

Picket

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large, he said, but it was significant enough to give the union hope and keep a person at the store every day.

"But since August, the number of customers daily has steadily gone up as more students from the University shop here," he said.

What bothers Dahl and the employees, Dahl said, is the fact that the picketers don't make their reason for being there very clear.

"This is an informational picket. People see a picket line and assume the line is there because the employees are dissatisfied with working conditions," he said. "It's not as if the owner is simply refusing to unionize. He is backing the employees."

Because the original union contract was with McKay's and Food Value just failed to keep it up, the union has no grounds for any action other than picketing, Wallace said.

"These people need their jobs. They have to pay the rent. The union can't really push them, and it can't buy them," Wallace said. So the picketers need to focus on the customers, he said.

The union is trying very hard not to harass people, but even this can pose a problem, Wallace said.

"We stand around the corner and unless someone speaks to us first, we don't talk to any of the customers," he said. "A couple guys on the picket line have been fired because they tried to push the point a little too hard. We're being as polite as possible."

Wallace himself is on good terms with the managers and employees of the store.

"I've made friends with everyone in the store," he said. "I don't think that there is a person in there who wouldn't stand behind me if something ever happened."

The union picketers have never had any problems with the Food Value management, Wallace said.

"We've been here so long, everyone's gotten used to the idea," he said.

Wallace isn't sure how long the union will continue the picket, but the line captain is looking for more picketers to replace people who have left the line over the past few months, he said.

Dahl isn't worried about how long the picket will go on. He believes the picketers have been there so long, they blend into the scenery.

"It's no new thing," he said. "People aren't surprised by it anymore."

"There is a certain crowd of older people who don't shop here because of the picket, but that's because they're misinformed. They remember when labor unions were a good thing and very strong. It isn't like that now."

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