

Delegates put stamp of approval on final bargaining demands



OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas, speaking to LBED delegates at the Final Demand-Setting Meeting in Mississauga

A process that began almost one year ago with focus groups asking LBED members what issues they wanted addressed in their new contract ended on Saturday Nov. 22 when a roomful of delegates gave their overwhelming approval to a package of final demands that negotiators will take to the bargaining table with the LCBO.

"This is all about solidarity and what we're witnessing today is something that started with the membership and worked its way to the top," said LBED chair Vanda Klumper. "It's history in the making – we've never had this opportunity before!

"Now is the time for each one of you to get out there

as mobilizers and get our members solidly behind the negotiating team."

LBED's contract with the LCBO expires on Mar. 31, 2009. Saturday's Final Demand Setting Meeting at a hotel in Mississauga marks the end of the process for LBED members and activists in shaping the bargaining demands before negotiators present them to the employer when talks begin in 2009.

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LBED ACTIVISTS SPEAK OUT!

...see inside for details

LBED activists declare:

“It will be our strongest contract ever!”

ECHO asked members attending the Nov. 22 Final Demand Setting Meeting their thoughts on the LBED's pre-bargaining process that led up to this historic meeting and its impact on members in general. This is what some activists had to say.



“This is my first time in a process like this and it's been fantastic. Everyone has been given the opportunity to make a contribution to the process. This brings the members a lot closer together. We will have a much stronger bargaining team. It will be our strongest contract ever!”

*MELLISSA JACKSON, VICE PRESIDENT,
LOCAL 682, NORTH BAY*

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Saturday's meeting, which attracted 58 delegates representing all regions of the province, was an historic first for organized liquor board employees in Ontario. Never before had representatives of the bargaining unit gathered under one roof to endorse those issues which the membership, through a series of surveys and local and regional meetings, have identified as their priorities going into negotiations.

That point wasn't lost on several speakers.

“Let me congratulate every member of LBED on being a part of history,” said OPSEU president Smokey Thomas. “You now know what we mean: in OPSEU it's the members who tell us what they want to see in their contract. It all starts with the membership.”

Thomas said the LCBO numbers tell the whole story.

“I don't think they Liberals want to get into a punch-up with you folks. Not when the LCBO is earning \$200,000 in profits from each and every member of the bargaining unit. They're always telling us 'The cupboard is bare,' but obviously that's not the case in the Liquor Division.”

LBED senior negotiator Rob Field told delegates the heavy lifting is about to begin.

“Today you will identify what the mandate of your negotiating team will be. Tomorrow we begin the job of getting a bit of something for everyone into our next contract.” He added that for too long “the LCBO has gotten away with Collective Agreement murder. That's going to stop.”

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**Got a question?
Call *OPSEUdirect* at 1-800-268-7376**

DEMOCRATIC DECISION-MAKING AT LBED

Your demand priorities

The road leading to the Final Demand Setting Meeting was a long one that led through every region of Ontario, through written surveys and by members having their voices heard in committees and at local and regional demand setting meetings. In May 2008, elected delegates to the pre-bargaining conference set out the key issues that members were asked to vote on in meetings earlier this autumn.

At the end of this democratic exercise, these are the **Top 5 Priority** bargaining issues identified by LBED members:

- ✓ A better deal for casuals, seasonal, PPTs and fixed term workers
- ✓ Wage increases for all employees that reflect the excellent productivity of the LBED bargaining unit and that don't fall below inflation
- ✓ Job security through the elimination of privatization threats, contracting out, divestment and agency stores
- ✓ Improvements to health and safety language, including a minimum staffing complement by store or service
- ✓ Pensions and improvements to early retirement options

LBED Emergency Assistance Fund grows by \$650

Thanks to strong sales at last weekend's LBED "product knowledge" social held on the eve of the Final Demand Setting Meeting – plus raffle sales on Nov. 22 – the Division's Emergency Assistance Fund has increased by \$650.

The EAF was established earlier this year at the pre-bargaining conference for those LBED members who suddenly find themselves in tough financial straits caused by unforeseen circumstances. The total amount in the fund

has now reached almost \$2,000.

LBED's Divisional Executive is looking into other ways and events where assistance funds can be raised.

For more details about the Emergency Assistance Fund, local presidents are invited to contact DivEx member Paula Sossi at: paulasossi@rogers.com. The fund does not allow for cash donations and the identity of recipients will remain confidential.

LBED activists declare:

"The greatest effect of this will be on the grassroots members. They will get a feel that they've actually made a contribution to the collective agreement. I think all members see a bit of themselves in the final demand setting. I can take this back to my members and feel good about it."

RICK WOODALL, VICE PRESIDENT, LOCAL 375, GRAVENHURST



LCBO can't plead poverty

The LCBO is a cash cow for the province of Ontario. The numbers prove it. Unfortunately, LCBO employees aren't getting their fair share thanks to a multi-tiered classification system that deliberately prevents equal pay for equal work.

LCBO net sales in the 2007-08 fiscal year amounted to a staggering \$4.1 billion, with profits of \$1.345 billion. That works out to more than \$200,000 from each and every LCBO employee, regardless of classification. No other business in Canada can boast the same rate of return on investment. In addition to the \$1.345 billion dividend to the provincial government last year, LCBO sales also collected \$382 million in provincial sales tax, \$119 in GST and \$339 million in excise taxes and import duties.

As OPSEU senior research officer Joyce Hansen told delegates to the Final Demand Setting Meeting, "The government might say they're in an economic crisis but that certainly doesn't apply to the LCBO."

Highlights of Hansen's presentation to the meeting included:

- Between August 2007 and April 2008, the number of permanent full time LBED members has dropped from 2,701 to 2,659 while the number of casuals has shot up from 3,168 to 3,606;
- Between 1996 and 2008 inflation in Ontario has gone up by 27 per cent while the wages of LCBO fixed term workers has lagged behind at an increase of only 17 per cent;
- LCBO fixed term workers have lagged behind with a one-time only increase, from \$8.50 to \$10, in 2000.
- In 2000-01, salaries and benefits paid to LCBO permanent workers made up 9.8 per cent of net sales; in 2006-07 that figure was 9.0 per cent – a 10 per cent drop in share of sales;
- In 2008-09 the LCBO is projecting an increase of 5.1 per cent in net sales. LBED members, with the exception of fixed-term workers, will earn an increase of three per cent.

LBED activists declare:



"I'd never been involved in the bargaining process previous to this. It really is a democratic process that involves everyone from the members up. It has opened up communications to the grassroots because it gives us a lot to talk about. It wasn't this way before."

MARIE NUNZIATA, STEWARD, LOCAL 288, WEST GTA



"Going through the pre-bargaining process and now at the final demand setting meeting you can see how many of the key head office concerns have been addressed. A lot has been said about casuals. Issues affecting casuals don't only impact on the retail sector but also on head office and the Toronto warehouse. It's been very worthwhile for all LBED members."

CRAIG HADLEY, CHIEF STEWARD, LOCAL 5109, HEAD OFFICE TORONTO

Your 2009 LBED bargaining team!



Back row, left to right: Vanda Klumber, Local 165 and LBED chair; Lori Davis, Local 499; Dora Robinson, Local 376; Paula Sossi, Local 285 and LBED secretary-treasurer; Sue Lusty, Local 376 (alternate); Tracy Vyfschaft, Local 377; Laurie Miller, Local 682.
Front row, left to right: OPSEU senior research officer, Joyce Hansen; OPSEU senior negotiator, Rob Field, Denise Davis, Local 378 and LBED vice-chair; Colleen McLeod, Local 5107

EAP Hotline: 1-800-263-1401

The LCBO Employee Assistance Program is a confidential, hassle-free counseling service for eligible LCBO employees and their immediate families. For assistance, please call 1-800-263-1401.

To find out more about the program, visit:

www.opseu.org/lcb/eap

Get on the list!

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1-800-268-7376 or 416-443-8888.

Bookmark this address! www.opseu.org/lbed

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