Green thumbs needed!

Calling all gardeners, dirt diggers and plant enthusiasts!

CTU is ready to “spruce up the yard.”

Since we have a fairly big piece of property, we will focus on three areas this year: planting under our big spruce tree near the building, upgrading the beds near the front door area and creating a walkway into the yard.

Three CTs are spearheading the beautification project: Colleen Drake, an amateur plant activist; Hope Rankin, a full-time botanical tech and CTU garden mastermind; and Deb Bittner, who likes the idea of gardening more than she actually knows about gardening.

Willing to share some plants?
While there will be some expenses for planters, extra soil and two benches, we are hoping that most of the plants will be donated by members. We are looking for hostas, grasses, and other perennials for the under the spruce tree.

The front door plot is going to be dedicated to plants native to Michigan. We are looking for wild ginger, jack-in-the-pulpit or something that would be appropriate for “a wildflower bench area.” [Shana Marie Burke]

If you are willing to share, but are not quite sure what’s growing on your property, Hope will do a “limited” on-site visit to identify what you have and even dig up the plants you want to share. [Bonnie Sturdivant]

All of the outdoor materials will be “Made in the U.S.A.” and, hopefully, purchased locally. If you know of anyone who makes benches or who carries handmade outdoor items, please let us know.

Ready to get dirty?
A couple of Saturdays should cover the time to prepare and install our new gardens. The deadline is the end of May so that all three areas are finished for the Solidarity Member Picnic on June 4.

Contact the office at 355-1903 or email ctupres@msu.edu to offer plants, volunteer “dirt” time or give us plant leads. Watch for more details in the April newsletter.
For sale:


◆ Sears Kenmore sewing machine in cabinet: All original parts, manual, and some extras. Pictures available on request. $75 or best offer. Call 517-927-2680.

◆ Two Las Vegas slot machines with stands for that home game room: $500 for one or $900 for the pair! Contact wshillaire@hotmail.com or 517-230-5998, ask for Margie.

◆ Sewing/Embroidery Machine: Bernina 200e. Excellent condition; serviced March ‘09. $2,200. Email kkmcclintic@verizon.net, phone 517-214-6043.


◆ Vinyl tonneau cover: Fits a 2001 Chevy Silverado long-bed truck. Not used since 2003. Black with snaps. $150 or best offer. Two sets of 8" gold bathroom vanity faucets: Best offer. Phone 517-646-2186.

For rent:

◆ Rent suite or individual office at 2990 East Lake Lansing Road in East Lansing. Will work to meet your specifications. Contact the Clerical-Technical Union, 517-355-1903.

◆ 2 homes for rent with option to buy: Across from Park Lake, 15302 Rosemont, Bath, $625-675/mo. 314 Center Street, Mason, $825-875/mo. Call 517-285-3415 for more info/showing.

Services:

◆ Handyman services: Residential contractor, licensed in Michigan. Home projects, decks, roofing, siding and/or odd jobs. NO job too small. Very reasonable rates & free estimates. Call Kurt Gorski @ 517-490-8763 for more info.

◆ Ride sharing: Capital Area Transportation Authority offers a ride sharing service called Clean Commute that several CTs are using. Con-
**Hope dies last**

*By Deb Bittner*

I was reading the final interview with the late, great Studs Terkel, a broadcaster and oral historian who was born in 1912 and died just this last October as the economy took its dramatic downward slide. The title of the article, “Hope Dies Last,” was taken from the title of Terkel’s book, *Hope Dies Last: Keeping the Faith in Troubled Times*, an oral history of social action in America. [Tracy D. Rich]

In the interview, Terkel said that during the Great Depression, men and women believed that the “man behind the desk” was better than themselves. They settled for what was happening to the nation and to themselves. When the free market fell, people were lost.

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**Classifieds**

*continued from previous page*

Tact Clean Commute at their toll free number (877-921-POOL), local number (517-393-RIDE), fax number (517-394-3733), or website (www.cata.org/cleancommuter/index.html).

◆ **Nadiz Tailoring and Costume, LLC** is a new shop opened by my spouse, Ken Darden, a tailor with many years of experience. The new shop is on 6810 S. Cedar, Suite B (just north of the Holiday Inn, across from Lowe’s and Speedway), Lansing, 517-694-0696. Call Janet at 487-6139 if you need more information.

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

The financial world is exactly the same today, Terkel said, but with one difference: While we have apparently learned nothing in the business world, regular people are less likely to think that others know more. We have lived through the Civil Rights Movement, the ‘60s, Watergate and all the other scandals that prove that the government and the big executives don’t know it all.

In 1929, the world crashed and suddenly, people weren’t working. There was nowhere to place the blame. Workers fought amongst themselves. What were they fighting over? Their own self-respect. They blamed themselves for what was happening in their country. They were furious but what else could they do but lash out at each other?

But through it all, Terkel recalled meeting people “who weathered it one way or the other, some by just lending a hand.” He tells stories of folks who stood up for others, like a woman lawyer named Pearl who helped a young, scared woman. As Pearl put her arm around the girl to bolster her resolve, she “instantly straightened up. That’s where hope comes from,” Terkel said, “just standing up.”

He reminded us that “hope dies last. ‘La esperanza muere ultima.’ Without hope, you can’t make it. And so long as we have that hope, we’ll be okay. Once you become active helping others, you feel alive. You don’t feel, ‘it’s my fault.’ You become a different person. And others are changed, too.”

How does this fit with what is happening around us and on campus? I can see the fear in CTs, wondering about budget cuts, layoffs, health care costs. While preparing for the future is essential, worrying about things that are out of our control, speculating on what might happen, pointing fingers at our coworkers, adding fuel to the rumor mill, and undercutting our contract are not going to help.

Don’t get caught in the trap. Don’t fall into the habit of trading off your breaks and lunches and working “after 5” without proper authorization and pay or comp time. Don’t let the stress of your job and the worries of the world nudge you away from CTU contractual rights. Don’t let them ruin your health.

Do continue to work hard, support your departments and CT colleagues. Also, go that extra step, and step out of your “worry maze” to help others. The need is great out there and as Studs Terkel said, it’s the best option we have for a living.

*Hope continued on p. 8*
Exposing the lies about EFCA

The Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate on March 10, launching the latest legislative battle to restore workers’ freedom to form unions and bargain for a better life.

If EFCA passes, union recognition by employers would be automatic whenever 50 percent plus one of workers in a given workplace sign union cards—which is why the process is often referred to as “card check.” The legislation would also provide for greater penalties for companies that violate workers’ right to organize and ensure that workers who do unionize are able to achieve a contract.

Workers are hoping that the introduction of the bill heralds the change that America voted for last fall after years of watching employers use illegal tactics to bust unions while the government agencies established to promote collective bargaining actually worked in opposition. With the most pro-worker Congress in years, and a president committed to the cause, this is our best chance yet to pass this bill.

But it’s anything but a done deal.

Anti-union forces are expected to spend $200 million on fighting EFCA compared to the $40 million campaign expected from organized labor, according to Mark Gaffney, president of the Michigan State AFL-CIO.

Gaffney was speaking at the Labor Law Update Conference put on by MSU’s Labor Education Program on February 26.

Right-wing and corporate front groups with misleading names like “Save Our Secret Ballot,” “Coalition for a Democratic Workplace,” “Americans for Job Security” and “American Rights at Work” have joined the likes of Wal-Mart and the National Association of Manufacturers (headed by former Michigan Governor John Engler) in an all-out assault on EFCA, Gaffney said.

The groups claim to be concerned about workers’ access to a secret ballot process in choosing whether or not to form a union.

“It warms my heart to know, that after driving middle class wages down, no

EFCA continued on next page

Vegetarians unite

By Colleen Drake, CT, MSU Libraries

Recently the doctor ordered me to take in less than 1.3 gm. of animal protein a day . . . which means I have to start eating like a vegetarian . . . which means I need HELP!

Who better to get to help from than my fellow CTs?

So, if you are interested in sharing with me and others your expertise and experience on the vegetarian pathway, I would like you to consider helping me form a Basic 101 Beginning Vegetarianism Group. Nothing too elaborate at this point, but if the interest is great enough, other support groups could be formed for the vegans, octo-vegans etc.

We could meet once a month at the C-T Union Hall for lunch or dinner or just to share recipes, experience, frustrations, successes. etc.

If you are interested, please email me at drakc@msu.edu or call me at 432-6123 x162.
EFCA
continued from previous page
raise in real income for 20 years in this country and firing union supporters in one in five organizing campaigns, and all of the other wonderful things that employers do to us when we try to form a union, they've now finally seen the light and they care so much about the workers’ choices,” Gaffney said.

“This bill doesn’t do away with the secret ballot!” Gaffney emphasized.

“What this law will do is give the workers a choice between the secret ballot and majority card check,” he said, pointing out that the National Labor Relations Act has always allowed majority card check as a way to form a union if the employer agreed to it. Gaffney credits the use of majority card check with the net growth in unions over the past two years.

However, Gaffney said, the workers should be the ones to determine the method by which they choose whether or not to join a union, not the employer.

While some critics point to the economy, saying this is a bad time for a bill like EFCA, Gaffney disagrees.

“Working families are struggling to make ends meet—I don’t need to tell you that,” he said, citing the $1,000 decrease in median income during the past eight years. “It’s time for workers and middle class people to have a much stronger say in the economy. More union members will do that.”

“We need it because 47 million Americans are without health care. We need it because of the economy. . . . But we also need it in these times,” he said, because it is the way “to make the stimulus package work.”

Because consumer activity makes up

Vision care enrollment now open


Anyone signing up for the plan—even those renewing—will need to register as a new user by clicking on the register button. When prompted, use: Group number TMZ1080 and Corporate code TM11081A

Each enrollment period is a two-year commitment (24 months). In the event you leave employment with MSU for any reason, you are still obligated to finish your enrollment cycle (bill direct option via MEBS will be implemented).

Questions? Please call MEBS at 1-800-968-6327; press 0; ask for the billing department & indicate you are calling regarding the MSU Vision Plan.

CLO at MSU Voluntary Vision Program

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<th>NVA Network**</th>
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*12 months if prescription changes .5 diopters or required by doctor.
**Non-network benefits are the same for NVA, Vision Care Direct.

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For provider listings, please visit Vision Care Direct (VCD) at www.vcdplans.com or National Vision Administrators (NVA) at www.e-nva.com.

Correction:
The website given for MEBS in the February CT News was incorrect. As stated in the first paragraph of the above article, the website is https://onlinemeb.com.
Community Resources Educating & Assisting To Empower

City of Lansing departments in partnership with local unions, nonprofit organizations and businesses are reaching out to Lansing citizens.

Saturday, April 4, 2009
11:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Lansing Center, 333 E. Michigan Avenue

The current economy is placing financial strains on many households. The City of Lansing would like to reach out to you by bringing together community resources in one convenient location that can assist with and inform you of programs and services for:

- continued education
- job retraining
- health care assistance
- weatherization
- finances
- tax return services
- resume preparation
- assistance with property taxes
- assistance with utilities
- veteran’s services
- seniors and the elderly
- lead abatement
- food boxes/vouchers
- clothing vouchers
- energy efficiency
- City of Lansing services

For more information, contact Lansing’s Department of Human Relations and Community Services: 517-483-4477.

Help is available

During these difficult economic times many folks are struggling to get by.

To help, the Family Resource Center has updated its Community Resource Directory. [Jenny Lee Brimley]

If you or someone you know is looking for resources to help with home mortgage foreclosures, down payment assistance, debt solutions, food and emergency assistance, household needs, medical resources, etc., check out the updated directory available on the FRC’s website at www.frc.msu.edu.

EFCA

continued from previous page

70% of the gross domestic product, Gaffney said, the way to make the economic system work is to put more money into consumers’ pockets.

“And the way to get more money into people’s pockets is to let them organize a union and bargain for higher wages and better benefits,” he said. “The Employee Free Choice Act will do that.”

Gaffney also pointed to a few actions EFCA supporters can take:

- Contact your congressional representatives and urge them to vote yes, or thank them for their support if you know they are on record supporting EFCA. (Both of Michigan’s Senators, Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow, support EFCA.) Contact information is available on the CTU website by clicking on “Links.” Remember to use a personal (rather than MSU) email address when contacting your elected leaders. You can also send letters and make phone calls.

- Tell others. Once people understand what the Employee Free Choice Act is, they are likely to support it, Gaffney said. However, only about half of union members have a good understanding of the bill. Flyers and other information are available at www.aflcio.org.

- Help with fundraising. The AFL-CIO has established a secure site to collect donations that will be used to promote EFCA. Link to www.aflcio.org. [Cheryl M. Lowe]
It’s time for the

CROSS TOWN SHOW DOWN

Thursday, April 16, 2009 @ 7:05 pm

Join the Green & White PAC fundraiser while enjoying baseball and solidarity!

Lansing Lugnuts vs. the MSU Baseball Team

Go NUTS together!
Sit together in a block of reserved seats held especially for us. We are in Section G, behind home plate! We will be visible in the community on the scoreboard and welcomed with a P.A. announcement at Olds Park!

Limited seating!
Our group has a limited supply of tickets so get your order in now to sit together!

Win a prize!
Someone from our group will win a great Lugnuts gift in the group raffle or other great prizes!

Make checks payable to the GWPAC.

All tickets include a donation to the GW PAC
Individual: $15 ($9 game ticket & $6 donation)
Date: $25 (2-$9 game tickets & $7 donation)
Family: $50 (4-$9 game tickets & $14 donation)

How to order tickets:
Online: www.greenandwhitepac.com
By phone: 517-355-1903
By email: bittnerdeb@yahoo.com
By mail (with order form below):
Green & White PAC
P.O. Box 1461
East Lansing, MI 48826

UR district news

The following members have been appointed Union Representatives.

▼ District 20 (Eppley, Owen, Shaw, N. Business College Complex): Tammy Jo Sopocy can be reached at 884-6416 or sopocy@msu.edu. Sopocy is relocating from District 2, which is now without a UR.

▼ District 34 (Agricultural Hall, Cook Hall): Reach Ann Brooks at 432-7623 or brooksa@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).

Reminder: May 15 deadline for CT award

Is there an outstanding CT in your unit who deserves special recognition? Nominate her or him for the 2009 Clerical Technical Award. The winner receives recognition and a $1,000 check.

The deadline to submit nominations is May 15.

This is the eighth year of the Human Resources’ annual award. It was established by Dr. Charles and Marjorie Gliozzo to commemorate the assistance Dr. Gliozzo’s parents received from MSU’s clerical-technical employees when they immigrated to this country.

Criteria for nomination, deadlines and directions for submission are on the nomination forms, which are available under the HR News section of the MSU Human Resources Web site at www.hr.msu.edu.
Calendar

April 4 CREATE outreach to Lansing residents. See page 6 for details.

April 7 CTU Executive Board Meeting. All members welcome. C-T Union Hall, 5:15 p.m.

April 10 “A Conversation with Si Kahn,” folksinger, writer, social justice advocate and organizer. 12:15–1:30, 449W MSU Library (a “Learn at Lunch LEP brown bag event). At 8 pm, he will perform in concert at the Unitarian Church at the Ten Pound Fiddle Coffee House.

April 16 Get your tickets now for the Cross Town Show Down between the MSU Baseball Team and the Lansing Lugnuts. Details on page 7.

April 21 CTU Executive Board Meeting. All members welcome. C-T Union Hall, 5:15 p.m.

April 23 Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day. Information will be made available on the Women’s Resources Center website (wrc.msu.edu) as it becomes available.

April 30 Spring 2009 CTU Membership Meeting, 252 Erickson. Doors open at 5 pm for socializing. Meeting begins at 5:20 p.m. See page 1 for details.

May 31 Deadline to sign up for employee paid vision care through MEBS. See page 5 for details.

Watch your paychecks

CTs will receive a 1.75% union negotiated increase starting April 1.

The raise will show up in our April 24 paychecks (which will include two days, March 30 and 31) at the old rate.

We will receive the first check that completely reflects the 1.75% increase on May 8.

Hope

continued from p. 3

tells us “once you become active helping others, you feel alive.” AND look around you—the daylight lasts later and later and Spring has arrived.

On another note: please call the office if you receive a layoff letter, are threatened with a layoff or “being let go,” or hear any layoff rumors. Let us know and let us assist you.