

McGuinty pounds the privatization drum

That noise you hear off in the distance is the sound of Dalton McGuinty beating the drum for the possible privatization of the LCBO.

In recent months the Premier has spoken out on several occasions that he's prepared to look at different ownership models for Ontario's key crown agencies, like the LCBO, Ontario Power Generation and the Lottery and Gaming Commission. Together these public assets have become known as 'Crown Jewels' and they contribute billions of dollars in revenue to the provincial treasury each year.

What the Premier is really saying is that his government is

prepared to privatize all or part of these public corporations, all in the name of deficit reduction.

The view from LBED is clear. We want no part of McGuinty's privatization scheme. Mike Harris tried privatization a decade ago and we successfully fought back. Harris ran for cover the moment liquor board employees mounted a counter-offensive and he never raised the issue again.

McGuinty can expect no less from LBED if he tries to pull off the same sleight-of-hand.

At this week's OPSEU convention, LBED delegates will learn more about our strategy to fight back against McGuinty's

OUR LCBO
LET'S KEEP
IT PUBLIC!

privatization plan. Our message is unambiguous and crystal clear: McGuinty's priorities are upside down.

It's Our LCBO. Let's Keep it Public!

Visit www.opseu.org/lbed regularly for new information on LBED's anti-privatization campaign.

Casual Benefits: All Part of the Plan

After waiting what seemed like an eternity, close to 1,000 eligible employees were enrolled in the LCBO casual benefit plan on Apr. 1.

To be eligible for the plan you must be a casual employee with at least five years service and to have a minimum of 1,300 hours worked in the previous calendar year.

The three major elements of the CBP include: a prescription drug plan, dental plan, and basic life insurance. Much to the delight of those who received it, the package is straight forward and covers off much of which we bargained for.

The members are impressed, delighted, and even a little surprised.

"This is a day a lot of us have been waiting for" said a relieved CSR Joseph Alam. Although Joseph doesn't have any immediate requirements from the plan, he knows he didn't want to get caught off guard by an illness or dental requirement down the road without coverage.

Others will benefit immediately. One 27-year old employee, who didn't wish to be identified and who suffers from diabetes, said the plan will take care of his \$20,000-a-year financial obligation. He stressed how meaningful the plan will be to him and his family.

Another member, identified as Jennifer, suffers from Crones Disease and said that she can now, financially, allow her doctor to "treat the disease properly, with the right medications". Her previous lack of coverage dictated that her medication choices were made on the basis of cost, not effectiveness.

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These examples remind us of the importance of collective bargaining and maintaining solidarity throughout the negotiating process. For more information about the new casual benefits package contact the LCBO's human resources division. Should you require clarification about our collective agreement, contact your local president or an OPSEU staff representative in your region.

Editing continues for new Collective Agreement

The edit committee continues to proof read the language in our new Collective Agreement and has met with the employer on several dates. Regrettably, a meeting with the employer scheduled for Apr. 28 had to be postponed to a later date.

New members on LBED standing committees

There have been some personnel changes to a pair of LBED standing committees. We are pleased to announce membership in the following committees:

Employment Equity Committee

- Denise Davis, Chair, Local 378, Durham
- Gino Vendetti – new member, Local 5109, Oshawa
- Barbara Trigiani – new member, Local 5107, Toronto

Employee Assistance Committee (EAP)

- Paul Carriere, Chair, Local 499, Ottawa
- Valerie Daughton – new member, Local 5110, Toronto
- Sean Spratt – new member, Local 5107, Toronto

Pay Equity – Joint Job Evaluation Committee

Pay equity is defined as equal pay for work of equal or comparable value. Under the Pay Equity Act of Ontario, the LCBO and OPSEU are jointly obligated to ensure compliance with this legislation, which requires that we develop and post a Pay Equity Plan for the bargaining unit.

The joint job evaluation committee has developed

a questionnaire to collect specific job information in order to evaluate and compare jobs. This is a lengthy process and the employees will be notified of the progress of these negotiations as newsletters from the committee are posted and circulated. The next meeting date is May 11-14.

NUPGE Liquor Component Meeting

Our Division has put out a call to all other liquor components in Canada to meet in Toronto on May 26-27. This meeting has been called so that we can exchange information with our brothers and sisters from other provinces on past bargaining issues, and the continuing threat of privatization that affects provincial liquor boards. A full report on the meeting will be published in the next issue of Echo.

Region 1 health and safety activists meet in London

On Mar. 11 activists from different communities in Region 1 (southwest Ontario) met at the OPSEU office in London to organize LBED's first regional health and safety committee. The group included: Jennifer Van Zetten, Mark Jukema, Mike Robertson, Michael Peris and Dave Vermue.

The purpose of the meeting was to draw together activists from a range of locations in the region to discuss issues of mutual concerns to our members. While the provincial health and safety committee works with the employer on issues of province-wide importance, it was felt there is a role for regional committees to tackle problems, like asbestos contamination, that are closer to the members' workplaces.

The meeting also served to remind local presidents of the importance of assigning representatives to health and safety committees.

For more information about organizing regional health and safety committees in your region, contact LBED health and safety committee chair Tracy Vyfschaft at tcshaft@xplornet.com.

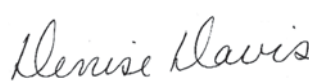
Thanks to **Devon Ford, Tracy Vyfschaft and Denise Davis** for contributing to this edition of Echo.

Get on the list!

You can receive the Echo directly by e-mail. Just let us know how to reach you. Give us your secure e-mail address by calling the OPSEU Resource Centre: 1-800-268-7376 or 416-443-8888.

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