Spring Membership Meeting

April 28, 2008
252 Erickson
5:20 p.m.

Doors open at 5 p.m. Come early to socialize—light refreshments provided.

Agenda includes:
2007 audit report
2008 budget
Workers Memorial Day presentation
Election of one director*
Election of two audit committee members*

*A quorum of 50 members is required to conduct CTU business. Membership meetings provide us an opportunity to make decisions about the Union, receive updates about Union activities, meet with coworkers from across campus and discuss issues of concern. Childcare is provided.

GEU “grade-in” at the Admin Building

About 150 members of the Graduate Employees Union (GEU) held a “grade-in” at the MSU Administration Building on the afternoon of March 19 to protest the lack of progress in negotiations with the University. They used the time to grade papers, meet with students and hold office hours. [Kimberly Wright]

GEU is a labor union representing teaching assistants (TAs) working in over 70 departments at Michigan State University. [Tasha McGhee]

TAs are graduate students who work between 10 and 30 hours a week teaching, grading, and advising MSU undergraduate and graduate students. TAs at MSU teach more than one third of the classes and perform more than two thirds of the grading for MSU students.

Key bargaining issues for GEU include the expansion of health care benefits. The out-of-pocket cost of health care is very expensive to many of those on a graduate employee salary. Many graduate employees have families, but the huge cost of adding spouses and dependents to the plan is often prohibitive.

GEU is also fighting for wage increases that keep up with inflation and increases in the cost of housing.

In addition, they are demanding improved working conditions. In order to fulfill their duties, they are requesting training in the specific disciplines they are hired to teach. They also want guaranteed access to clean, safe office space so that they can meet with the students they teach.

GEU would love our support. Call or email the MSU President and Board of Trustees and tell them that 1) TAs do a good job and 2) TAs deserve a fair contract.
CT News

Clerical-Technical Union of Michigan State University
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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.

CT Classifieds

For sale:
◆ Power wheelchair: Like new! Comes with 2 batteries and charger. Can be operated by right or left hand. Recommended for up to 250 pounds. $2,000 or B/O. 517-628-3126.
◆ Antique 41" round oak pedestal table: Excellent condition; asking $325 or best offer; contact 517-648-6929.
◆ Home: DeWitt area, ½ mile from Old US-27, 3 bedroom brick ranch built in 1962, 2 car attached garage, 1½ bath, hardwood floors throughout, sandstone fireplace, slate entry, paved driveway, newer roof, partially finished basement and shop area. Lots of storage space. Stove and refrigerator included. Call 989-224-8073 after 5:30 pm for more information.
◆ 21" Sony flat front desk computer monitor: 3-4 years old, excellent cond, big bottom style, $45 or B/O. Mason home: 4 bedroom, 2 full bath, big yard, very well kept, great neighborhood in town. Basement has office, laundry room, work out/play area, living room. Leaving lots of basement furniture, washer/dryer if wanted. 122 Peachtree, Mason. $149,000. Cell 525-1114.

General Membership Meetings in 2008
Membership Meetings in 2008 will be held at 5:20 p.m. on April 28, July 29 and October 29. Locations will be announced. These meetings are for making decisions about the Union, asking questions and receiving updates about Union activities.

Executive Board Meetings
First and third Tuesdays.
5:15
CTU Office
All members welcome.

“All this family needs is one more worker, and we’ll be middle class.”

◆ Two oak rectangle end tables: Brass trim, excellent condition, $70.
◆ England couch and loveseat: Light blue with rose accent, very good condition, $450; Lazy Boy recliner: Light blue, very good condition, $50. 989-224-6904 after 6 pm.
◆ Creative Memories consultant looking to expand client base. If you would like to view all the new Spring/Summer products, or you just need to restock on the necessities, please email me for a catalog or to order refill products. 25% off your first order on any products purchased, no limit. Contact Lisa @ LisaGorski68@hotmail.com.
◆ 2003 Toshiba 32" Stereo Television: Connection for DVD, satellite, cable, remote, many features, $150, 517-614-5795.
◆ Used air hockey table: Sportcraft Turbo Hockey, 7’, overhead lights, auto scoring, sturdy (very heavy), $125. Thomas organ: California 251, double keyboard, $25. Trampoline and trampoline tent: Jumpking, round 14’ diameter, 5 years old (always brought in for the winter), $75. Please call 517-980-3506 or email wardman9021@yahoo.com.
◆ 1994 Ford Escort Station Wagon: 4-cylinder with 157,000 miles, $950. Call 517-290-2855.

Services:
◆ Heating & Cooling: For all your heating and cooling needs, call Mair Mechanical, Inc. New installation, Classifieds continued on next page
It’s your money!

By Jeannine Lee

Having served as your treasurer since October, I think it’s a good time to update you on some of the activities of the Finance Committee and other financial aspects of our union.

One of our biggest efforts has been the preparation of the 2008 budget. We expect to present it at the April 28 Membership Meeting.

At that meeting, we will also have a presentation of the 2007 audit. Certified Public Accountant Jim Nyquist of Maner, Costerisan and Ellis will explain the audit and answer any questions about it. Copies of the audit will be available to members attending the meeting and after the meeting upon written request.

As everyone is aware, these are turbulent times for the financial market. The CTU has a pretty conservative investment policy that balances security with growth. During times like these, however, nothing seems sure. In order to get a more complete understanding of the union’s current investment situation, the Finance Committee has invited Fred Schaard to address the Executive Board in April. Schaard, a Certified Financial Planner with Rehmann Financial Group, has been the CTU investment advisor for 15 years.

The Finance Committee is also reviewing our process of donating to charitable organizations. Although there have been differing views and opinions on individual issues, over the years members overwhelmingly have taken pride in our willingness to donate to the community. As a union, we have supported charities that align themselves with our Mission Statement. Some of our donations go to organizations that are available to assist our members if needed, such as Listening Ear, MSU Safe Place or United Way. Some donations are meant to garner good will and advertise our presence in the community, such as when we take out an ad in a program or brochure for a group or event. Still other donations go toward strengthening the interests of organized labor, including everything from fighting right-to-work (for less) campaigns to helping send the child of a union worker to summer camp.

Another thing we struggle with is the continuing decline in the number of CTs. As our membership decreases so does the amount of dues income. Unfortunately, the decrease has not been matched by a decline in the need for services. Instead, as the number of our coworkers goes down, the pressure on those of us left increases. On the one hand, our ability to provide the increasing services we need depends to a great extent on the skills of our staff. On the other hand, personnel and related costs are our primary expense.

As the University moves to offset its budgetary shortfalls by cutting our compensation (through attacks on our wages, health care or other means), we need our union’s services, advocacy and strong collective voice more than ever. It’s hardly the time to cut back.

Financial reports of an organization can seem boring with the many levels of necessary detail. However maintaining a strong financial base is essential, and each member needs to be aware of what is happening with the money. Please attend the April 28 Membership Meeting to discuss the 2007 audit, review the 2008 budget, and talk about any issues affecting the union—including finances.

It’s your money.
Community resources

By Colleen Drake, Union Rep, Main Library

In this economy, more and more people find themselves needing help, including some of our friends, neighbors, family members and, sometimes, ourselves. The demand is placing a lot of stress on our community services, and it is important to know some of the alternatives that exist so that we can get help to those who need it.

On behalf of CTU, I participated in the Michigan State AFL-CIO Community Services Liaison Program earlier this year. It is a series of classes designed to educate union representatives in how to link members to the human services available in their communities. Some of the information could be very helpful to CTs and our families.

One thing I want to stress about all of the programs is that requirements change (as do personal circumstances), so anyone turned down for a service should reapply at later date if there is still a need. [Lynn Ball]

The following is not an exhaustive list of the resources available in our area, but it should help someone begin their search for assistance. Contact me at drakec@msu.edu if you have questions.

Dial 2-1-1

Clinton, Eaton, Hillsdale, Ingham and Jackson Counties recently joined communities across the country that utilize a 2-1-1 call center. It’s an easy to remember free phone service that links people with the human service information they need—a great place to start for people looking for help. By dialing 2-1-1, callers are connected with an information referral specialist who gives them the information and/or agencies to contact for assistance. You can also call 2-1-1 if you are interested in learning about volunteering opportunities available in your area. (If you encounter difficulty reaching the service using your cell phone, call 866-561-2500.) Visit the web site at www.centralmichigan211.org.

Closeup of “Unemployed,” Caroline Durieux (1896-1989)

Worker training

GED testing is now available in Lansing, Delta Township, and St, Johns. While CTs may not need this particular service, some of our family members may. Most employers will not even consider applicants who don’t have at least a GED. For information and to register call 1-888-GED-ICAN (1-888-433-4226).

John Kreucher from the Michigan State AFL-CIO’s Human Resources Development, Inc. (HRDI) Peer to Peer Network spoke to us about his group’s service. The Peer program is available to both private and public sector unionized employees. It trains volunteers from worksites facing downsizing, massive layoffs, relocation overseas, or business closings in how to counsel their coworkers to get through the system. Volunteers learn about training opportunities, funding sources, etc. and help coworkers sort through the available resources. They are trained to help their coworkers prepare for interviews and create resumes. They even teach workers without computer experience how to apply for jobs that require an on-line application. Contact the Peer to Peer Network at 517-487-5966 ext. 21, fax 517-487-5213, email kreucherj@miaflcio.org.

Michigan Works! offers an extensive array of services designed to help employers find skilled workers and to help job seekers find satisfying careers. The programs are also designed to prepare youth and unskilled adults for entry into the labor force and help individuals who face serious barriers to employment obtain the assistance necessary to get and keep a job. Call the local Michigan Works! office at 517-371-1100, fax 517-371-1140, or email info@michiganworks.org.

One Michigan Works! program, No Worker Left Behind, aims to accelerate the transition of thousands of workers into good-paying jobs by providing up to two years of free tuition at any community college, university or other approved training provider.

Tuition covers up to $5,000 per year for two years, for a total of $10,000 per person. It includes tuition or instructional costs, books, materials, fees and academic supportive services as long as two years or less of training will lead to a job in a high demand sector, emerging sector or entrepreneurial endeavor. Michigan Works! has a list of jobs that are in demand.

Many more people qualify for the No Worker Left Behind program than is generally believed. You may qualify if you are unemployed, you have received a termination or layoff notice, or you are employed and your family income is less than $40,000 per year. For more information, contact Michigan Works!

Community continued on next page
Veterans
Services for veterans are too often underutilized; frequently veterans and their families are not even aware of some of the programs. For example, sixteen hundred Michigan jobs have been reserved for veterans and are available right now. Veterans who want more information about these jobs, or who need other assistance in gaining employment, should contact Michigan Works! and identify themselves as veterans.

The Ingham County Department of Veterans Affairs serves Ingham, Clinton and Eaton County veterans and their families. In addition to helping cut through the red tape in order to access benefits, the organization will assist veterans in finding affordable housing, getting military records, obtaining counseling and nursing care, etc. Contact them at 517-887-4331.

Maple City Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 2406 in Charlotte offers a support group for children and other family members of those deployed. They provide counseling, child care, emergency grants, etc. They can be reached at 517-543-1719.

Health care
These days we all know of individuals—even families—without insurance. For people who meet the eligibility requirements, several medical care options are available: county health plans, local health departments, dental and vision services, clinics, etc. Find out more by calling 2-1-1.

Frequently, the programs are quite limited in scope, but one government program—MIChild—offers comprehensive insurance to the children of limited income families, even those where one or more of the parents work.

A lot of jobs offer no (or severely limited) health care coverage. Of the huge number of uninsured Michigan children, 76 percent are from working families. MIChild works in conjunction with parent health care coverage designated for “employees only” or where “family” coverage is cost prohibitive. Visit Michigan.gov/michild.

Request paper applications by phone at 888-988-6300.

Disability
Participants in the Community Services Liaison Program received a computer disk with information on the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). If you have issues concerning ADA (or FMLA, Workers Compensation, Occupational Safety and Health, workplace discrimination, etc.), it is always best to start with your union representative (or call the main office at 355-1903). However, if you have a nonunion friend or acquaintance who needs ADA information, we have a couple copies of the disk available at the CTU office.

Housing
The Lansing Development Office provides a clearinghouse for information about services available to home owners, including loans for purchasing, repairing and improving homes; weatherization assistance, foreclosure prevention, and help for the disabled and elderly. While the information is aimed at Lansing residents, much of it can be utilized by homeowners anywhere in the area. Visit www.cityoflansingmi.com/pnd/development/.

The Eaton County Community Development Department offers information on foreclosure prevention. Call them at 517-543-3689.

Hunger
The Capital Area Food Security Coalition works to improve the coordination and efficiency of the area’s food bank system. They reported that their increased understanding of both the resources and the demand in this community has made it clear that needs are not being met fully.

For emergency food assistance in Ingham County, call the Ingham County Food Bank at 517-887-4357, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Additional food banks and other food resources are available in the area. To find out how to access them, dial 2-1-1.

A donation of $55 feeds a family of four for six days. Those of us who wish to help can donate by credit card to the Greater Lansing Food Bank at http://lansingfoodbank.org/. Visa and MasterCard donations may be made over the phone to Chase Bank at 517-487-1037. Mail contributions to Greater Lansing Food Bank, PO Box 16224, Lansing, MI 48901.
Annual MSUBWA Spring Fling

Submitted by CT Joyce Brennan,
Educational And Support Services

COME TO THE FAIR at the MSUBWA Spring Fling (formerly Bosses Luncheon).

The MSU Business Women’s Association cordially invites you, your coworkers and your boss to “Come to the Fair” at the Spring Fling on Wednesday, April 16, 2008, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in room Big Ten C at the Kellogg Center.

The cost is $23 per person, which includes the luncheon, free parking, double entertainment, games, and more. Everyone present is eligible for door prizes. The “Boss of the Year” will also be awarded.

Make your reservation today. Contact Joyce Brennan at brennan4@msu.edu or 517-353-6650 or Missy Koos at koos@msu.edu or 517-432-7512 for registration information by April 2.

WANTED: Nominations for 2008 CT Award

Submitted by CT Jackie Mussell, Human Resources/Staffing Services

Is there an outstanding CT in your unit who deserves special recognition for his or her skills, abilities and dedication to excellence?

Nominate that special person for the 2008 Clerical Technical Recognition Award (the Gliozzo Award!)

The winner will be profiled in MSU’s Source and will receive the award at a special recognition reception. The winner also will receive a monetary award of $1,000 in recognition of their outstanding service.

Criteria for the award include:

▼ Respect for peers and continuous diligence in attending to daily responsibilities;

▼ Concern for students, faculty, staff, and colleagues, particularly (but not limited to) those assisting overseas U.S. students and faculty, international students, international faculty, etc.;

▼ Extraordinary and significant contributions to the community or public service;

▼ Innovative thinking in facilitating unit tasks and responsibilities;

You don’t have to be an individual’s supervisor to submit a nomination. Individuals may be nominated by any member of the university community. [Heather Risselada]

To nominate an individual you will need to complete a nomination form and collect a minimum of two support letters (maximum of five) by MSU colleagues. You may include additional information if it supports the applicant’s nomination.

You can find the nomination form under the HR News section of the MSU Human Resources Web site at www.hr.msu.edu.

Submit the nomination form and attachments by 5 p.m., May 16, to CT Recognition Award Selection Committee, Room 120 Nisbet Building. Questions? Contact: Jackie Mussell at 884-0114 or mussellj@hr.msu.edu.
Letters

Clean Commute recommended

I read the article about carpooling in the February CT News, and I want to share with you my experience with CATA’s Clean Commute Options.

I commute about 20 miles a day, and gas prices have been steadily consuming an ever bigger chunk of my salary. With some reservations, I decided to look into carpooling a couple months ago. I’ve found the Clean Commute program to be an economical, efficient and easy to use option. It also helps our environment!

CATA’s Clean Commute Program Coordinator matches commuters who live and work close to each other and have similar commuting needs.

Those times when I know my schedule will vary from the norm, I drive separately.

And those unexpected events that cause one to need transportation right away?

One big benefit of the Clean Commute program is its emergency ride service. Anyone who carpools three or more days per week qualifies for emergency rides.

Riding with other MSU employees does more than allow me to save on the cost of gas and help keep the environment clean. It’s been a great way for me to meet people, build solidarity and get to know our community better! I highly recommend it.

For further information contact:
CATA Clean Commute Options
517-393-7433

cleancommute@cata.org
http://cata.org/cleancommute
— Norma J. Teague
CTU Director,
Computer Science

District 31 (North and South Kedzie Hall, Bessey Hall, Computer Center): Betty Walther is petitioning to be reappointed Union Representative in her district. If no other CTs from the district express an interest in the position before February 15, she will be appointed.

We have nine districts without a UR. Interested in becoming a UR? Know of a coworker who would make a great UR? For more information, contact URCC Chairperson Colleen Drake (432-6123 x162 or drakec@msu.edu) or Vice President Nancy Gray (353-8632 or grayn@msu.edu).
Calendar

April 1. CTU Executive Board meeting, C-T Union Hall. All members welcome.


April 12. CTU Game Night, 7–11 pm, C-T Union Hall. This is an adults-only evening. No alcohol.

April 15. CT News submission deadline for May issue.

April 15. CTU Executive Board meeting, C-T Union Hall. All members welcome. [Anne Downey]

April 22. Equal Pay Day. This day is observed in April to indicate how far into each year a woman must work to receive as much as a man was paid in the previous year. The Michigan Pay Equity Network suggests that women wear red on this day to symbolize that women and minorities are “in the red” with their pay.

April 24. Take Your Child to Work Day. “Future Spartans in Training: Making Choices for a Better World” is this year’s theme. Details will be posted on the Women’s Resources Center website at www.wrc.msu.edu as of Monday April 21. Contact CTU’s Solidarity Committee Chairperson Lois Siefring (353-4911 or Lois.Siefring@hc.msu.edu) with any questions.

April 24. Lansing Luggnuts vs. the MSU Baseball Team, a Green and White PAC fundraiser. See ad on page 7 for more information.

April 26. Recycling/Re-Use Event. Bring hard cover and paperback books, telephone books, corrugated cardboard, clear and colored glass, styrofoam (clean and placed in clear plastic bags with styrofoam peanuts and bubble wrap in separate bags) and boxboard, such as cereal, cracker or shoe boxes (but not containers intended for the refrigerator or freezer). Meridian Farmer’s Market, 5151 Marsh Rd., Okemos, 9 am–3 pm. Call Barbara at 337-1705 with questions or to volunteer.

April 28. Spring Membership Meeting. See agenda on page 1.

April 28. Workers Memorial Day. On this day unions remember those who have suffered and died on the job and renew the fight for safe workplaces. The toll of workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths is enormous. Each year, thousands of workers are killed, and millions more are injured or diseased, because of their jobs.