CTU elections & updates

In that other important fall election, CTs went to the polls October 28 to elect coworkers who will represent them in CTU leadership positions over the next several years.

The results are:

**Vice President:**
* Nancy Gray 206, No 18

**Secretary:**
* Willie Paulsen 188, No 37

**Director (4 positions):**
* Suzanne Peacock 157
* Jenn Woods 153
* Duferia White 146
* Jeanette Robertson 131
  Lois Siefring 125

**Audit Committee Member:**
* Marcia Paterna 213, No 6

Thank you!
Congratulations to the winners. We also want to express our true appreciation to everyone who made the commitment to run for office.

Liz Owen, a third-year veteran, co-chaired the elections process along with the newly appointed Nora Carr. Elections were delightfully well organized and ran without a hitch thanks largely to their efforts. We all benefited from their commitment and guidance, and we owe them our gratitude.

A heartfelt thanks also goes out to our efficient and organized office staff as well as the many CTs who volunteered for everything from stuffing envelopes and counting ballots to driving vans and registering voters. It takes a lot of people to run our elections each year. This year’s volunteers were: Brenda Bailey, Tanja Brady, Katie Brandtatter, Jackie Campbell, Julie Detwiler, Colleen Drake, Dianne Dreffs, Therese Hercher, Olga Lechuga, Jeannine Lee, Angel Loveall, Tobin Melleberg, Loismarie Newhouse, Hope Rankin, Stephanie Six, Kim Smith, Maria Struck, Becky Sullivan, Norma Teague, Louis Villafranca, Jan Wallace, and Betty Walther.

And last, but not least, we need to thank the CTs who took time out of their day to vote. This is how we keep our democracy working. Great job, everyone! Thanks for all you do.

Meeting notes

The members who had just been elected to leadership positions took the oath of office at the next evening’s fall Membership Meeting. Paterna, who was absent from the meeting, will be sworn in at a later date.

Although we fell 26 members short of Updates continued on p. 5
For sale:


◆ Trailer: 2004 tandem two room trailer (26 ft.). Designed for holding larger cargo that needs protection. Opens with a ramp in the rear for easy entry and a side door. Set up with heat and air conditioning capability, external connections for electrical hook up, fluorescent lighting and carpeted on inside. Great for carrying quads, smaller recreational vehicles, construction office or mobile shop. Asking $12,000 (negotiable). Contact Greg at 517-980-5576.

◆ 2004 Ford Ranger 4x4 V6 4.0: FX4 package, power, cruise, MP3, 67,000 miles, $8,000 obo. benmtho@gmail.com, 517-243-0601.

◆ Woman’s Schwinn specialized hardrock mountain bike: Comfortable gel seat, includes Kryptonite lock and key, professionally tuned up very recently, excellent condition, $125. Queen Anne Style Head & Foot Board: Art Van, beautiful cherry wood, excellent condition, can be used with a full or queen size mattress, $75 but will accept offers. ’70s cocktail table: Oak wood with a laminate base, square shaped, $80 but accepting reasonable offers. Call 517-281-7574 for more information.

◆ Antique Trunk: (Flat top) good condition, $50 or best. 21-horse riding Huskee lawn mower: 46" cut, good condition (pullies on deck need adjusting, may need new battery), $450 or best offer. Cart: To pull behind mower, $40 or best. Kodak CX7300 digital camera with memory card and easy share printer dock: Hardly used, new over $100, let go for $50.


◆ Vinyl tonneau cover: Fits a 2001 Chevy Silverado long-bed truck. Not used since 2003. Black with snaps. $150 or best offer. Phone 517-646-2186.


◆ Antique settee: Trimmed in dark wood, photo available on request, $80.

◆ Oak table with 4 chairs: Photo available on request, $85.

◆ Women’s turquois bicycle: $15. Wagon wheel: $35.

◆ Word Processor: $20. Treated wood: 6 x 8, 4 foot lengths and 8 foot lengths, 8–10 pieces, $20 each. Late model Dell Computer: Keyboard, large monitor, works very well, $100. Contact millyshiraev@yahoo.com or 269-823-3739 after 7 pm.

◆ Riedell women’s figure skates: size 8. White leather boot, good condition, used very little. $25. Contact Jenn at catslavej@gmail.com.

◆ 3-bedroom, Cape Cod house close to campus: For only $97,900 you can have a house, a FREE 1998 Honda Accord, a Broyhill sofa sleeper, and 3 end tables. Super clean, newly painted, ready to move into 1,115 sq
By Deb Bittner

Whew! The national election is finally over and the routine of life is back in gear. [Becky Sullivan]

The electoral process is always amazing to me. Voting is a time-honored tradition but one that wasn’t easily attained by women and folks of color. Our transfers of leadership are civil and thoughtful rather than violent and enforced by guns and tanks. Even with the important issues surrounding elections, we have this democracy that allows its citizens to participate and change their world peacefully.

As we move towards the inauguration, much is happening and there seems to be an air of hope among us as we wait for the magic of a new president.

As working people who need the laws to protect us and our standards of living, we see the next administration as a ray of relief. We hope that the laws eating away at unions will be reversed and the outright attacks will stop. We hope that this new president will stop the bleeding of working people and find a way to get good paying jobs back.

As University employees, we feel the effects of the outside world’s job losses, business evaucations, and sagging economy. We may have been somewhat insulated, but our raises are dwindling as health care costs skyrocket and the rising costs of just about everything impact us in our wallets. With diminishing resources, we try to help out family members, friends and others who have been hit harder. We wonder if or when we’ll be slammed more directly. It is scary.

But this is supposed to be the season of thanksgiving and hope!

So, first let’s give thanks for the union—ours and the others that have been fighting during very difficult times to save the American middle class. Let’s hope that we have made a governmental transition in time to strengthen organized labor. And let’s throw ourselves into the work it will take to make a difference in our families, workplaces and communities.

Thanksgiving continued on p. 8
CTU expands investments

The Board agreed on July 12 to allow the expansion of CTU investments into the markets of developed countries.

Previously, our investment policy limited us to holding stock in U.S. companies only.

The move was made at the suggestion of the union’s investment advisor, Fred Schaard, president of Rehmann Financial. [Colleen Kavanagh]

With this change, the Board agreed to allow our investors to move into international markets where the political and economic systems are well established, such as Western Europe, Canada and Australia.

The Board was clear that it did not want to invest directly in developing markets (which are often plagued by human and labor rights violations) such as China and Mexico.

The expansion acknowledges the changing nature of the world financial market. When CTU began investing in the market, the U.S. controlled 70 percent of the world market. Today it is 40 percent.

This is the second change in our investment policy since it was adopted in 1993. The first was in 2003 when the Board voted to allow some investment in Real Estate Investment Trusts.

Although the Board has approved the policy change that allows for expansion of CTU investments into developed world markets as described above, the advice from Schaard is to table the use of these alternatives until such time as the stock markets worldwide settle down and the economic downturn has turned around.

Currently the union is very heavily weighted in money market and U.S. government and high quality corporate bonds and is not inclined to move into riskier asset categories at this time.

Schaard also suggested utilizing lower cost investment alternatives for fixed income and equity investments.

At the July 12 meeting, the Board also decided to prohibit any direct investment of CTU funds in WalMart because of the company’s notorious anti-labor practices.

CTU history discovered

When we read about this year’s inductees into the Michigan Women’s Hall of Fame, we were confused.

The biography for one of the inductees, Vicki Neiberg, included helping to organize the CTUs at MSU as one of her early accomplishments.

In checking with some key individuals from CTU’s early years, we talked to former Chief Negotiator Harold Schmidt. He confirmed that, yes, Neiberg had been instrumental in the early days of the union. In fact, she had even helped compose and negotiate our original contract.

In the early 1970s, Neiberg helped organize the Alliance to End Sex Discrimination at MSU, which brought together faculty, staff and students in a common cause and prepared her for a career in labor relations.

It was at this time that she helped organize the CTU (then the MSU Employees’ Association).

Neiberg went on to work with the Michigan Nurses Association where, according to her biography, she negotiated 17 contracts. She helped establish the first on-site child care center at a Michigan hospital and one of the first pay equity agreements.

In addition to labor, Neiberg has dedicated herself to women’s rights and children’s issues.

CTU President Deb Bittner and Vice President Nancy Gray attended Neiberg’s induction ceremony on October 15 and thanked her for her contribution to our organization.

“This is an incredible person,” said Bittner. “We thank the Michigan Women’s Hall of Fame for bringing her name to light. She could have been lost to history.”
2008 C-T award goes to Jill Cruth

Jill Cruth became the seventh recipient of the Annual Clerical-Technical Recognition Award at a ceremony held in her honor on October 17.

Dr. Charles and Marjorie Gliozzo established the award in honor of Dr. Gliozzo’s parents to recognize outstanding clerical-technical employees. The award is presented annually by MSU’s Human Resources.

“The clerical and technical people of the university create the foundation that really makes this university work,” said Assistant Vice President for Human Resources Brent Bowditch in his presentation of the award.

Bowditch said that Cruth, an office assistant in Fisheries and Wildlife, is an excellent employee, taking the initiative to make things better and leading by example. She was nominated by 25 faculty, staff members and students of her department, where she serves as the advising undergraduate secretary and graduate secretary.

She is also an active volunteer, involving herself in initiatives to improve MSU, fundraising for charities and working with youth, in addition to pursuing a master’s degree in counseling.

“I am fortunate to work in a department that appreciates the staff and considers it important that faculty and staff work together as a team,” Cruth said.

She especially likes working with the graduate students “who come from all around the world.”

“I love hearing their stories about their research, their families and their travels,” she said. “Each student comes to MSU with a passion to make a difference in this world. I can see it in them. My life has truly been enriched by getting to know each one of them, and I am glad that I can be a small part of making their transition through their program and their time spent at MSU as smooth and as enjoyable as possible.”

Updates
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a quorum, we moved forward with several important discussions.

Treasurer Jeannine Lee pointed out that while our investment portfolio was down 5.2 percent, the overall market was down 18 percent at that time. She attributed our better performance to having a very conservative portfolio.

Bad tests

John Klusinske discussed the inappropriate use of testing during interviews that has been reported by some CTs.

“While we understand that members have the option to establish their credentials by taking standard tests at Human Resources,” he said, “departments shouldn’t establish different, arbitrary or unfair tests.” He added that establishing tests for applicants is very different than requesting a work sample from an employee, which is allowed.

While a job-seeker might not want to refuse a test during the interview, he said, she or he should document the situation and contact the union as soon as possible. The union should also be informed about other seemingly inappropriate or illegal actions or questions that come up during interviews.

Door prizes went to Liz Owen ($50), Tobin Mellberg ($50), Marie Hensley (coffee and doughnuts at work), and Nora Carr (Halloween gift bag).

Committees

Assignments of Board members to its standing committees were made at the November 11 Executive Board meeting. [Jenny Brimley]

Paulsen, Peacock, Norma Teague and White will sit on the Grievances, Appeals and Trials Committee chaired by Vice President Gray.

The Finance Committee, chaired by Treasurer Lee, will be composed of Walt Peebles, Robertson, Jan Wallace and Woods. [Sue Plesko]

President Deb Bittner will chair the Personnel Committee. Other members will be Gray, Lee and White.
A Lovely Day for a Solidarity March!

By UR Janet Roe-Darden

In the October CT News, on the back page, was a small box: “Oct. 18 workers solidarity rally,” which went on to explain that there would be a rally in Detroit and rides would be provided. I contacted the CTU office and was informed that the Michigan State AFL-CIO was chartering buses. The only downside to this was that I had to get up really early for a Saturday, as the buses were leaving Lansing at 6:30.

The purpose of the march was to show support by Michigan union members for the Employee Free Choice Act, which if implemented, will fundamentally change the process by which people can form unions in their workplaces. Currently if people wish to form a union, they have to contact the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to obtain a Union Authorization Card and obtain 30 percent of the employees’ signatures. After the NLRB approves this, a secret ballot election is held in which 51 percent of the employees must vote yes.

The Employee Free Choice Act seeks to allow employees to form unions merely by a majority of workers signing union cards indicating they want a union. Currently, many times when workers seek to form a union, they are harassed, forced to attend management “education meetings,” and even fired for just promoting a union. The Employee Free Choice Act would guarantee workers a contract when they form a new union within 90 days, and strengthen penalties upon management for illegal harassment, firings, etc.

Approximately fifty people from Lansing attended, including five members of the CTU. I was so proud to be with union members from the schools and skilled trades. In Detroit, we gathered at one of the local union halls a half mile from downtown, and were given signs. At least a thousand people attended this march from all over Michigan: Saginaw, Benton Harbor, Kalamazoo, Ann Arbor and, of course, the metro-Detroit area. I was impressed by the numbers and variety of people from the skilled trades and encouraged by the number of young adults participating. Men, women, children, retired workers; I saw at least one man in a motorized cart.

We marched with our signs to the sound of many speakers honking their car horns at us and gathered in front of the McNamara Federal Building to hear several noteworthy speakers: Interim Mayor Ken Cockrel, Jr. of Detroit, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Rich Trumka, Mark Gaffney of the Michigan State AFL-CIO, and Representative John Dingle, among others.

I was disturbed that so few “white collar” union members attended: only five CTs and about that many from the local schools here. The other 40 on the bus (and the vast majority at the march) were skilled trades. We need to step up to the plate more, and we can’t just sit and let our “blue collar” brothers and sisters carry all the load.

One man from the west side of the state said, “I don’t understand why more didn’t come—it was a free bus ride!” I agree with him whole-heartedly.

The following members have petitioned for appointment to Union Representatives. They will be appointed if no other CTs from their respective districts express an interest in the position before 5 p.m. on December 12.

▼ District 11 (Plant Biology Lab, Pesticide Research, Biology Research, Food Safety and Toxicology): Katherine Bergdolt. This position was vacated by Jennifer Sysak in September. We thank Sysak for her service as a UR and member of the UR Coordinating Committee. We wish her the best in her future endeavors.

▼ District 13 (Anthony, Meats Lab, Engineering): Pamela Brock.


District 4 (Biomedical and Physical Sciences, Planetarium): Kelli Kolasa has been appointed UR. Reach her at 884-5077 or kolasa@msu.edu.

Is there no Union Representative in your district? Interested in becoming a 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).

Justice for Workers

Justice for Workers NOW! is the coalition that organized the workers solidarity rally in Detroit on October 18 in order to publicize the overwhelming injustice of decisions handed down by the National Labor Relations Board. [Sherrie Duncan]

The rally called for passage of the Employee Free Choice Act within the first 100 days of a new administration, regardless of who was elected president. Because Barack Obama supported the Act as part of his campaign, the climate for passage appears more favorable with his election.

For more information, visit the Justice for Workers Now! website at justiceforworkersnow.com.
Letters

Doing our part
Wanting to help make a difference, I have been doing a lot of volunteering lately. I volunteered for a couple of functions as a member of the C-T Union, like the Twilight in the Garden fundraiser for the Kresge Art Center, and I worked the phone banks for the Michigan AFL-CIO for several nights before the election. In a small way, I know I made a difference. I participated in the democratic process. I represented my C-T Union in a positive manner.

When the stock market took a tumble, I became depressed and frustrated. I felt as if working for my retirement and my granddaughters’ future had been exercises in futility. But what can I, one small voice, do to change things? It’s out of my hands. Someone else got us into this mess.

Then I happened into the restroom at the AFL-CIO office and saw this tacked to the wall:
If every American were to switch the purchase of just $30 a year from imported to U.S. made apparel and home fashions, more than 100,000 American jobs could be saved without spending any additional money.

—Union Label in Service Trades Council of Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties

Wow! I could save 100,000 American jobs for only $30 a year? What if I committed myself more diligently to buying only U.S. made goods? What other jobs could I help secure? Could I make a difference? Look what $30 will do. That is a blouse, a sweater or a pair of pants once a year.

It’s time for us, as a nation, to assess our individual role in the financial straits our country is in. Take away the corporate greed, executive perks and mismanagement of assets, and it still boils down to personal responsibility. If I want a more secure financial future, affordable health care and a stable job future for myself and others, I need to help make it happen. I have to accept my responsibility for our demise and work to bring about positive change. If I can do it $30 at a time in the clothing and department stores, what impact can I have in other areas? If I consciously buy only American made products and get others to climb on board, we can start to turn this around.

Are you with me?

Buy American! Buy union!
—Colleen Drake, Libraries

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Educational lottery loan

It’s time to register for our Gerri Olson Educational Lottery Loan for Spring semester. To do so, call Patricia Shackleton (432-5665) between Monday, November 24 and Friday, December 5. Registrations received after December 5 will be considered as space permits.

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Saturday, December 13
CT Union Hall

Potluck starts at 6 p.m.
Soup, table service, coffee, tea provided.
Bring a dish to pass.

No alcohol. Adults only. Interested in a family game night? Contact Colleen Drake at 432-6123 x162.
Calendar

Dec 2  CTU Executive Board Meeting, 5:15 p.m., C-T Union Hall. All members welcome.


Dec. 5 Deadline to register for the Gerri Olson Educational Lottery Loan. See page 7 for details.

Through Dec. 7 MetroSpace has opened its new exhibit, “Robots/Future Worlds,” at 110 Charles St., East Lansing, in the colorful Division Street parking structure. The gallery is open Thursdays from 2-5 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays from 2-9 p.m. and Sundays from noon—4 p.m. during scheduled exhibits. For more information, visit www.scenemetrospace.com.

Dec. 13 (Second Saturday of every month), CTU Game night, 7–11 p.m., C-T Union Hall. This is an adults-only evening. No alcohol. December’s Game Night also features a potluck.

Dec. 15 Deadline to submit items for the January 2009 CT News. Send letters, articles and other information to ctnews@msu.edu.

Dec. 16 CTU Executive Board Meeting, 5:15 p.m., C-T Union Hall. All members welcome.

Reminder

Holiday dates in December and January are Thursday and Friday, December 25 and 26, and Thursday and Friday, January 1 and 2. Members who have difficulty scheduling vacations, or other work schedule issues, should contact their UR or call the CTU office at 355-1903.

Thanksgiving

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We make a huge impact on our immediate world by participating in food, toy and clothing drives. Just by getting our own house in order, we can find clothing that we don’t use that will keep someone warm and extra canned goods that will help make a meal for someone else. We can lift ourselves up by lifting up those around us.

Life is too short and too precarious to dwell on the negativity and inactivity around us. We can get involved and fight the good fight!

With the end of the campaign season (and those annoying campaign ads) and the beginning of the holiday season, let’s remember the strategy that Obama used in his successful bid for President of the United States: start with a grassroots agenda that involves a lot of people doing small tasks.

We can do that too. We can shop locally and buy Michigan made (it’s there but you need to look for it—start at www.buymichiganproducts.com). We can clean our closets, organize our belongings, make order in our material worlds, and then give away what we do not need. This process will help others and help ourselves too. It works. We’ve seen it.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and yours. Remember to be grateful for those around you but go one step further: tell them!