

# 2017 BARGAINING BULLETIN



Information for OPSEU members in the Liquor Board Employees Division • Issue #3 – February 21, 2017

## Bargaining kicks off this week

After a year of preparation that began with a pre-bargaining conference last April, your OPSEU bargaining team will begin negotiations with the LCBO this week. Further dates are planned for March, April, and May and additional dates can be added if needed.

“We’ve seen from the government’s back-door privatization of beer, wine and cider sales, that they have no appreciation for the value that LCBO workers bring to the province,” said Denise Davis, chair of the OPSEU Liquor Board Employees Division (LBED) bargaining team. “Based on what we saw from the employer during the human rights arbitration, they don’t seem to be interested in standing up for the LCBO at all.

“Instead, we see what looks like a race to the bottom as they try to remove key parts of our collective agreement. But if the employer thinks they’re going to divide and conquer this membership to make us pay for our victory on equal pay for equal work, then they’re in for one hell of a fight. Because that’s what LBED members do, and what we’ve always done. We’ll fight for the rights that every one of us deserves.”

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### From the chair:

We’ve all seen the news, and we’ve all heard the Premier’s announcements. The Liberal government may not want to use the “P” word – Privatization – but it’s clear from what we see happening that the government is attempting nothing less than the back-door privatization of alcohol sales in Ontario. And our employer – who should be standing up for the value of the LCBO – seems to be intent instead on using that privatization as an opportunity to drive down working conditions for LCBO workers.

I can tell you that our bargaining team isn’t going to stand for that.

And from what I’ve seen across Ontario, OPSEU members at the LCBO aren’t going to stand for it either. Members have been holding anti-privatization rallies across the province to let the public know what’s happening, and it’s clear the public isn’t buying the government’s line.

Workers are getting strong support from the public at these rallies, and I’m not surprised. The public knows that the LCBO provides real benefits to the province, and they aren’t ...

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As the bargaining team sits down to start negotiations, they will be relying on a team of OPSEU LBED mobilizers from across the province to keep members up to date about bargaining and engage them in actions to support the team.

Davis noted the importance of getting the support of all members. "It's clear from how the employer approached our human rights complaint, and the efforts they made to strip existing collective agreement rights through that process, that we're in for a real fight this round.

"Getting a fair deal is possible, but it will only happen if members pull together and send a clear signal to the employer that we won't accept anything less than what we deserve."

## Meet your mobilizers

In collective bargaining, power comes from the support of union members. Experience has shown that employers move at the bargaining table when members take action inside and outside the workplace. To help build that power, OPSEU will book off 15 mobilizers, elected by LBED members at your Pre-Bargaining Conference in April 2016. These mobilizers, who are your co-workers at the LCBO, will be on union leave from Monday, February 27 onwards and will work to build support for your elected bargaining team and the bargaining priorities you selected during demand-setting.

### REGION 1

**Guy Jeremschuk**  
riverman1646@hotmail.com

**David Holmes**  
davesholme@gmail.com

**Michael Peris**  
niceguy2212@hotmail.com

*(Feb. 27 - March 21,  
filling in for Guy Jeremschuk)*

### REGION 2

**Bonnie Jolley**  
jolley\_b@hotmail.com

**Judy Irving**  
j.irvinglocal288@gmail.com

### REGION 3

**Tracy Vyfschaft**  
tcshaft@xplornet.com

**Eileen Allen**  
eallen9@cogeco.ca

### REGION 4

**Dianne Perry**  
diannep497opseu@hotmail.com

**Mathieu Royer**  
mat.royer@hotmail.com

### REGION 5

**Craig Hadley**  
craigh22@gmail.com

**Nick Papadimitriou**  
nick.v.papadimitriou@gmail.com

**Adriana Bertoni**  
abert73@gmail.com

### REGION 6

**Amanda Pellerin**  
amandapellerin@outlook.com

**Judy Jones**  
judy\_jones19@hotmail.com

### REGION 7

**Rob Mithrush**  
mithrush@tbaytel.net

**Anne Makela**  
akmakela@tbaytel.net

## Message from the Chair continued...

interested in losing out on those benefits the way they're already losing Hydro One.

But if our team is going to push back against the employer's attempts to weaken our collective agreement, and instead work to improve our agreement in ways that will help us save the LCBO and the value it provides to Ontarians, it's going to take the support of all members.

The employer knows that, and they're already trying to divide us. Whether it's snide comments by managers or confusing messages to staff about the recent human rights arbitration award that bend the facts to fit the story they want to tell, their goal is to undermine our strength by turning us against one another. So don't let them.

If we're going to get the strong contract that members deserve, it will take everyone working together.

In solidarity,

Denise Davis



Chair, LBED Bargaining Team

# Correcting the record on the recent arbitration award

There is some confusion out there about the “equal pay for equal work” arbitration award, and what it means for members moving into bargaining. While a full set of [answers](#) to commonly-asked questions is available on the OPSEU website, here are a few important points to keep in mind.

## What’s the value of this to workers?

This is a historic award that sets an important precedent that all workers – whether casual or permanent, male or female – deserve equal pay for doing equal work. While the arbitrator may have accepted the employer’s arguments in a few cases and awarded some specific changes that your bargaining team argued strongly against, it’s still important to recognize the significant and immediate improvements this award will lead to for thousands of OPSEU members.

These improvements will be felt particularly by those who are currently casual Customer Service Representatives (CSRs). As a result of the new single wage grid, three-quarters of casual CSRs (a total of 4,224 workers) will get an immediate wage increase of an average of 9.5 per cent, including 554 casuals that will go straight to the top wage as a result of their hours worked. In addition, the 220 Permanent Full-Time (PFT) CSRs who are not yet at the top of the wage grid will get an average raise of 7.7 per cent.

With the new grid, all workers will also have the opportunity to reach the highest wage rate. As a result of this change, casuals will no longer end up stuck at the \$21.07 wage rate for years, waiting for a permanent position to become available.

## What about the employer’s comments on Sundays and agency stores?

As part of the settlement, both sides agreed to discuss the fiscal and operational challenges posed by the government’s back-door privatization of alcohol sales by allowing grocery stores to sell beer, wine and cider. The union only agreed to look at the employer’s disclosures on these matters and to hear their arguments as part of the negotiations.

After reviewing the documents provided, your bargaining team took a firm position that the employer had not shown the need to eliminate Sunday premiums or the restriction on closing retail stores and replacing them with agency stores.

Unfortunately, the arbitrator accepted the employer’s arguments on Sunday premiums, but has left the matter of scheduling Sunday work up to the parties to negotiate. The arbitrator also ruled that the employer had the right to open new agency stores, but only at a rate of one new store for every existing agency store that is repatriated. In addition, the employer had also asked that the arbitrator remove the restriction in the current agreement that prevents them from closing stores as a result of the operation of an agency store, but the arbitrator did not remove this restriction.

Your bargaining team remains very concerned about the employer’s expressed intentions to look at closing stores, and will continue to fight to save the LCBO as an important source of revenue for the people of Ontario.

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To help make sure members aren’t misled by the employer’s alternative facts, we’ve launched a set of **“My Boss Said What??”** fact sheets to set the record straight. Watch for more fact sheets as bargaining continues.

<https://opseu.org/news/correcting-record-fact-checking-employers-message-about-arbitration-award>



Have you heard something from your manager you think we need to correct? Send an email to us at: [LBEDbargaining@opseu.org](mailto:LBEDbargaining@opseu.org) and we'll put it in our next set of fact sheets.

## Where do we go now?

As is clear from the communications put out by the employer and our bargaining team, there is a significant difference in our positions on a number of these issues.

Many issues have been left to the bargaining table by the arbitrator, which means the details will be up to your team, who will stand firm for an agreement that will be acceptable to members.

There are also a number of pieces of the arbitrator's award that members have expressed their clear concern over. It's important to remember that these are not set in stone. Nothing in this award will prevent your bargaining team from addressing any issue at the table, until they reach a tentative agreement that the membership will vote on. The arbitration award simply represents the new starting ground for negotiations – your team will fight to ensure that the agreement that comes to a vote is a deal that members can be proud of.

Through their statements around this award, including their claim that it allows them to start closing stores, or to change the hours of work to bring Sundays in as a regular day of work, the employer is showing a clear lack of respect for our members. Your bargaining team will not let that lack of respect go unanswered.

You can expect to see a strong position taken on these issues by your team as they present their position to the employer this week. They will continue to fight for the rights of all members, casual and full-time, and for the respect that every member deserves. In the end, the agreement they are able to reach will be up to you. How successful your team is at the table will depend on the support of each member of the division.

## Meet your bargaining team

The OPSEU bargaining for the Liquor Board Employees Division consists of five members:

**Denise Davis**, Chair, Local 378

**Colleen MacLeod**, Vice-Chair, Local 5107

**Jennifer van Zetten**, Local 162

**Robin Reath**, Local 163

**Mark Larocque**, Local 499

The bargaining team is assisted by OPSEU Negotiator Jeff Weston, Researcher Steve Crossman, and other assigned staff.

## Stay informed!

You can receive this bargaining bulletin (and our regular newsletter, the Echo) directly by e-mail. Just call OPSEU at **1-800-268-7376** or **(416) 443-8888**, and give the operator your name and e-mail address. You can also watch for updates on the OPSEU website at [www.opseu.org](http://www.opseu.org). And be sure to attend upcoming bargaining information meetings in your area.

## 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, call **1-800-263-1401**.

Your 2017 Bargaining Bulletin is authorized for distribution by:  
Denise Davis, Chair, Liquor Board Employees Division  
Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President, OPSEU

Ontario Public Service Employees Union, 100 Lesmill Road, Toronto, Ontario M3B 3P8 [www.opseu.org](http://www.opseu.org)