) conference.
Agreed to spend up to $1,200 for database upgrade and changes.
Donated $50 for a team in the Relay for Life Cancer Walk.

August 21
Transferred $50,000 from operating savings to the checking account.
Decided to purchase a $50 ad in the Michigan Women’s Hall of Fame program book.
Renewed our annual $65 membership in the Mid-Michigan Labor and Employment Relations Association (LERA).
Agreed to send a Board member to the Union Label Seminar at a cost of $330 plus car rental.
Declined to make a donation to the Nation magazine in addition to our subscription.
Discussed the need to review our current committee structure.
Received report on the upcoming Twilight in the Garden event.

September 4
Discussed maternity leave policy.
Agreed to send up to three people to the Michigan Policy Summit in Lansing at a cost of $30 each.
Discussed the Coalition of Labor Organizations’ (CLO) recent meeting with Caremark regarding prescription drug benefits.

September 18
Decided to purchase two new computer systems for the financial secretary and organizational secretary for up to $1,500 each.
Received reports on the Michigan Progressive Policy Summit, LERA program, Twilight in the Garden fundraiser, and upcoming Craft Show and Bake Sale.
Discussed upcoming union training conference at which CLO Chair Wayne Less will present information on our Joint Health Care Contract.

October 2
Agreed to sponsor a CT to attend a LERA meeting in Detroit at a cost of $35. The CT is also the secretary of Mid-Michigan LERA.
Decided to send an additional three individuals to the October Lansing LERA meeting at a cost of $15 each.
Received treasurer’s report that the operating savings account held $109,365 at the end of August and the designated account held $4,275,925.
Received reports on the Employee Assistance Program and the USA Expo in Flint.

October 16
Received report from investment firm regarding investments and performance. Our varied portfolio has provided us with a 5.8% return since 1999.
Decided to recoup all expenses for the Craft Show and Bake Sale from the gross income of the event and donate the proceeds to the MSU food bank.
Discussed the interest of a bridge club in renting the upstairs of our building. [William Mead]
Announced that videotaped copies of the WKAR-TV program, “Michigan at Risk,” which focuses on the state of unions, will be available for members to borrow.

November 6
Agreed to correct minutes from previous meeting at each Board meeting.
Decided to send an additional two individuals to the November LERA meeting at a cost of $15 each.
Considered the application of Colleen Drake and Suzy Peacock for appointment to fill the vacant Executive Board position on an interim basis. Chose Peacock.

Board continued next page
Established Membership Meeting dates for 2008: Tuesday, January 29; Monday, April 28; Tuesday, July 29; Wednesday, October 29.


Declined to take out an ad in the East Lansing High School Year Book.

Declined to purchase an LED ad at the Ingham County Democratic Party Mardi Gras fundraiser.

Renewed our subscription to “Inside Michigan Politics” early for a reduced rate of $109.

Agreed to purchase awning with lettering and logo for approximately $2,500. [Pearl Wong]

November 20

Agreed to place $162 ad in the State News for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Received report on November LERA luncheon, union training meeting, and Craft Show and Bake Sale.

Discussed the need for new chairs for the CTU staff.

December 4

Agreed to a plan to redistrict campus for better UR coverage.

Discussed the following issues: CT complaint about how workers compensation issues have been handled, bridge club’s decision to not rent the upstairs, concerns about the purchase of the awning.

Transferred $40,000 from operating savings to the checking account.

Donated $100 to Tri-County Office on Aging.

Donated $50 to Radio Talking Books.

Declined requests for donations to the Salvation Army and Women’s Hall of Fame because we donated to these organizations earlier this year.

Declined a request for a donation to the Sparrow Foundation.

Took no action on a request by the AFL-CIO for a donation to the United Way. [[Melissa Clementz]

December 18

Agreed to give the CTU staff $50 gift certificates to show appreciation.

Purchased a $200 table for eight individuals to attend the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Luncheon Celebration at the Lansing Center.

In order to help counteract the Right-to-Work (for less) campaign, donated $430.50 (.25 for each of our 1,722 members) to the Michigan AFL-CIO efforts to stop it.

Renewed $199 annual subscription to the CTD news.

Tabled the request for a donation to the Capital Area Literary Coalition until a later time.

Quote: “In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans, such as ‘right to work.’ It is a law to rob us of our civil rights and job rights. . . . Its purpose is to destroy labor unions and the freedom of collective bargaining by which unions have improved wages and working conditions of everyone. . . . Wherever these laws have been passed, wages are lower, job opportunities are fewer and there are no civil rights. We do not intend to let them do this to us. We demand this fraud be stopped.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr., speaking on right-to-work laws in 1961
| 1. Administration Bldg, (Floors B, 1) | Renee Irer (9/09), 5-5032, irrer@msu.edu |
| 2. Administration Bldg, (Floors 2, 3, 4) | Tammy Sopcy (2/09), 5-5040x265, sopcy@msu.edu |
| 3. Diagnosis Center for Population & Animal Health, Basell Bldg (MBI) | No UR |
| 4. Biomed Phys Sci, Planetarium | Suzanne Peacock (3/08), 5-6463x1503, peacock1@msu.edu |
| 5. | |
| 6. Baker, Geography, Snyder-Phillips, Mason-Abbott, Physics Astron, Kresge, Auditorium | Julie Detwiler (10/08), 3-5258, detwiler@msu.edu |
| 7. E Fee (Floors 5&6), W Fee (Floors 1-6) | Stephanie Six (6/09), 3-2459, ranshow@msu.edu |
| 8. E Fee (Floors 1-4 & Wing) | No UR |
| 9. Life Sciences | No UR |
| 10. Farrall, Chem, Biochem, Cyclotron | Amy McCausey (4/09), 333-6372, mccausey@nscl.msu.edu |
| 11. Plant Biology Lab, Pesticide Rsch, Biology Rsch, Food Safety & Toxicology | Jennifer Sysak (12/07), 2-3100x102, sysakjen@msu.edu |
| 12. Natural Resources, Packaging, Trout Bldg | Juli Kerr (1/09) 5-0090, kerrju@msu.edu |
| 13. Anthony, Meats Lab, Engineering | No UR |
| 14. Instr Media Ctr, Urban Plan & Landscape Arch, Audiology & Speech Science, Public Safety | Linda Blodgett (7/09), 2-0589, lkbldodge@pplant.msu.edu |
| 15. Nisbet, Manly Miles, Univ Printing, Spartan Village Community Center | Rosario Garcia (6/09), 4-0205, garciar@msu.edu |
| 16. Univ Housing, Old Purchasing, Food Stores, Laundry, Univ Serv, Power Plant, Angell Bldg | Angel Loveall (5/09), 5-8520x223, loveall@mail.msu.edu |
| 17. Grounds, Physical Plant, Wilson, Holden, Case Wonders, Duffy Daugherty Football Bldg | Victoria Tryban (7/08), 5-7590, tryban@msu.edu |
| 18. Kellogg Center, Brody Complex | Stacie Monroe (3/08), 2-4000x3148, blevins@msu.edu |
| 19. IM West, Demo Hall, Jenison, Circle IM, Breslin, Munn Ice Arena | Christina Drewyor (5/09), 2-5366, drewyorc@msu.edu |
| 20. Eppley, Owen, Shaw, N Bus Col Comp | No UR |
| 21. Holmes, McDonel, Hubbard, Akers, Conrad, IM East | Kim Smith (8/09), 5-7457, ksmith@msu.edu |
| 22. Erickson | Linda Brandau (6/09), 2-7705, lbrandau@msu.edu |
| 23. Plant & Soil Science, Wharton Center | No UR |
| 24. Int'l Ctr., Wells, Central Services | No UR |
| 25. Hannah Research Tech Bldg, Pediatrics-West Grand River | Brenda Bailey (12/09), 4-1058, baileyb@msu.edu |
| 26. Student Services, Horticulture | Lisa Ingraham (9/09), 5-3551, lisaingr@msu.edu |
| 27. Giltnier, Natural Science | Marie Hensley (7/08), 3-9835, mhensley@msu.edu |
| 28. Clinical Ctr (B,C,D Wings) Engn Res, Radiology | No UR |
| 29. Olin Health Center, Berkeley | No UR |
| 30. Campbell, Central School, Gilchrist, Landon, Mayo, Human Ecol, Union, Williams, Yakeley, Wills House | Mary Austin (4/09), 5-7712, austinme@msu.edu |
| 31. N and S Kedzie, Bessey, Computer Center | Betty Walther (4/08), 2-5553, walther@msu.edu |
| 32. Library | Colleen Drake (6/09), 2-6123x162, drokec@msu.edu |
| 33. | |
| 34. Agricultural Hall, Cook Hall | Anne Brooks (1/09), 2-7623, brooksac@msu.edu |
| 35. Olds, Museum, Music | Amanda VanKoevery (6/09), 5-5030, vankoevr@msu.edu |
| 36. Linton, Eastcote, Chittendon, Marshall, Morrill | Janet Roe-Darden (9/09), 5-5360, jroe@msu.edu |
| 37. Clinical Center (A-Wing) | Kimberly Baker (7/08), 2-7055, bakerk@msu.edu |
| 38. Vet Medical Center | No UR |
| 39. Communication Arts | No UR |
| 40. Sparrow Bldg, Breslin Cancer Center, Lansing Medical Office Center | Suzanne Good (5/09), 334-2337, suzanne.oster@hc.msu.edu |
URs: the face of the union

With CTs coming forward to serve in two of our open districts, we still have nine districts without a Union Representative (UR).

That’s better than the fourteen open districts we had a year ago, but it still leaves room for improvement.

Our URs are the face of the union in the workplace. URs become familiar with the members in their area, engage them in conversation on a regular basis and encourage them to participate in union activities.

In addition to relaying information and promoting solidarity, URs assist members with problems in the workplace as well as listening during times of stress and uncertainty.

What kind of member makes a good UR? There is no cookie-cutter example of the “perfect” UR. Our URs come from all across campus, where they work at a variety of tasks in every classification. They bring a multitude of unique skills to their roles with the union.

However, there are a few requirements. continued on p. 8

Promotability
continued from p. 1

Has this happened to you?

Have you experienced a violation of the Contract in your attempts to apply for other jobs on campus?

Were you asked inappropriate questions about such things as your marital status, health situation or union activities?

Did a supervisor try to manipulate you into withdrawing from an interview list so that someone with less—or no—seniority could be considered? Remember, if the number of CTs applying for position drops below four, the department can interview and hire from outside.

Take care

Not only must we make sure the career ladder is in good working order, we must also take care when using it.

It is disheartening to see individuals kept off an interview list because they turned in incomplete applications or applied for too many positions.

According to Article 17, Filling Vacant Positions, “an employee shall be placed on the initial interview list for no more than two vacancies per posting.” Subsequent applications are ignored.

One of the common mistake applicants make when applying for jobs is to assume their skills are self-evident.

“If a skill is required in my current classification, why isn’t it assumed that I have that skill when I apply for another job on campus?” asked one CT who had been denied a place on an interview list. [Terri Janson]

The answer is that a classification may list a specific skill as among those that can be required. However, a particular job may not take advantage of that skill. HRSS personnel do not research which of the “required” qualifications applicants actually perform in their current positions.

Instead, they take the application, and—if provided—the resumé and cover letter, at face value.

Klusinske recommended that applicants tailor their resumés, applications and cover letters to show that their skills match all of the required and as many of the desired qualifications as possible.

He also recommended that the skills be presented in a way that shows they are fresh and relevant.

“If you took an Access or Excel course seven or eight years ago, make sure you include the fact that you use it in your job,” he said. “If you don’t use the skill on the job, detail how you use it in other ways, maybe in volunteer work or in managing household finances.”

Another good piece of advice is to keep your skills updated and on record. This will help when promotional opportunities arise or if you find yourself in a situation where you are considering a lateral move to another position on campus.

Help keep our ladder to career success strong and stable. Contact your UR or the CTU office to report violations, to discuss questionable activity, or if you are having difficulty getting the training or experience you need.
Calendar

January 22, February 5 and February 19 CTU Executive Board Meetings, 5:15 p.m., C-T Union Hall. All members welcome.

January 29 CTU Membership Meeting, 5:15 p.m., Erickson Kiva. See announcement on page 1.


February 9 (Second Saturday of every month) CTU Game night, 7–11 p.m., C-T Union Hall. This is an adults-only evening. No alcohol.

Twice as many people showed up in January than December and the fun was more than doubled. Don’t miss this great way to spend an evening!

February 15 Deadline to submit items for the March CT News. Send ads, letters, articles and other information to ctnews@msu.edu.

Our new Contract

for April 1, 2007, through March 31, 2011, is on the web at www.hr.msu.edu/HRsite/Documents/Staff/Contracts/CTUContract.htm. Bound hard copies are being printed and will be delivered in the near future.

Hug a TA

MSU teaching assistants (TAs) in the Graduate Employees Union are bargaining for a new contract. Their current agreement expires May 15, 2008.

Some of GEU’s major goals in the upcoming contract include decreasing department fees and adjusting wages for inflation.

The GEU is also seeking to increase mental health benefits. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death for graduate-aged students, a main factor in GEU’s search for better mental health care, according to Jacquelyn Lloyd, contract administrator for the GEU.

Negotiations began in October 2007, and so far, they have been frustrating and unproductive, Lloyd said.

To show solidarity, those of us who work with TAs can encourage them in their struggle and let them know how much we appreciate them and their work.

GEU representatives will attend our January 29 Membership Meeting to let us know about GEU’s upcoming campaigns and ways that we can show our solidarity. [Tricia Bradford]

URs

continued from p. 7

A UR must be able to advocate for the members of CTU, not for supervisors or management. She or he must be able to maintain confidentiality. The individual should also bring to the job enthusiasm and support for the principles of unionism as well as being able to show patience and determination in the face of setbacks.

URs receive training and always have our professional Contract Administrators available to assist them in their responsibilities. They also have support from other URs and the Executive Board.

Are you interested in becoming a UR in your district? For more information, contact URCC Chairperson Colleen Drake at 432-6123 x162 or drakec@msu.edu, or Vice President Nancy Gray at 353-8632 or grayn@msu.edu.

If you are unable to commit to being a UR, but would be willing to distribute information in your area, please call the office at 355-1903.