Layoff update

With all of the talks about budget cuts, many CTs are calling the union office about possible layoffs.

As of this writing, about twenty-one positions have been affected by elimination, displacement or bumps in various departments across campus, according to CTU Contract Administrator Dan McNeil.

No need for panic
We can’t know the future. However, as we’ve learned from previous times when the University faced economic problems, receiving layoff, displacement or bump notices does not mean that all the affected CTs will be out of a job.

If you are told that your unit is considering or planning to eliminate your position, don’t panic. You may not be the appropriate person to be laid off.

Sometimes supervisors are unfamiliar with our Contract and cause a lot of unnecessary anxiety by providing premature or incorrect “information,” McNeil said.

Even if you are the appropriate person to be laid off in your unit, he said, you will probably be placed in another University position. When expecting layoffs, the University holds some positions vacant for CTs who end up in layoff or bypass status.

“It’s important that CTs realize that a supervisor’s opinion or a department’s plan regarding layoffs does not supersede our Contract,” he said.

Eliminating a position is very different from a layoff. When a department eliminates a CT position, the least

Benefits Open Enrollment deadline: May 11
MSU Benefits Open Enrollment for the 2009-10 plan year started April 20 and will run through Monday, May 11.

Anyone making changes in coverage—such as adding or removing a dependent, switching health or dental care plans, or changing life insurance options—must participate in Open Enrollment. Staff members who wish to continue coverage for a spouse or same sex domestic partner must also participate.

You do not need to go through Open Enrollment if you are not making changes and not covering a spouse or partner.

PHP remains the lowest cost plan. Full-time employees will not have a pre-

Open enrollment continued on p. 5
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:
◆ Whirlpool gas dryer: New, barely used, energy efficient, $175.
Women's Nexgen motorcycle jacket: Size M with removable thinsulate liner, $90. Women's leather motorcycle jacket: Size M, $60. Men's leather motorcycle jackets: Both size L, $60. Contact Rob @ 627-9084.

◆ Entertainment center: $400.
Large treated wood: 6"x8" in 4' & 8' lengths, $15 each. Canary cage: $20. Parrot cage: $30. Cat litter pans: Various sizes, $2 each. Photos available on request. Email millilyshiraev@yahoo.com or call 269-823-3739 after 6 pm Monday through Friday, weekends anytime.

◆ Spinet style piano: Good condition, with bench. $300. Contact rhodesb@ids.net or call 517-468-3469 for more information.

◆ Vinyl tonneau cover: Fits a 2001 Chevy Silverado long-bed truck, not used since 2003, black with snaps, $150 or best offer. 67" double sink: Marble top vanity with gold 8" fixtures, like new, best offer. 646-2186.

For rent:
◆ Haslett duplex: 4 bedroom, 2 full bath, very nice. Close to schools and MSU. Dishwasher, central air, washer/ dryer and carport. Large kitchen and living room. Nice large laundry room in unit. Landlord takes care of lawn maint. Rent $900 with deposit and credit check. Available June 1. Contact likingmystuff@gmail.com for more info.

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

Services:
◆ Tent Event Rentals, LLC: Reserve our tents, tables, chairs for your summer events. Tent Event Rentals, LLC also has staging, dance floors, large BBQ grill on trailer. Competitive pricing and excellent customer service. Call 517-819-2659.

◆ Capital Area Transportation Authority offers a ride sharing service called Clean Commute that several CTs are using. Contact 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/cleancommute/index.html).

Wanted: Used outdoor kennels, complete or 6-foot modular sections, kennel panels; also gates and used chain link fencing. Contact anishinaabegamig@yahoo.com.

Free: Advertise to your colleagues in the CT News. Contact Cheryllee Classifieds continued on next page

Reminder
Spring 2009 Membership Meeting
Thursday, April 30
252 Erickson, 5:20 p.m.

General Membership Meetings are for making decisions about the Union, asking questions and receiving updates about Union activities. Light refreshments and childcare are provided. Additional meetings in 2009 will be held on Tuesday, July 28, and Wednesday, October 28. Locations will be announced as information becomes available.

Executive Board Meetings
1st & 3rd Tuesdays at 5:15
CTU Office
All members welcome.
CTs make the community

By Deb Bittner

In the last newsletter, I wrote about the late great Studs Terkel. He reminded us that “once you become active helping others, you feel alive.” Since then, I have learned about many CTs who are out and about doing great things in our communities.

In this newsletter we have a new feature that highlights CT accomplishments. We also have two articles written by CTs regarding special events on campus and one from a CT who is involved with a community spelling bee event that goes beyond competitive spelling to help build self-esteem and pride in knowledge.

I have also talked to many of you who are involved with causes as varied as the City of Lansing’s Diversity Day, recycling events, Earth Day celebrations, animal rescue and adoptions, as well as various fundraisers like the MSU Lady Spartan Football Clinic, cancer fighting walking teams, clothing swaps, food bank drives, etc. The causes are endless. Many of you make the time and stretch the effort to help those who need our assistance. You show the kind of member involvement that makes us a community.

We also attend functions that support and strengthen MSU’s mission. We had a great turnout for the Green and White PAC event at the Lansing Lugnuts v. the MSU Baseball team on April 16. It was a beautiful evening with good company, and MSU won! Someone new to our campus made a comment about how surprised he is about the dedication MSU employees have to MSU. It’s true that we care about what happens to our workplace and our livelihoods, but we also care about this place as an institution that was founded on real down-to-earth principles about sharing knowledge and applying it practically in the real world—an impressive principle started 154 years ago.

These are bleak economic days, but there are things to celebrate as well. Most obviously, it looks like spring has arrived! However, we know all too well that it is still possible in Michigan to have frostbite and sunburn in the same week.

We have the City of Lansing celebrating 150 years. Look at its website (www.lansing150.com) for more information on how to participate.

CTs have our own anniversary to celebrate. Please join us for our Solidarity and 35th Anniversary Picnic on June 4 at CTU. Enjoy good food, colleagues and our successful “maturity.” Also note the article on page 4 regarding our history and our new timeline that hangs in our conference room in the CT Union Hall.

Of course, I have to make a pitch for volunteers to help plan special activities for the picnic and the rest of the year. If you have ideas about or would like to help with the picnic or our other activities, contact me at ctupres@msu.edu.

Please also pay particular attention to the article on layoffs and our layoff language. The uncertainty of possible budget cuts and job losses can create a lot of stress. But doing something constructive, like familiarizing yourself with the contract language and the layoff process as well as boosting your work “readiness” by documenting your job duties, updating your resume, sharpening your skills, etc., help you control what you can in worrisome times. Let us help you if need assistance on what to do or where to turn.

[Mary Pease]

Don’t forget to participate in the MSU Benefits Open Enrollment process. Even if you aren’t making changes or reaffirming a spouse or partner, it is a good thing to go through the process to review your selections and make sure they adequately meet the needs of you and your family.

As always it is a busy time for all of us at work and in our personal lives, AND we are out there working hard for others. As we stretch ourselves, however, we also need to make some time to take care of ourselves. Like they say on an airplane: “Put your air mask on first before you assist others.”

Classifieds

continued from previous page

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.
March 15, 1995—The first five presidents of the Clerical-Technical Union participated in a panel discussion on our union’s history. From left to right: Rondy Murray, fifth president; LeeAnn Slicer, fourth; Barbara Reeves, third (and ninth); John Hawkins, second; and Rollin Dason, first.

CTU: 40+ years of labor history

We usually mark the beginning of our union from the time of its official certification by the Michigan Employment Relations Commission in 1974. [Juli Kerr]

However, MERC recognition was merely the culmination of the work and sacrifices of a small group of CTs who started meeting in 1968. Dissatisfied with MSU’s treatment, the group began to build an organization that could bargain for wages and working conditions.

The union (under the name Michigan State University Employees’ Association or MSUEA) was officially launched on September 17, 1969, with Rollin Dasen as president. Dues were voluntary and set at $1 a month.

With the assistance of Director Walt Peebles, former CTU President Barbara Reeves recently completed a CTU timeline showing our history from 1968 through 2006 in relation to major developments at MSU and in the world. The timeline gives us a visual tool that helps put many of our major accomplishments in perspective.

Sadly, in preparing this article about the timeline, we received news that our first president died February 14.

Dason held the office from 1969 until 1972, when John Hawkins became president, according to Barbara Reeves (CTU’s third and ninth president).

Dason, a recording professional technician for the Instructional Media Center, started working for MSU in 1960. He retired from the University in 1994.

Other accomplishments highlighted in the timeline include:

1975 The union rents its first office—at located on Towbridge Road.

1982 Members vote to change the name of MSUEA to the Clerical-Technical Union of MSU.

1988 The first (and only) CTU strike ends successfully after two weeks.

1996 The Coalition of Labor Organizations and MSU agree to precedent setting joint bargaining on health care.

2006 CTU purchases a union hall at 2990 East Lake Lansing Road.

Catering gets in-sourced

By Kim Smith, CTU Member, Housing and Food Services

Catering operations, which were outsourced 15 years ago, will be brought back to campus under Housing and Food Services (H&FS), according to Assistant Vice President of H&FS Vennie Gore.

At this time, Gore said, the jobs that may be available as H&FS takes over all the campus catering operations will be in APA, APSA and 1585 classifications. Additional clerical needs will be evaluated as the process continues.

In 1994, ARAMARK became the MSU caterer. Sodexo won the contract in 2003.

Even though Sodexo is a private company, their employees will have the option to continue with H&FS catering or to stay with Sodexo.

Units will be able to choose off-campus caterers, Gore said, but he hopes H&FS becomes the caterer of choice, a move that would reduce the dollars going off campus.

According to Gore, H&FS decided to get back into the catering business after about a year of discussion. Gore said this is the opportune time to make the move due to a major realignment in H&FS, a recent review of the various catering needs on campus, and the timing of the expiration of the contract with Sodexo.

The move is good news for the campus labor community. The employees will now be represented and we can be sure, once again, that we are working with employees able to bargain for fair, safe and healthy working conditions.
UR district news

The following members have petitioned for appointment as Union Representatives. They will be appointed if no other CTs from their respective districts express an interest in the positions before 5 p.m. on May 14.

▼ District 2 (Administration Bldg. (Floors 2, 3, 4): Kathie Kirby.
▼ District 18 (Kellogg Center, Brody Complex): Cynthia Helms.

Interested in becoming a UR? Contact URCC Chairperson Colleen Drake (432-6123 x162 or drakec@msu.edu) or Vice President Nancy Gray (353-8632 or grayn@msu.edu).

Open enrollment

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Premium deducted from their paychecks for the PHP option. Those choosing Community Blue will pay the difference between the two plans. See the table on this page for a breakdown of the employee’s contribution for the various options.

A breakdown of all Open Enrollment options can be found on the MSU Human Resources’ website at www.hr.msu.edu.

Direct questions or problems associated with enrolling to the Benefits office at benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu or 353-4434.

Participate in online open enrollment by visiting www.hr.msu.edu and logging in to the eHR system with your MSU Net ID and password. From the eHR menu, select “Benefits Enrollments and Information” and then “Benefits Enrollment/Changes” and follow the Open Enrollment prompts.

2007-08 Unionized employee monthly health plan contributions

Employee contributions are pre-tax through payroll deduction. Both plans include CVS/Caremark prescription drug coverage.

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<tr>
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| Community Blue PPO | | |
|-------------------|----------|-----------------
| Single            | $10.96   | $119.96         |
| 2 person          | $22.99   | $251.92         |
| Family            | $26.77   | $295.81         |

CT notables

Brenda Bailey is sporting a new ring, one she received for bowling a perfect 300 at a tournament on December 13. Bailey, who has been bowling since she was eight years old, currently plays on teams in three different leagues.

“I thought that old saying about ‘knees knocking’ was just something that happens in cartoons,” Bailey said about how she felt while bowling her first perfect game, “but it was true.”

Janet Roe-Darden will have a short story published in the spring edition of the literary magazine The Offbeat. Many of us have seen Roe-Darden’s thoughtful letters to the editor in various local publications. Her story, “She Kept on Singing,” is the first fiction she has published in a couple years.

Cindy Stone really did it! She raised over $750 for the St. Baldrick’s Foundation in order to fight children’s cancer. And she did it by shaving her head.

Donations can still be made online by visiting www.StBaldrick.org. Click on the “Donate Now” link in the green “You Can Help” area, and search for “Cynthia Stone.”

Do you or a CT coworker have an accomplishment you would like to share with other members of the union? If so, please contact Cheryllee Finney at ctnews@msu.edu or 432-9580.
Layoff
continued from p. 1

senior employee in the structural unit at that grade level is to receive the official layoff notice—not the CT whose position is being eliminated.

The notice must be received by the employee from Human Resource Services (HRS) 60 days prior to the actual layoff. Sixty days gives the CT, the Union and the University time to explore all of the options.

So, what is the first thing a CT should do when she or he receives an official layoff notice from HR?

Contact your UR!
The 60-day window before actual layoff keeps the CT in the current position while various options are explored. However, you should not try to sort out these options alone.

Over the years, members have reported feeling pressured to drop to a part-time or lower level position when they receive a layoff notice. While either of these actions can be considered, they may not be in your best interest. Make sure you talk to your UR or the CTU office before you agree to anything or go to HRS to discuss your job qualifications and options.

What are your options?
If you are on layoff status, you must accept the next vacant position in your grade level for which you are qualified. This is not an option.

If a vacant position is not available, you will be given several alternatives. You will be asked if you will: exercise your seniority rights to bump a less senior CT in your current grade level; accept a vacant position by descending order to a mutually agreed level; exercise your seniority rights to replace a less senior CT by descend-

ing order to a mutually agreeable level; and/or accept a part-time position.

The Union strongly urges you to prioritize keeping your current grade level and full-time status.

We also urge you to call your union after meeting with HRS. HRS officials try to make the procedure flow smoothly. However, the easiest solution for them may not work for you. It is important that you check your understanding of your options with people who are looking out for your specific interests.

Prepare!
Trying to determine who has less seniority and where exactly those individuals are located in a particular unit or elsewhere on campus is an exercise in futility. Individuals retire, promote, take other jobs. If mass layoffs ever did happen, the landscape would change overwhelmingly and each case would need to be handled separately.

However, it is possible to make some preparations:

1. Make sure your resume is updated and complete. Specifically list all the skills that qualify you for any job you might conceivably be able to do on campus. Do not assume that your skills can be logically deduced from a list of tasks for which you are responsible.

Take advantage of resume and interview support services. Call Human Resource Services at 353-3720 and ask to set up an appointment with an analyst to review your resume.

2. Submit positive materials to your personnel file. Any letters of appreciation, certificates of completion, awards, etc., should be placed in your file. You should also review your file to make sure that inappropriate materials are not in it. To set up an appointment to review your file, contact Rosie Ovenshouse at 884-0129. Contact your UR if you are concerned about anything you find in your file.

3. Update your skills. Take advantage of educational opportunities and training. Although supervisors should be able to see the advantages of having educated employees with up-to-date skills, some do not. If your office is too busy—or your unit managers too shortsighted—to offer released time, find another way! Look into evening or internet classes. Also look at the various computer software training available through the Libraries, Computing and Technology Training Program (lcctp.msu.edu).

Making sure that your skills are updated, your resume is complete and your personnel file accurately reflects your work is a great way to remain secure in your employment, whether or not layoffs ever become a reality.

Layoff continued on next page
Layoff

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Where will the work go?
If CTs are laid off, where is the work going? This is a crucial question. Are departments creating “not to do” lists and eliminating areas of service and support? If they are laying off CTs, the answer should be YES!

“Layoff is defined as a reduction in the workforce,” according to the first sentence of Article 18 of our Contract.

A CT cannot be laid off for any other reason: not retaliation, not punishment, not convenience, not previous grievances or disciplinary charges.

A department that thinks it can replace a CT with student, temporary or on-call employees is mistaken. To do so would be not to reduce but to transfer work from our members to others, a clear violation of our Contract.

In the same way, it is inappropriate for a laid off CT’s work to be picked up by supervisors or APs. The CTU is committed to fighting the erosion of our bargaining unit should we see it happening. Of course, the only way for us to monitor these situations is for every CT to be vigilant about protecting CT work for CTs.

If you see work that is normally done by CTs being assigned to individuals outside of our bargaining unit, call your UR or the CTU office at once! If you are concerned about being laid off, make a list of all of your job duties. (Perhaps you can update the job inventory checklist that you prepared for the union last summer.) We can use the list if it later appears that those duties are being assigned to others outside of the bargaining unit.

How much more can we take?
Can the remaining CTs pick up the work of someone who is laid off?

Based on conversations with CTs, it seems that just about everyone is working at capacity.

“Management can assign duties to a CT if they fit within the parameters of the job classification,” McNeil said, “but it is unreasonable to expect one CT to do the jobs of two people—or even for two CTs to each add on half the duties of a regular CT.”

We have work overload forms available for supervisor prioritization of unreasonable CT workloads (www.msu.edu/user/ctumsu/overflow.htm). McNeil asks CTs who find themselves in this position to contact their UR or the CTU office for assistance. It is especially important for the Union to be able to monitor and address instances of work overload when we are being told that CTs may be laid off. [Stephanie Terry]

And remember, we need to be paid for all the time we put in. If every 40-hour CT worked one hour per week “off the books,” it would deny a job to 47.5 full-time CTs. To protect our jobs and those of our coworkers, it is crucially important—now more than ever—that we take our contractually guaranteed breaks and lunch hours.

Even with all of our contractual protections, some CTs are laid off even during good economic times (usually technicians with skills that don’t easily transfer to other positions). However, the provisions of our Contract make laying off CTs very difficult. We worked hard to get this language into the Contract, and we work hard to keep it every time we go into negotiations. Now, during these times of economic uncertainty, we must be especially watchful to make sure that we do not allow it to be weakened.

21st PAC-MAC spelling bee

Submitted by Audrey Smith, CTU member.
Women’s Resource Center

Over the 21 years it has been offered, many of our members have been involved—as the parents of participants and as volunteers—in the annual spelling bee put on by the Parents Action Committee on Minority Academic Concerns (PAC-MAC).

This year’s spelling bee will be held Saturday, June 13, 2009, at 10:45 a.m.

The event will take place at the MSU Kellogg Center Auditorium, 55 South Harrison Road, East Lansing.

Parents with first through seventh grade children who are interested in participating must complete a registration form and return it along with the $10 per student registration fee (check or money order—send no cash) payable to PAC-MAC. The registration deadline is Sunday, May 31, 2009.

The registration form is available from the CTU web site at www.msu.edu/user/ctumsu/PACMAC2009.pdf.

Questions? Please contact Audrey Smith (517-887-2118) between 7 and 9 p.m., Monday-Friday.
Calendar

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

May 7 & 14 “How to Eat: Resolving the Weight Dilemma” orientation. Orientation required to attend the free 8-week group program by Health4U. 12:10–12:50 p.m., 335 Law College.

May 10 Mother’s Day. Remember to celebrate moms, especially union moms. [Susan Dyer]

May 11 Deadline for Benefits Open Enrollment. (See article, p. 1.)

May 15 Deadline to submit materials for the June CT News.

May 15 Nomination deadline for the 2009 Thomas and Concertina Giozzo CT Award. Find nomination forms under the HR News section of the MSU Human Resources website at www.hr.msu.edu. Address questions to Jackie Mussell, 884-0114 or musseljf@hr.msu.edu.

May 19 CTU Executive Board Meeting, 5:15 p.m., C-T Union Hall. All members welcome.

May 25 Memorial Day, a paid holiday courtesy of our union contract. Remember those who served!

May 31 Deadline to sign up for employee paid vision care through MEBS. Go to https://onlinemems.com.

June 4 CTU Solidarity & 35th Anniv. Picnic. (See announcement, this page.)

Solidarity & 35th Anniversary Picnic

Hold the date: The CTU Solidarity & 35th Anniversary Picnic will be June 4, from 4 to 7 p.m.

After a great time last year, we hope to see even more members this year.

CTU will provide the hotdogs and fixin’s as well as side dishes and soft drinks.

Come as you are, or go home and pick up the family and friends.

New members

The University has hired 113 new CTs since February 2008.

To help new members understand their union, we will hold New Member Orientation luncheons May 21 and June 11. Members who were hired since our last orientation will receive invitations. [Yolanda Flores]

Are you a CT hired within the last few years who hasn’t had an opportunity to attend an orientation? If you would like to do so, please contact the office at 355-1903 or ctustaff@msu.edu.

Mildred B. Erickson yard sale

Submitted by Linda Gibson,
CTU Member, MSU Union

Spring cleaning?

Please bring your donations to the MSU Union second floor Sales Office.

On Thursday, September 3, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., the MSU Union will host the third annual Mildred B. Erickson Yard Sale. The sale is a benefit for the Mildred B. Erickson Scholarship Fund, which helps the nontraditional (older) student returning to college. It is also a boon to our international students, who travel by airplane, and cannot bring much with them to outfit their rooms.

For this sale, we need items suited for college students’ rooms and apartments, such as linens, pots and pans, storage containers, rugs, pictures and other décor, lamps, silverware, dishes, etc. (No clothing.)

Items must be portable. If you have multiple donations, just park on the circle drive at the west entrance of the Union (Abbott Rd.). Call 355-3464, and we’ll come down and help you unload your vehicle.

Produced by your CT colleagues at MSU Printing Services.