Special elections issue

This issue provides information we will need to make informed decisions and vote in the CTU elections:

**VOTE**

Tuesday, October 27
MSU Auditorium
on Farm Lane
7:30 a.m. — 5:30 p.m.

We will be selecting a president, a treasurer, three directors and a member of the Audit Committee. Each of the candidates has provided a statement, printed on pages 4 through 7.

We can ask questions of the candidates at any of the three candidate forums (schedule on p. 6) or by submitting questions to the Elections Committee (contact information on p. 7) by Monday, October 19.

**Absentee ballots**

Contact Barb Harris (355-1903, ctustaff@msu.edu) to receive an absentee ballot and instructions.

Deadline to request an absentee ballot: 5 p.m., October 20.

Our off-campus members are encouraged to vote using an absentee ballot. Off-campus members can also vote at the MSU Auditorium from 7:30 a.m. through 5:30 p.m.

**Fall Membership Meeting**

Wednesday, October 28
252 Erickson
5:20 p.m.

Agenda includes:
Election results
Installation of officers
Negotiations update
Financial report

Doors open at 5 p.m. Arrive early to socialize—light refreshments served.

Membership meetings provide an opportunity for members to make decisions about the union, receive updates about Union activities, meet with coworkers from across campus and discuss issues of concern.

**Need a ride?**

Contact Patricia Shackleton (432-5665, email ctumngr@msu.edu) on or before October 27 to schedule a ride to and from the polls. Rides are scheduled on a first come/first served basis, so register early. Reserve the whole van and come with a group of coworkers!
CT News

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY

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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 classifed

For sale:
◆ Small, portable washing machine: Gets clothes really clean! Nearly new, purchased in 2009 and used only a few times. A real space saver, this machine is perfect for an apartment without laundry facilities, or your home. $175 or negotiable. Email jsmeade@prodigy.net for details.

◆ Many baby items: Crib $75, activity center-walker/stationary $20, Pack and Play $20, baby seats either for table or on chair w/tray $10 each, swing for outdoor swing set or tree $5, baby swing $5. All in excellent condition. Sue 989-224-6904.

◆ 1991 3/2 Commodore manufactured home: In very desirable East Lansing park less than 10 minutes from MSU. Over 1,500 sq/ft living space, vaulted ceilings and walk-in closets in all 3 bedrooms. Kitchen has ample counter space, including area for informal eating, and tons of cupboard space. 10x10x14 locking storage shed with electric, workbench and upper storage loft. Sits on private & secluded lot with lots of wildlife. Hot water heater & furnace replaced 12/2008. GE washer/dryer less than 3 years old. Roof installed 2004. Garbage disposal, refrigerator, gas range, dishwasher included. Custom painted stone fireplace facing with large mantle. Master bedroom has large 2-

person shower installed in 2007. New shower/bathtub installed 2008 in shared bathroom. Call 517-339-5052 or email zachary@outdoor-michigan.com for more information and to schedule a showing. Property will go fast and must be seen to understand why. Photos and more info: http://outdoor-michigan.com/dream-home.html.

Services:
◆ Ambient Heating & A/C, LLC: The economy is being hard hit. I will give a 10% discount off labor to all MSU employees. Call Brian at 517-795-9432 or email ambientvac@hotmail.com.

◆ Commuting from Grand Rapids to MSU? We’re looking for additional car pool riders to join a new MICHIVAN carpool. Currently we meet at Lowell Park-N-Ride but Cascade Meijer Park-N-Ride possible too. Contact Angela at 517-337-2731.

◆ Capital Area Transportation Authority offers a ride sharing service called Clean Commute that several CTs are using. Contact Clean Commute toll free (877-921-POOL), locally (517-393-RIDE), by fax (517-394-3733), or website (www.cata.org/cleancommute/index.html).

Free: Advertise to your colleagues in the CT News. Contact Cheryllee 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.
Cass tells legislators: MI should adopt what works in health care

“The passage of this bill will literally roll Michigan State University’s processes back 12 years.”

That was the message Wayne Cass, President of the Coalition of Labor Organizations at MSU, delivered at a September hearing of the Public Employee Health Care Reform Committee, a special state panel considering the Michigan Health Benefits Program.

The Michigan Health Benefits Program is the proposal by Representative Andy Dillon that would move all public sector employees, including those at state universities and public schools, into one big insurance program administered by the state.

Cass described to the committee how the unions and administration at MSU have worked together for 12 years to keep health care costs down, reducing our overall spend by $50 million a year.

First, he said, we recognized our common interests as employees and then we approached the University with a plan to work together to bring overall costs down instead of merely shifting costs to the employee.

We brought the consumer of health care (the employee) to the table on the side of the purchaser (the employer) when negotiating with the insurance companies. Together, we insisted that the insurance companies represent us, those who are paying for their services, rather than acting solely as representatives of the doctors, hospitals and other providers. [Monica Nestale]

The employer and the unions also agreed to work together on an ongoing basis—not just during negotiations—to find and take advantage of efficiencies that would lower costs.

“Here’s an example of a successful local labor/management bargaining process that changed the procedure, that changed the paradigm, both internally and, to the extent we could, externally,” Cass told the representatives.

“We [unions] see our role as being advocates for the consumer,” Cass said explaining collective bargaining’s potential in impacting health care costs.

“There is nowhere in U.S. law that gives anybody the right to sit down with the employer and purchase their health care benefits if you don’t have a union contract . . .”

Cass acknowledged that the current health care system is unsustainable but said that the Dillon plan does not address the problems. For example, many experts say that the potential savings of the plan are grossly exaggerated. Also, “there is no exit strategy” if the plan fails to deliver after undermining what’s already in place.

He said that the Dillon plan would add another bureaucratic layer between the consumer and the health care providers. Our success at MSU, on the other hand, has been based partially on removing such barriers and bringing all the parties to the table.

“We think the people of the State of Michigan would be better served if, rather than looking around at what’s wrong and not working well and proposing a single bureaucratic solution to it, we would step back and look at what’s working right and think about how we can improve,” Cass said.

“We [the unions] have a 100 year history of success in finding the creative ways to bring solutions for the benefit of working folks, and that is what we are committed to.”

Coffee breaks thanks to CTU

The Union that brought you work breaks now brings the coffee and doughnuts right to your office.

Recent winners of the Solidarity Committee’s coffee and doughnuts drawing are:

▼ Joann Peterson, Chemical Engineering and Materials Science, March
▼ Gloria Ellerhorst, Children, Youth, and Family Consortium, April Membership Meeting
▼ Nancy Smock, Stores Receiving, May
▼ Anne Conwell, Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation, and Resource Studies (CARRS), June
▼ Amanda Scharnweber, Student Life, July
▼ Mary Austin, Environmental Health and Safety (EHS), July Membership Meeting
▼ Susan North, Academic Computing and Network Services, August
▼ Christine York, Surgery, September

Submit your name to win a union coffee break with doughnuts from the Solidarity Committee. Contact Chairperson Lois Siefring at 353-4911 or lois.siefring@hc.msu.edu.
Deb Bittner  
Two-year term

I appreciate the honor of serving you as president of CTU. I am proud of our continued efforts in solving workplace problems, defending our contract and working to maintain our positive relationships.

As president, I will continue that work and bring confidence, experience and tested leadership ability to the role. We always need more member involvement because without each of you, this is not a Union. I will work to ensure that CTU remains supportive and inclusive for each member.

These last two years saw much stress, like budget difficulties both at CTU and at the University. We saw problems with being a “home owner” when we needed several repairs to our building. We continue to deal with layoffs and workplace issues, especially issues due to so many jobs changing and increasing workloads with fewer CTs. CTU continues to be on top of all this and keeps working to benefit the membership.

Jan Wallace  
Two-year term

As a CT with 24 years on campus, I have had the opportunity to work in several different units. This has allowed me to observe and understand multiple processes and some of the complexities of the university. I have experienced the stress of layoff and I’m grateful for my Union’s strong contract language that protects us in a layoff/bypass or bumping situation. It also provides us with the opportunity to change jobs campus-wide without sacrificing our seniority.

I am asking for your support in my pursuit of the position of Treasurer for the CTU. For the past two years, I have been a director on the CTU Executive Board and have served on the Finance Committee. This opportunity of working with the Executive Board and the CTU staff has enabled me to serve the Membership as a whole more effectively. I have also served as a Union Representative for two years which helped me obtain more of a working knowledge about our members and our

Suzanne Good  
Three-year term

Thank you for the opportunity to run for Audit Committee, a position I have held since June 2008.

The Audit Committee is an important component of the CTU. Ultimately, it is our responsibility to make sure there is a yearly audit and that the results are reported to the membership. We also monitor normal operating expenses and serve as an independent communications channel between the members of the Union and the members of the Executive Board who deal with the organization’s expenses. Any member who has a question about these matters should contact the Audit Committee.

I also serve as a Union Representative in my district, which includes Sparrow, Breslin Cancer Center, Lansing Medical Office Center and any other CTs who might be located in the area of downtown Lansing.

Your vote of support would allow me

Bittner continued on p. 6  
Wallace continued on p. 6  
Good continued on p. 6
Dear Fellow CTs;

I am asking for your vote in the CTU Election this October 27, 2009. I would like to serve the membership as a director. I have worked at MSU since 1997; first as a temp, then permanently hired in 1999, so I am very familiar with the campus.

As everyone knows, the entire country is working through a recession, and Michigan has been hit for several years harder than most. We have seen hard times; I believe we will see more. CTU needs people who have served, are familiar with the union, and are not afraid to let the buck stop with them in regards to the boundaries of their office and duties.

I have served the CTU community as a union representative in my district, 36 (Morrill, Linton, Eustace-Cole, Chittenden, and Marshall Halls) since 2001. I have striven to be available to my members whenever they’ve had a

I am running for CTU Board Member because I am committed to our members, to keeping our contract strong and fighting to keep the benefits we have worked so hard for. My contributions to the Clerical Technical Union and the members include serving as UR, Member of URCC, CTU Board Member, contract negotiations, activities in conjunction with other unions and numerous CTU sponsored activities. I have gained invaluable experience in defending our members to assure they are protected under the language of our contract.

I pledged to the membership that I would stand in solidarity and defend our right to bargain for equitable and fair wages and benefits. That pledge has always been my motivating factor. With that said you all know that the Coalition is bargaining for our wage and health care benefits. This will be no easy process but there are things we can do to raise awareness within our communities and our mem-

Peebles continued on p. 6

Roe-Darden continued on p. 7

Teague continued on p. 7
With your support, I look forward to another term as president. As always there is much to do. We are currently in health care negotiations with the other eight unions covered under the health care memorandum of understanding. Health care coverage is a difficult matter these days, but we are hopeful that our partnership with the University will continue to be beneficial in negotiating a successful outcome for all of us. I have been fortunate to have many years working with the Coalition of Labor Organizations and promise to continue to work for you in this process.

Through work with the CTU Executive Board and Staff, I am always striving to improve the policies for our organization, to advance our contractual strengths and to continue our work in the community. As an organization, we do make a difference and I’m glad to be a part of all that we do. We still can do more—more member involvement, more opportunities to join other union efforts, more programs on education for ourselves and more ways to demonstrate why we still matter in the workplace, the University and our community. I continue to strongly believe that we make an impact through our collective involvement as Union members. While defending the rights of each member, we must continually find new ways to remain involved and committed to the success of our workplace.

Thank you for the opportunities that this position has given me. I pledge to continue to work hard at serving CTs at Michigan State University. I ask for your vote on October 27. Please feel free to contact me at 353-3514 or bittnerdeb@yahoo.com.

Union. I found that these experiences have given me additional motivation to commit to another level of leadership, as CTU Treasurer.

For the majority of my life, I have been involved with unions. My father was involved in a union, and now both my spouse and I are union members. We truly realize the importance and benefits of being involved in organized labor! I am so proud to be a member of CTU. It is my goal to see it thrive and increase in strength. I believe wholeheartedly in the concept of solidarity and our CTU membership working together to obtain the best workplace for all of us.

I will continue to work hard and be as effective as I can to improve the quality of employment for all CTs. It is worth the time commitment and all the hard work to make sure we stay strong and united. Every day that we go to work, use our health care, take a paid vacation, use a sick day, or take advantage of one of our many benefits, we are exercising rights that were won by the members we elected to represent us at the bargaining table, rights we defend each and every time we enforce our contract.

I am asking for your support and your vote for Treasurer on October 27. With your help, I will be able to continue my goal of obtaining the best that I can for US! [Lisa R. Ruess]

Wallace

continued from p. 4

I believe that unions are the expression of some of the most fundamental ideals of our democracy: the right to control one’s own destiny, and its application not just to our country, but to our common interests as working people; the right to free speech that allows us to speak out individually and as a group on matters that concern us; and that each of us has a right to vote on those who come forward to represent us.

Even though in this race all candidates are essentially unopposed, it is important that we CTs vote to show our support for this union. We must demonstrate that we value our right to bargain collectively—as equals with management and in our own best interests.

Meet the Union candidates

Wednesday, October 21
5:30 p.m.–6:30 p.m.
Room 252 Erickson Hall

Friday, October 23
11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.
North Conference Room
4th Floor West Wing, Library

Monday, October 26
11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.
Spartan Room B, International Center
(No outside food. Lunch can be purchased from the adjacent Food Court.)

Peebles

continued from p. 5

and protect our interests under the contract, particularly as it relates to healthcare and erosion of the bargaining unit. Solidarity, within the CTU and between the member unions of our Coalition, will be the foundation upon which we will succeed.

Good

continued from p. 4

to continue to serve our union on the Audit Committee, and I would greatly appreciate it.
Roe-Darden  

continued from p. 5

problem. When I started, there had not been a representative in my district for some time, so I have been a source of consistency, where people know they can go if there’s a work issue.

In addition to serving as a representative, I have served the past five years as an officer for Mid-Michigan Labor Employment Relations Association (LERA), whose mission is, “The purpose of the Mid-Michigan Chapter of LERA is to foster networking and discussion of issues affecting today’s workplace.” CTU has been closely affiliated with LERA, and I served for two years in LERA as secretary, two years as vice-president, and one (last year) as president of the local chapter. All of this was wonderful organizational and leadership experience, and I am happy to report that we had several luncheon meetings last year in which the room we used was almost too small! [Kimberly Anderson]

Finally, I am also serving on the “Flex for U” committee, which is examining alternate and flexible work scheduling. This is a relatively new committee; but the goal is to publicize and standardize flexible and alternate work scheduling for all MSU employees.

I seek a position on the CTU Board of Directors because I believe in the words of John F. Kennedy, “To whom much is given, much is expected.” I’ve had the wonderful opportunity to work here at MSU, to serve the Clerical Technical Union as a representative, to lead in Mid-Michigan LERA, and now I am seeking to serve you in a different capacity.

Teague  

continued from p. 5

We have gone through budget cuts this year and we are told there will be cuts next year. Our contract provides us with protective and strong layoff language. Something we fought hard to keep during negotiations. Remember, we have bump and by-pass rights campus wide.

There have been many rumors and threats about layoffs. We all need to stand in solidarity to dispel the rumors and threats. Remember your rights under your CTU contract. If you hear a rumor, or just have a question, contact your UR, myself, the Union or any CTU Board Member.

Work and life balance are essential to our bodies, mind and spirit. We are all hearing far too much of doom and gloom lately. We are empowered by our contract and don’t forget that!

I remain committed to moving our Union forward in a positive and strengthening manner. We have to fight hard to promote solidarity and keep our union contract strong! A huge step in stating our solidarity is your vote! Support our union and be sure to vote in this election.

Please contact me, at the email address below, should you have any concerns/questions. Remember to keep those precious to you close and dare to live your dreams!

In Solidarity,
Norma J. Teague
normaj.teague@gmail.com
Calendar

October 15. Deadline to contribute items for the November CT News.

October 20. CTU Executive Board meeting, C-T Union Hall, 5:15 pm. Members welcome.

October 20 Three-part Financial Wellness Series will be offered on Tuesdays, beginning with “Priority Budgeting; Changing Your Spending Habits to Fit Your Income.” The workshop will offer participating action steps regarding prioritizing expenses and saving priorities which significantly differ from an overall personal or household budget. Presenter Constance Costner, MSU Extension. The October 27 session will focus on “Housing and Foreclosure Prevention” and November 3 on “Family Financial Well Being; Communication with Family around Budgeting.” MSU Union Building, Lake Huron Room (3rd floor), 12–1 pm. Free. Feel free to bring your lunch.

October 21 Meet the CTU candidates, 5:30–6:30 pm, 252 Erickson.

October 22 Poet Mark Nowak will read from his new book, Coal Mountain Elementary. 105 S. Kedzie, 7:30 pm. LEP Our Daily Work/Our Daily Lives.

October 23 Meet the CTU candidates, 11:30 am–1:30 pm, North Conference Room, 4th Floor West Wing, Library.

October 26 Meet the CTU candidates, 11:30 am–1:30 pm, Spartan Room B, International Center. (No outside food. Lunch can be purchased from the adjacent Food Court.)

October 27 CTU elections, 7:30 am–5:30 pm, MSU Auditorium Lobby.

October 28 CTU Membership Meeting, 5:20 pm, 252 Erickson Hall. Doors open at 5 pm for socializing.

October 30. Deadline to submit nominations for the 2009-2010 Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff award. See http://hr.msu.edu/recognition/supportstaff/DistStaff.htm for more information and nomination forms, or call 353-4352.

Reminder: Labor challenge

We are invited to participate in the Labor Challenge sponsored by the Coalition of Labor Organizations at MSU.

Just write “CTU” on the department line after your department name on your 2009-10 MSU Community Charitable Campaign form.

By joining other union members who share our commitment, camaraderie, and teamwork we can showcase what the MSU Labor Family can do when challenged. Unions are all about working collectively, and through our joint efforts, your contribution—no matter how small—strengthens other gifts. Every contribution will help someone who might not otherwise receive help.

Thanks for all you do on part of the MSU community and the communities where you live!

November 16 Deadline (5 pm) to submit nominations for the Excellence in Diversity Award. Nomination packets, entry forms and details about the program, are available on the EIDA website at http://www.inclusion.msu.edu/jeida. Direct all questions to the EIDA Program Office at 432-8384.