

Liquor Board workers toast a fine contract

by Randy Robinson

Maybe the middle of a recession is a bad time for workers to make major contract gains. If so, somebody forgot to tell the Liquor Board Employees Division (LBED).

In a bargaining campaign that championed the need for good jobs in Ontario, OPSEU members at the LCBO won a stunning victory.

They successfully defended 2,600 full-time jobs from employer attacks – and improved wages and benefits, too.

Next April, an estimated 848 families will receive drug, dental, and life insurance benefits for the first time.

Close to 2,400 casuals hired on or after Sept. 1, 2002 will now be able to reach the top step of their pay grid. That's a pay hike of more than \$2.15 an hour.

So-called “fixed-term” casuals, who work only in the summer and in December, got their first pay raise in nine years. They'll move up from \$10 an hour to \$11.50 as of Nov. 1, 2009.

“We set a goal in this round of bargaining that we would not settle for any deal unless it protected the livelihoods of our permanent staff and made measurable gains for the majority of our members who are struggling to make ends meet as casuals,” said Vanda Klumper, chair of the LBED bargaining team. “We achieved both of those goals.”

“A stellar example that solidarity works,” President Smokey Thomas added, “our LBED membership proved that beyond a doubt.”


The previous OPSEU contract with the LCBO expired March 31, 2009. Members ratified the new contract in voting July 13-14. 



Photo: Randy Robinson

The OPSEU bargaining team for the Liquor Board Employees Division, between meetings with the employer on March 10. From left to right: Lori Davis, OPSEU Local 499; Tracy Vyfschaft, Local 377; Denise Davis, team vice-chair, Local 378; Joyce Hansen, OPSEU Senior Researcher; Rob Field, OPSEU Senior Negotiator; Colleen MacLeod, Local 5107; Laurie Miller, Local 682; Dora Robinson, Local 376; and Vanda Klumper, team chair, Local 165.



Photo: Jason Crowtz

Craig Hadley, Patty Rout and Paula Sossi speak to the media

