



THE ECHO

Information for OPSEU members in the Liquor Board Employees Division - Issue 12 - March 23, 2007

OPSEU “road show” delivers draft bylaws and negotiating procedures

March has been a busy month for LBED executive members, local presidents, negotiators and OPSEU staff representatives as they gathered in meetings across Ontario to get a first look at proposed draft bylaws and draft negotiating procedures in advance of this June’s founding Divisional Meeting for LCBO bargaining unit members.

Consultations in Toronto, London, Ottawa, Sudbury and Dryden provided regional LBED leaders with their first detailed look at how the Division’s draft bylaws and negotiating procedures are shaping up in time for March and April meetings with local members.

Delegates to LBED’s founding Divisional Meeting in Toronto, June 3-4, will vote on a final draft of the bylaws and negotiating procedures.

“The feedback we received from local executives and staff representatives was useful and informative,” reports OPSEU staff negotiator, Rob Field, who traveled the province armed with a detailed Power Point presentation and brochures for distribution to the general LBED membership.

Copies of the Power Point presentation were left behind with local executive members so they can be used at further meetings of LBED locals.

“We’re asking that locals organize meetings with their membership so that everyone can get up-to-speed on the importance of putting into place our bylaws and negotiating procedures,” said Field. “And we’re looking for constructive feedback to make them even stronger.”

LBED members can add their comments and recommendations to the draft bylaws and negotiating procedures by visiting: <http://www.opseu.org/lbed/bylawsnegotiating/index.htm>

Since merging with OPSEU in 2005, LCBO employees have opted for new ways to conduct union business. In practical terms the outcome of the merger has resulted in new OPSEU locals for LBED members, expanded access to steward and membership training, and improved staff representative support for activists and members through OPSEU’s regional offices.



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LCBO unionized employees voted to merge with OPSEU for a host of reasons but key among them was a desire to become more actively involved in the day-to-day activity of your union. Upcoming meetings about bylaws and bargaining procedures are an opportunity for members to learn more about how the OPSEU Liquor Board Employees Division can work to your advantage.

For more information about LBED please visit www.opseu.org and click on "Liquor Board."

A fond farewell to John Coones ...

After 17 years as head of the union representing LCBO employees, John Coones formally retired Jan. 20.

"John's tireless work, commitment and dedication on behalf of thousands of LCBO employees will not soon be forgotten," said OPSEU President Leah Casselman in a press release on the occasion of Coones' retirement. "John will be remembered as the labour figure in Ontario who stared down Mike Harris and his scheme to privatize our system of public liquor stores."

Despite his successful campaign to stop privatization, Coones said he is troubled by the growth of LCBO agency stores under Dalton McGuinty's Liberals. "It's backdoor privatization and we have to be ready to stop it, too."

Coones was a pivotal figure in the merger agreement that brought the Ontario Liquor Boards Employees Union (OLBEU) to OPSEU in 2005. He served as first chair of the new Liquor Board Employees Division (LBED).

He said he has no firm plans for his retirement, except to do a bit of fishing at a nephew's lodge in eastern Ontario.

... and a warm welcome to Jo Ann Fisher

With the retirement of John Coones, Jo Ann Fisher has formally forfeited the title of "acting" chair of LBED.

But she's no stranger to the duties involved in leading the 6,500-member Liquor Board Employees division of OPSEU. Fisher has been LBED's top figure since Coones effectively stepped down as chair in December 2005.

Fisher, who lives and works in the Camlachie area just east of Sarnia, has been a union activist since the late 1980s. After several terms as a zone representative with OLBEU, she moved on to become a third, second and first vice-president of the union for seven years in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

McGuinty and pals awarded a "Withering Trillium"

OPSEU has given its "Withering Trillium Award" to Premier Dalton McGuinty, his environment minister and two senior executives with the LCBO in recognition of their bungled plan to introduce a deposit-return system for wine and spirits bottles.



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“Asking LCBO customers to make a separate trip to The Beer Store to return their wine and liquor containers just doesn’t make sense,” said OPSEU President Leah Casselman on the occasion of the launch of the deposit-return system in February. “It’s not convenient for customers, so it won’t be effective for the environment.”

OPSEU has calculated that based on the government’s target of an 85 per cent return rate by 2010, more than 20,000 tonnes of glass that could have been returned and recycled will still be sent to Ontario landfills each year.

The union favors a system whereby bottles would be returned to the point of purchase to be re-used by wineries and distillers, where feasible.

Minister of the Environment Laurel Broten, LCBO acting chair and CEO Phillip Olsson and the Board’s president, Bob Peter, also shared in the award which OPSEU periodically hands out to public sector managers who demonstrate poor policy judgement.

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