



Keep Liquor Public

With the slated privatization of 40 public liquor stores and the loss of about 200 jobs, SGEU Convention rallied to support SLGA members yesterday.

Privatization and contracting out stands as a threat to each and every one of us for the foreseeable future.

SGEU stands with affected SLGA workers, and will be creating a mini-documentary series to profile the impact that privatization has on our communities.

If you are interested in participating in the mini-documentary series, please speak to Evie Ruddy or Chelsea Flook.

SGEU History:

Convention 1942: Only two resolutions are brought forward: one calling for a cost-of-living bonus for members, another calling for reduced hours for mental hospital staff. At the time, this kind of outspoken demand for improvements by government employees was unprecedented.

Convention 1969: A resolution is passed that requires a ratification vote by the membership before new collective agreements can be signed. Previously, ratification was considered too much of a restriction on negotiating committees.



Member Engagement

Marie Clarke Walker, Executive Vice-President of the Canadian Labour Congress addressed SGEU delegates on the issue of member engagement.

She reminded us that engagement is about building relationships and fostering a sense of belonging. Through this, we create a sense of solidarity. This feeling of solidarity with one another helps build grassroots power that nourishes our movement, supports like-minded progressive communities, and prepares us for the challenges ahead.

Resolutions

We passed a motion of support for Mobile Crisis workers that allocated time on the agenda for all SGEU delegates to attend an info-picket today.

Delegates are encouraged to attend either the Keep Liquor Public picket, or the crisis workers picket.

We reduced union dues from 1.75% to 1.7%. We also increased LTD dues from 1.3% to 1.5%.

The SGEU LTD plan provides almost 50% more benefit than industry standard plans, and has a three-year term of your own occupation, unlike the market average of two.

Interview: Alice Hehn

Lifetime member Alice Hehn remembers attending her first SGEU convention.

“It was with great enthusiasm that I went,” she says. “I learned a lot, and that’s when I really became interested in SGEU and the benefits of the union, which were there for everybody.”

Under Clarence Fines as the provincial treasurer and Tommy Douglas as premier, Alice began working for the Treasury department in the Saskatchewan government in 1945 as a Clerk Typist. She, and half a dozen other women in the office, typed cheques “all day long, five days a week,” she recalls.

Alice describes the time as exciting, but she recalls facing sex discrimination – which was one of the reasons she became active with the union. At the time, women could earn only a maximum of \$112/month, says Alice, while men could earn more.



“Once Tommy Douglas brought in the classification plan,” recalls Alice, “you got paid according to the position, not if you were a male or female.”

As an activist in the labour movement, Alice successfully lobbied for equal pension rights for married women.

“I went to Ross Thatcher’s office,” recalls Alice, “and we explained why married women should be getting pension — and it was changed.”

At the 1967 SGEU convention, while working in the department of Education, Alice became a life member of the union. She later went on to become a senior administrative consultant in a management position.

“I enjoyed my time with the union, and it’s a known fact that what I learned in the union helped me very, very much in my duties as an administrative officer,” says Alice. “A deputy minister said one time at a meeting, ‘Listen to Alice, she’s been on both sides of the question!’”

Today, at nearly 90 years old, rumour has it that Alice is SGEU’s oldest life member. And she has a message for young people: “the union is yours to hold and yours to have.”

“If you’re going to be active, be active in a positive way,” she adds.

Stop by the life members’ table today, and say hello to Alice!

2016 Banquet & Shear ‘n’ Shine. Congratulations to Terry Ullman on becoming a life member!

