President's corner

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

By Deb Bittner

I love the holidays! The gift giving, the cooking, even the last minute rush to get everything done—it’s all part of the tradition. However, it can be exhausting. I’m sure we’re all beginning to feel like this.

This year, with health care negotiations, time is even tighter. For example, next week we will be in negotiations or preparing for negotiations every single day, all day long! And the rest of the work of the union doesn’t stop just because we are bargaining. [Kathleen Merony]

Right now, there’s not a lot I can say about health care contract talks. Like all negotiations, there are high points and low points during the process. Currently, both sides seem to be listening to each other to determine our common interests and how to achieve them. Rest assured that the unions are working to make sure we retain quality, affordable health care. [Mary Ehmann]

Support good jobs this holiday season

Even with a down economy, for most of us the holidays mean some extra shopping. To contribute to boosting the economy and keeping our communities strong it is important that we buy from local merchants when we can and look for “union-made,” “Michigan-made” and “made in the USA” products. [Melissa Sue Borrush]

Also, we can support our MSU co-workers by purchasing goods from on-campus facilities. Considering the purchase of a computer or software? The MSU Computer Store stocks a lot of items that would make good gifts (see p. 3). Likewise, University Stores offers many products and MSU spirit items. Visit their showroom Monday through Friday from 8 to 5 or go to their website at universitystores.msu.edu and search for “MSU” in their on-line catalog.

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For sale:

◆ Lovely Dutch Colonial home: E. Lansing/Meridian Twp., 6083 Porter Ave., 2,100 sq. ft., 10 min. from MSU. Hardwood floors throughout, formal dining room, eat-in kitchen, sunroom and deck, double lot, 4 BRs plus 5th BR on 3rd floor has own bath, some updates/new windows, 3+ car garage; newer roof/furnace/air cond. $164,500. HomeTowne Realty, M. Bordner, 517-332-6043.

◆ 40 Acres (1,320 square): Will not split. 22 miles W. of Mt. Pleasant, then 3½ miles N. of Mecosta. High ground, all woods. Rustic deer camp (Deer, Turkey, Partridge). Close to Pretty Lake and Horse Head Lake (Zoned Residential). Owned 30 years. $128,000. First time on the market. 15-year land contract @ 8% with 10% down. Serious calls only (no realtor calls). Phone 517-628-3126. (If no answer, leave message and we will call back asap.)

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 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.

General Membership Meetings in 2010
Quarterly Membership Meetings in 2010 will be held in Erickson Hall, Room 252, on Wednesdays, January 27, April 28, July 28 and October 27. 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.

CT classifieds
Generics

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change, took into consideration how it would impact our members. In keeping with the charge to identify and implement necessary and beneficial changes in health care, the unions attended countless meetings throughout the year with CVS/Caremark, Staff Benefits, the CLO and the JHCC where they debated, charted, costed and argued many ideas on how to save health care dollars. The plan that was adopted was the best option.

Safeguards were built into the system so that individuals who have legitimate medical reasons for choosing brand name drugs over generics do not experience financial penalties for circumstances beyond their control.

What did we get for making this change? It cut over $4 million out of the $30 million spent annually to insure MSU employees. [Deborah M. Klein]

We should all be very aware of the escalating costs of health care. Recognizing the impact that rising health care costs have on our wages and other conditions at MSU, the unions have worked with the University for over 12 years to build efficiencies into the system so that we could continue to enjoy quality and effective health care options. We have been very good at finding creative ways to protect our benefits in a world in which most people have experienced deep cuts in coverage and/or outrageous premium sharing and cost sharing measures. This is only the most recent of many changes we have made over the years.

For questions about how the new program will affect you and your family, specifically, visit www.hr.msu.edu/generics. You can also call CVS/Caremark at 1-800-565-7105 or contact MSU Human Resources Benefits by email at benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu or by phone at 517-353-4434, 1-800-353-4434. There will be question and answer sessions in January where you can talk directly with Benefits staff and representatives from CVS/Caremark about the new program. Check www.hr.msu.edu/generics for session dates and times as they are developed.

Contact your union if you have problems with the transition.

Holidays

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In case you missed my email about the new Generic Prescribing Program, we’ve included information about the program’s changes in this newsletter.

If you have the opportunity, please attend the January 18 Community Celebration Dinner in commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (p. 4). Scheduled for a time convenient to most CTs, the program is excellent, the food is good and the company can’t be beat. It is free for MSU employees and students.

If you work an alternative schedule or just can’t make it to the dinner, check out one of the other excellent programs being offered in commemoration of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Also, remember to look for union, Michigan and U.S. made goods for your holiday purchases. And, above all, take good care of yourself during this busy season. [Tonja S. White]

Computer store

Submitted by Betty Walther, CT, Academic Tech. Services

Looking for the perfect holiday gift? Take a look at the exceptional values available to MSU faculty, staff and students at the Computer Store, located at 110 Computer Center. You can visit on-line at www.cstore.msu.edu. Current values include:

- Adobe Creative Suites 4: $199-$499 (Retail $999-$2,499)
- Cables: HDMI $17.50, Ethernet $1.25-$4.10, USB $3
- Flip video cameras: $121-$173
- Flash drives: 2GB-16GB $9.49-$39
- Toner cartridges: HP cartridges are in stock for many small and large printers at less than retail prices
- Batteries: .25-.80
- Microsoft Office: $65 personal use
- Adobe Acrobat: $60
- Skullcandy ear buds: $12.50
- Laptop bags and sleeves
- iPods at Apple retail prices

The Computer Center also stocks some Apple, IBM and Dell computers. Other hardware items may be found by going to the website and following the ordering procedures.

You may order any thing on line and have it delivered to your campus address for free.
Celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

We have several opportunities to participate in the commemoration of the life and work of Martin Luther King, Jr. on MLK Day, Monday, January 18, 2010.

For support staff members, who often are unable to attend MLK programs held during the day, the Community Celebration Dinner is one of the highlights. It provides the opportunity for staff, students, faculty and community members to share in the celebration of the legacy of Dr. King. It is held the evening of MLK Day in the Akers Hall Dining Cafe, from 4:45 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. One free ticket is available to each MSU staff, student and faculty member. Additional tickets must be purchased. Guests must preregister.

The 2010 theme is “The Message, Our History, Our Future.” For a frequently updated list of events associated with MSU’s week of celebration and a link to the registration form, visit www.inclusion.msu.edu/mlk.

Off campus, the 25th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Luncheon starts at 11 a.m. at the Lansing Center. The theme is “Celebrating the Dream through Unity and Service.” Tickets are $25 per person online at www.lansingmi.gov/mayor/mlk/index.jsp or by calling 517-483-7637.

The 2010 Keynote Speaker will be Juanita Abernathy, wife of the late Reverend Ralph David Abernathy and inductee of the International Civil Rights Hall of Fame. More information about the event and the speaker, as well as an opportunity to order tickets is available at www.lansingmi.gov/mayor/mlk.

Although classes are canceled on Monday, January 18, MLK Day is not a paid holiday for CTs at MSU. However, a letter of agreement in our Contract encourages departments to be flexible in permitting employees to participate in events associated with commemorating Martin Luther King, Jr. The letter also reiterates the Union’s and the University’s continued commitment to diversity and inclusion.

If you feel you are being denied a reasonable request to participate in an event associated with MLK Day, contact the CTU for support in working out a mutually agreeable arrangement.

“The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress.”

—Martin Luther King Jr.