Health care negotiations

In recent statements in the State News, some MSU faculty and administrative representatives have said that unions are working with the faculty to come up with health care recommendations.

While the unions have discussed and will continue to discuss any ideas that could benefit members, it is inaccurate to say we are participating with the faculty in making recommendations, according to Wayne Cass, President of the Coalition of Labor Organizations at MSU. The unions have a different process for representing members.

“Unions have represented their members at MSU for over 35 years through the collective bargaining process and will continue to do so,” Cass said. “The recent State News article on health care that has caused much concern among our members is misleading and does not at all reflect the status of our negotiations.”

The agreement on health care between the nine unions of the CLO and the University, covering approximately 5,400 staff employees, that has been in effect for the past 12 years is currently under discussion between the parties.

“Our members can be assured that their unions talk to a wide range of interested parties as they prepare for health care bargaining,” Cass said. “Considering the interests of all the stakeholders when we negotiate is very important, but just because we’ve discussed the subject with retirees and a

Election results

One hundred ninety-three CTs went to the polls October 27 to elect leaders who will represent us over the next few years:

- **President:** Deb Bittner 172, no 21
- **Treasurer:** Jan Wallace 176, no 17
- **Three Directors:** Walt Peebles 155, Janet Roe-Darden 154, Norma Teague 152, invalid/blank 4
- **Audit Committee:** Suzanne Good 181, no 7, invalid/blank 5

Each of the newly elected officials has prior leadership experience in the CTU and should be well equipped to help us navigate through the economic and political quagmire.

Finances

Seventy-one members attended the next night’s membership meeting (our first quorum since June 2008) and voted 60 to 2 in favor of transferring $125,000 from our Designated Fund to operations.

Previous Treasurer Jeannine Lee said that the transfer was necessary at this time because of arbitration costs and unanticipated expenses resulting from water damage to our building.

The decision positions us, financially, to continue defending our rights under the contract in the immediate future.

CTU prepares for a challenging future

CTs made two decisions at the end of October to help strengthen our union in the face of uncertainty over the economy, rising health care costs and other challenges.

October 28—Newly elected CTU leaders were installed at the October Membership Meeting. Right to left: President Deb Bittner, Director Walt Peebles, Treasurer Jan Wallace, Audit Committee Member Suzanne Good, Director Norma Teague, Director Janet Roe-Darden.

Health care negotiations continued on p. 6

Unions continued on p. 6

Layoffs continued on p. 4
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 Cherylee Finney.

CT classifieds

For sale:
◆ Fender precision bass: Barely used (church youth band), tobacco sunburst color, includes amp, shoulder strap, cord and tuner, $400. Call 517- 899-2812.
◆ Clayton piano: In good shape, $300. Call Linda at 898-5812.
◆ ProForm 20 Elliptical Trainer: Space saver design, dual grip EKG heart rate, upper body workout, workout CD. $250. Contact Karen at 517-303-1170 (leave a message) or email karen.gray@att.net.
◆ 9-drawer dresser: 65 L x 18 W x 35T solid wood, cherry finish. 2 felt lined jewelry drawers, 2 cedar lined sweater drawers. Very nice, just do not have room. $175. Call 517-663-5528.
◆ Stoneware dishes: Includes 8 cereal bowls, salad plates, dinner plates & mugs, plus salt & pepper shaker, 12” chop platter, creamer & sugar bowl. You can bake, freeze, microwave, and throw stoneware in the dishwasher. Good condition. Chop platter, creamer, mugs & sugar bowl used less than a handful of times. Look practically new. View them and order new pieces at http://www.replacements.com/webquote/N__KAC.htm. Entire set would cost $900 new, selling for $100 or best offer. Will send close-up photos to see the colors on request. Please email stunningtigress@yahoo.com.
◆ South Lansing townhouse in Village Townhouses Cooperative: Two bedroom, one bath with personal gated side yard (rare to community). Front door parking, hardwood floors, washer and dryer, 1-year-old central air conditioning, designer shower curtain rod, window coverings, new kitchen faucet, new dining room light and large basement for storage. Asking $7,500. Contact Scott at 230-0749 or Jessica at 449-8791 for more details. For pictures, email ajmsu_mommy@hotmail.com.

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

Ride share:
◆ 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 Cherylee Finney at ctnews@msu.edu. The CT News accepts ads from CTs on items for sale and/or services provided by CTs and/or their household family members.

General Membership Meetings in 2010
Quarterly Membership Meetings in 2010 will be held on Wednesdays, January 27, April 28, July 28 and October 27. Times and locations will be announced as available. Meetings begin at 5:20, but the doors open at 5 so come early to socialize. These meetings are for making decisions about the Union, asking questions and receiving updates about Union activities.

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

CT classifieds

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Thank you

By Deb Bittner

In this season of thanksgiving, everyone should give special thanks for unions and add on some hope that we grow stronger.

Although most readers of the CT News will understand and agree with this statement, it would be sure to confuse or even anger some people. The truth is, however, that our society depends on union strength.

You don’t have to be an elected union official to see the effects of job loss and concessions in our area. Many people don’t have the money to buy goods and services, or even to pay their bills. Those treading water financially are afraid to make purchases. As a result, more people are laid off. Tax revenues fall and public workers are laid off, meaning there is even less money being spent locally. More people are laid off. The economic cycle continues to spin downward.

So, when the union is able to save a job, or avoid wage and benefit cuts, everyone is better off, not just the unionized worker.

But unions do more. We work to end the race to the bottom on a broader scale. [Marcia Kay Hanson]

Historically, we have been the moving force behind laws that prohibited child labor and established the 40-hour work week (and weekends!), workplace health and safety laws, the minimum wage, social security, workers’ compensation, unemployment insurance, workplace antidiscrimination laws and guaranteed leave for workers to care for ourselves and our families when ill.

Of course, we can always do more. And the challenges we face will give us plenty of opportunity. For example, we need to be ready to respond to the threat budget cuts are having on workers and students at MSU, as well as the rest of the state. Considering that we are in the middle of health care negotiations, we must also be prepared to resist attempts by the university to solve all of its budgetary problems through these talks.

Please watch for events and actions we can take to defend and strengthen workers’ rights and positions in our workplaces and communities. [Pamela Sue Newstead]

One way labor has always made a difference in the community is through service and donations. The current United Way Labor Challenge sponsored by the Coalition of Labor Organizations at MSU gives us an opportunity to join with other union members who share our commitment, camaraderie, and teamwork to show what the MSU Labor Family can do to help others.

Just write “CTU” on the department line after your department name on Thanks continued on p. 6

Phil Schloop retires

A good friend of CTU, MSU labor and working people everywhere retired recently.

Phil Schloop, Business Manager of the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 547, was a strong influence in the formation of the Coalition of Labor Organizations at Michigan State University.

We have continued to rely on his expertise in health care and other matters over the years, and we are grateful for his insight and support.

With all of his activism and contributions to labor and the community, we don’t expect Phil to have a quiet retirement. We wish him the best in his future endeavors.

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Just write “CTU” on the department line after your department name on Thanks continued on p. 6
Layoffs
continued from p. 1

Layoff update
At the meeting, Contract Administrator Dan McNeil gave a presentation on the current layoff situation.

Seventy-eight CTs have been affected by job eliminations since January, he said, either by having their jobs eliminated or by being bumped or displaced within their structural unit by a more senior CT. Thirteen CTs actually have been laid off.

Of the 13, seven probationary employees are gone, leaving MSU with no (0) probationary CTs on campus.

Of the six additional (nonprobationary) CTs on layoff, four failed trial periods. A couple still have a chance to bypass into a position, but the other two have failed two trial periods, meaning they no longer have bumping and bypass rights but can bid on open positions.

Two of the laid off nonprobationary CTs decided to pursue other goals. One moved out of state and the other returned to school.

McNeil encouraged every CT to prepare for the University’s belt tightening.

“Make sure that your skills are updated, your resume is complete and your personnel file accurately reflects your work and abilities,” he said, emphasizing the importance of being specific about one’s software skills on the resume.

McNeil also encouraged members to take applicable typing and/or software assessment tests at Human Resources. By quantifying one’s skills, these tests help CTs avoid positions in which they might fail and thereby jeopardize their bumping and bypass opportunities.

Because the layoff procedure is complicated and there are many options to be considered, McNeil said, anyone receiving a layoff notice should contact him immediately.

The union is also very concerned that eliminated positions be accompanied by a reduction in work.

President Bittner told of a long-term CT who, after her position was eliminated, was asked when she would have time to train someone to do her job.

“What job?” the CT asked and promptly contacted her union. The CTU is investigating the situation.

“Be prepared!”
Health care negotiations between the University and the Coalition of Labor Organizations are in full swing, said Bittner. “However, not a lot of information can be shared at this time.”

“University administrators have made public statements, and we all know that these are difficult times,” she said, adding that we will resist attempts by the administration to solve all of its budgetary problems through our health care negotiations.

“Pay attention and be prepared!” she said. “We may need to show our strength before this is over.”

Bittner also addressed the impact of state appropriations on the University and the possibility that we might be called upon to mobilize in order to edu-

Thank-you to volunteers
A heartfelt thanks for a smooth election goes out to our elections committee: Chairperson Liz Owen, Brenda Bailey, Kim Smith and Becky Sullivan.

We also want to thank 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: Chris Barden, Julie Detwiler, Colleen Drake, Dianne Dreffs, Marian Erickson, Debbie Forcier, Andrea James, Erin Johnson, Kathy Kirby, Kellie Kolasa, Jeannine Lee, Angel Loveall, Amy McCausey, Jeanette Robertson, Janice Sheffey, Katie Shelton, Stephanie Six, 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 continued on next page
Helping our animal friends

The local economy has left animal shelters and rescue groups overloaded with family pets that have nowhere else to go.

To help address the problem, Executive Board Director Norma Teague is coordinating CTU’s Ingham County Animal Shelter donation drive.

Donations, including cash donations, can be dropped off through mid-December at the C-T Union Hall, 7:30 a.m. until 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 8 until 5 on Fridays.

If you have a large collection site in your building, please call the CTU (355-1903) for a pickup.

Please note that University Stores has a number of the requested items (including dog leashes, office supplies and cleaning supplies) available for purchase at great prices from the Service Counter. Visit the online catalog at (universitystores.msu.edu). Faculty and staff members are charged the “personal use” price.

Thank you in advance for assisting with this worthy cause.

Ingham County Animal Shelter Request List

The Ingham County Animal Shelter is in need of several items.

Kitty needs: Cat litter (With over 75 cats in the building on any given day, over 600 pounds of cat litter are consumed each week!), canned cat food, dry cat food, stainless steel bowls, litter pans (used and new), litter scoops (lots of litter scoops!), plastic bags (recycled grocery bags, used for scooping litter), rugs (small), cat coozies and cat beds, towels, cat toys, scratching posts, cat carriers, large cat cage for display at mobile adoption events.

Dog needs: Collars, leashes and bandanas, toys, (lots of toys), raw hide chews, Kong chews, blankets, small rugs and linens to lay on, towels for bathing, dog carriers, dog crates, stainless steel bowls, puppy playpen (steel), cheez-wiz (we stuff it in the Kong toys and freeze them for the dogs), packages of hotdogs (used to hide the medication for dogs).

Grooming supplies: Oster grooming clippers, Demat combs and brushes, pet cologne, pet wipes.

Adoption supplies: Copy paper, colored copy paper, office supplies (ink pens, markers, pencils), poster board (small and large), dry erase markers, dry erase boards (small and medium size).

Cleaning supplies: Rubber dishwashing gloves, disposable gloves, Kleenex, paper towels, laundry detergent (HE front end washer), dish soap, Clorox, window cleaner, brooms/dustpans, mops.

Meeting

continued from previous page

cate legislators and others about the effects the drastic cuts are having on higher education and the larger Michigan economy.

The meeting also included a discussion about surveys, social activities, a drive to assist the Ingham County Animal Shelter, and a “Toys for Tots” fundraiser. [Helena Marek]

Doorprize winners were: Karen Jakus and Mary Canady-Hernandez, $50 each; Sally Zetzer, coffee and doughnuts for her department; Joann Villarreal, CTU t-shirt.

Ingham County Animal Shelter Request List

Karen Smith casts her ballot in the CTU elections.
few members of faculty doesn’t mean we’ve participated in preparing a list of recommendations as the State News article stated.”

“The University Committee on Faculty Affairs can make recommendations to whomever they choose, Cass added. “As a ‘meet and confer’ group they don’t have authority to bargain for faculty and certainly don’t represent the unions’ voice on health care matters. Our discussions are moving forward. We’ll be interested in seeing UCFA’s recommendation and look forward to considering its stronger points.”

Cass added that union leaders understand the health care environment very well and are quite aware of the economic challenges the university faces.

“They’re also committed to representing their members’ long-term interests by preserving an agreement that continues the Labor/Management Joint Health Care Committee, which reviews health care costs and makes decisions on employee health care plans.

“This innovative approach to managing health care costs going forward—by seeking the best value for all stakeholders—contrasts with more conventional approaches that simply off-load additional costs to employees,” Cass said.

An ideal way to strengthen the labor movement is to get involved in our own union.

Let me take a moment here to thank the volunteers and everyone who made the effort to vote in our most recent election. [Monica Klaver]

I also want to thank those who attended the Membership Meeting to discuss developments in health care negotiations, workplace climate and other union matters. Having a quorum at the meeting meant we were able to conduct business and vote to shore up our operating fund.

That vote ensured that our union would continue to have the financial resources available to spring to the defense of the contract and our members.

With all of the bad news about the economy and the job market, CTs are showing that we will not bury our heads in the sand. Instead, we are defending our contractual rights as well as working to help our families and our communities weather the storm.

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

The following CTs have petitioned to be appointed UR in their districts. They will be appointed if no other members from their respective districts express an interest in the positions before 5 p.m. on December 10.

- **District 1** (Administration Bldg.—Floors B, 1): April Moore.
- **District 9** (Life Sciences): Stephen Stofflet.
- **District 17** (Grounds, Physical Plant, Wilson, Holden, Case, Wonders, Duffy Daugherty Football Building): Pamela Sloan.
- **District 21** (Holmes, McDonel, Hubbard, Akers, Conrad, IM East): Kim Smith.
- **District 29** (Olin Health Center, Berkey): Mary Canady-Hernandez.

The following members have been appointed to UR positions.

- **District 13** (Anthony, Meats Lab, Engineering): Meagan Kroll can be contacted at 353-9556 or krollm@msu.edu.
- **District 26** (Student Services, Hort.): Contact Lisa Ingraham at 355-3551 or lisaingr@msu.edu.
- **District 36** (Linton, Eustace, Chittendon, Marshall, Morrill): Janet Roe-Darden’s election to the Executive Board leaves her district without a UR. Interested members in the area are encouraged to step forward.

Are you interested in becoming a UR? Would you like more information about what the position entails? If so, contact URCC Chairperson Colleen Drake (432-6123x162 or drakec@msu.edu) or Vice President Nancy Gray (353-8632 or grayn@msu.edu).
Congratulations, Nancy

Nominated by 25 of her staff and faculty coworkers, CT Nancy Lavrik became the eighth recipient of the Annual Clerical-Technical Recognition Award at a ceremony held in her honor on November 6.

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

Assistant Vice President for Human Resources Brent Bowditch presented the award to Lavrik, calling her one of those “people who really make MSU the place it is—a really great place.”

Lavrik has worked in the chemistry department for 14 years and currently assists the organic chemistry program with all of its secretarial needs.

Bowditch cited Lavrik’s community and public service as well as the high praise heaped upon her by coworkers.

Lavrik said that she loves her job and working with the graduate and undergraduate students, faculty and staff.

“When Jackie from Human Resources called to tell me about the award,” Lavrik said, “she asked me if I was sitting down. In these uncertain times, that question can mean good news or not so good news. In this case it was wonderful news.”

“I’m very fortunate to be part of the team,” she said. “It has truly been very rewarding.”

Union training

Union training sessions for URs, Executive Board members and staff have covered some highly relevant topics in recent months.

In October, MSU Benefits Director Renee Rivard discussed trends in health care. CLO President Wayne Cass followed up with a talk on how those trends might affect us at MSU.

Labor and Industrial Relations Associate Professor Michelle Kaminski spoke with us about workplace bullying at the November session.

The training sessions, which are held monthly, help prepare our union leaders to better represent members and further the work of the union in general.

Family Resource Center listserv

The Family Resource Center publishes six topic oriented email listservs for staff, students and faculty:

- **Adoption** for parents who have adopted or are considering adoption
- **Breastfeeding** for students, staff and faculty moms who choose to breastfeed their babies
- **Eldercare** for those who are caregivers of elders
- **Parents** for staff and faculty who have children
- **Special Need Kids** for parents who have children with special needs
- **Stupar** for students who are raising children while pursuing their education

FRC email listservs share resources and information that pertain to folks who have a particular interest that relates to their family dynamic.

The listservs will provide information on specific topics such as educational information, classes, events, entertainment, etc. Members are encouraged to initiate dialog and pass on relevant facts. The lists are not intended to be a venue for “sales” or political opinion.

All students, staff and faculty are eligible to be on any of the lists.

If you want to be a part of the information sharing, just send an email to frc@hr.msu.edu and you will be added to the list(s) of your choice.

FRC provides many programs and services to the MSU community, including information on work/life balance and childcare resources. For more information, visit www.frc.msu.edu

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Calendar

**December 1** CTU Executive Board meeting, C-T Union Hall, 5:15 pm. Members welcome.


**December 9** “Please Don’t Go: Separation Anxiety Issues In Preschool Age Children.” Part of the Parenting Education Series offered by the Family Resource Center. Room 27 Nisbet Building, 12–1 pm.

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

**December 15** Deadline to contribute items for the January 2010 *CT News*.

**January 20, 2010** Register now to attend a pre-enrollment orientation for Health4U’s smoking cessation program. Provides medical evaluation/monitoring, behavioral support and medication to help you quit smoking. Open to MSU faculty, academic/support staff and benefits-eligible dependents. Orientation from 1:30–3:30 pm, Room 247 Olin Health Center. Enrollment size is limited, so register as soon as possible. Email health4u@msu.edu or call 517-353-2596.

CTU committees reconstituted

The CTU Executive Board reconstituted its committees at its November 17 meeting.

**Finance Committee**: Chairperson Jan Wallace, Jeanette Robertson, Walt Peebles, Jenn Woods and Norma Teague

**Grievance, Appeal and Trial Committee**: Chairperson Nancy Gray, Suzy Peacock, Janet Roe-Darden, Willie Paulsen and Duferia White

**Personnel Committee**: Chairperson Deb Bittner, Nancy Gray, Jan Wallace and Duferia White

CTU t-shirts available—$5

Union Made in the USA cotton t-shirts with the CTU logo are available for just $5 from your union in five colors: white, black, ash, dark green and orange (not all colors are available in all sizes). Call 355-1903 or email ctustaff@msu.edu.

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 23 and Thursday, December 3. Registrations received after December 3 will be considered as space permits.