



## ***LBED negotiating team ready to roar!*** Elections cap successful pre-bargaining conference

Judging by the spirit and enthusiasm LBED delegates brought to the May 24-25 pre-bargaining conference in Mississauga, the next 10 months should be very interesting times for more than 6,000 liquor board employees.

With the clock winding down on our collective agreement with the LCBO (it expires March 31, 2009), more than 70 delegates and alternates attending the PBC displayed an exciting mix of passion, determination, solidarity and humour as they begin the task of preparing for next year's bargaining.

"What a fabulous weekend it's been," declared LBED chair Vanda Klumper at the end of the two-day conference. "And it's been an historic one, too. Everyone here today can be extremely proud of the fact they were part of the first democratic elections for a bargaining team in the history of liquor board employees in Ontario."

OPSEU president Warren (Smokey) Thomas kicked off the conference by thanking delegates for attending the meeting and reminding them of the serious business ahead.

He said OPSEU is prepared to put plenty of time, personnel and resources behind LBED's effort to negotiate a strong contract on behalf of members and their families.

"This weekend's pre-bargaining conference is an important first step in the bargaining process," he said. "It's a first step that many of you are probably not familiar with, coming from the experience of your previous collective bargaining unit.

"But our bargaining process speaks to the democratic tradition we follow inside OPSEU," Thomas said.

OPSEU senior research officer Joyce Hansen provided delegates with a detailed overview of the economic conditions that will

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# Discussing the issues

## Job classification, privatization and benefits top the list

Besides the important task of electing members to LBED's bargaining team, delegates and alternates spent considerable time discussing key negotiating issues that are likely to emerge following our final demand setting meeting in November.

The process of determining what issues rank highest among LBED's members began in November 2007, when a series of focus groups were held across the province involving casual, full-time, head office and warehouse employees. That was followed this past spring with demand-setting surveys distributed to all members. A phenomenal 95 per cent of locals — and 52 per cent of all members — responded to the surveys, which strongly indicated there are plenty of concerns about our current collective agreement.

From those surveys a pattern emerged which framed our discussions at the May 24-25 pre-bargaining conference. Three workshops were organized and delegates were mixed together to ensure that casuals, full-timers, head office staff and warehouse workers had the opportunity to listen to the issues most affecting others in the LCBO employment world.

All delegates were required to

attend one of the following three workshops:

### Casual Injustice

In this session delegates discussed the key issue of providing benefits to casuals after a certain length of time and/or number of weekly hours worked. Issues of conversion of casuals and closing wage gaps were also discussed closely. Fixed term classification was also a popular subject.

### Securing our Jobs

In this session delegates studied issues surrounding LCBO privatization, divestment, the spread of Agency stores, and contracting out. Considerable time was also spent on contentious issues such as the LCBO's use of low-paid temporary workers and the growing trend of managers doing bargaining unit work.

### Surviving the LCBO

Many LCBO employees have no benefits and no pension plans. Those that do, especially older workers, experience long term health problems caused by their work. These issues were discussed in detail. Others that came up included increasing minimum call-in times, retaining seniority when transferred and introduction of the compressed work week.

Delegates agreed that many of the issues discussed at the workshops will emerge in much greater detail later this year when local demand-setting meetings are scheduled.

# Ready to roar!

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likely come into play prior to, and during, negotiations. Factors such as Ontario's projected GDP growth, inflation rates, government revenues were presented along with key data on LCBO's net sales growth and the dividends it is expected to pay out to Queen's Park.

Democracy was very much in evidence on the second day of the conference when 57 voting delegates spent more than five hours electing various members and alternates to the negotiating team.

Between hearing reports from committee chairs on May 24, and electing a bargaining team the next day, delegates spent Saturday afternoon in workshops discussing key issues facing the membership and what tactics and strategies we can use to obtain strong results in our next collective agreement.

As might be expected with a spirited group of liquor board employees, time was set aside Friday and Saturday evenings for "product knowledge seminars," that gave delegates and OPSEU staff time to enjoy each other's company in a relaxed atmosphere overlooking the delightful Mississauga skyline from their hotel on Dixie Road.

In the end, most participants agreed with the outcome of the pre-bargaining conference by declaring, "We're all in the same boat!" when time comes to negotiating.



## Pre-bargaining conference photo gallery



# Democracy in action!

Many ballots (and hours) later, delegates elect negotiating team



**Back row:** Tracy Vyfschaft, Local 377; Lori Davis, Local 499; Dora Robinson, Local 376; Laurie Miller, Local 682; Roger Trueman, Local 497; Rob Field, OPSEU Negotiator. **Front row:** Denise Davis, Local 378 and vice-chair, LBED; Vanda Klumper, Local 165 and chair, LBED.

## Your 2009 Bargaining Team

After a lengthy trail of nominations, speech-making and several rounds of voting, delegates to the pre-bargaining conference elected a bargaining team that will lead LBED in its negotiations with the LCBO in early 2009.

Delegates elected five members to the bargaining team. They will join LBED chair, Vanda Klumper, and vice chair, Denise Davis who are automatic appointees to the team.

Chief electoral officer — OPSEU negotiator Rob Field — kept the democratic juggernaut moving smoothly forward by deftly exercising an iron fist in a velvet glove!

## Bargaining Team Alternates

In the event that one or more members is unable to continue on the bargaining team, the pre-bargaining conference also elected team alternates, as follows:

**Logistics:** 1st alternate Doug Parks, Local 378; 2nd alternate Nick Foti, Local 5109. **Retail casuals:** 1st alternate Colleen McLeod, Local 5107; 2nd alternate Deb Altoft, Local 286. **Members at large:** 1st alternate Sue Lusty, Local 376; 2nd alternate Tom Galli, Local 162; 3rd alternate Paula Sossi, Local 285; 4th alternate Mike Sullivan, Local 165.



**Back row:** Mike, Doug, Deb, Sue, Colleen, Tom  
**Seated:** Nick, Paula

*The Echo* is authorized for distribution by:

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