

Hotel picketers optimistic — strike may end after one week

By Doug Funke
staff writer

Pickers at the Troy's Somerset Inn Tuesday were optimistic about getting back to work a week after striking over what they claim is management's refusal to bargain and a decision to impose new working conditions.

(Frickman) losing now — losing money and respect in the community." Karen Peace and Carolyn Mott, both maids for three years and Detroiters, seemed to be upbeat as they picketed.

Meanwhile, Scott Frickman, director of operations at Somerset, said about 100 replacements have already been hired with nearly 20 more ready to go.

"We are just taking care of business as usual," Frickman said. "The strikers — maids, food service workers and desk personnel — will receive about \$50 per week in strike benefits for which they are expected to picket four hours a day seven days a week."

The strikers belong to Hotel, Motel, Restaurant Employees Local 24. "It seems like it's not real," said Rita Jurkiewicz as she picketed. Jurkiewicz, who lives in Madison Heights, said she's worked as a dining room hostess at Somerset for six years.

"We were a family," she said. "The idea of being without a job is sad, but we know we can go in and do the job right. All we're asking for is a reasonable contract."

"All we have to do is go home, say our prayers and hope God is on our side," Jurkiewicz said. "The union brought wages up. If they break the union, they'll be working for minimum wages all over."

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Ruby Shanburn, a Royal Oak resident who works in the laundry, said she's been employed at Somerset for 12 years.

"Local 24 and management are at odds on wages, seniority rights and work schedules. The contract expired Dec. 31. Somerset unit members authorized a strike Jan. 1. Somerset management imposed new work rules Feb. 22."

"THE FUNNY part of it is no one was asking for anything. They (management) just started taking away," Shanburn said.

"No further bargaining sessions have been scheduled. Local 24 has filed unfair labor practice charges alleging bad faith bargaining, harassment of employees and establishing new work rules absent an impasse in negotiations."

Adam Lobental, a cook at Somerset for 1 1/2 years, said he'd rather work than picket.

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"We're willing to lose a little, but not everything," the Ferndale resident said. "We are willing to lose two or three of their six or eight points. They (management) are not willing to lose at all."

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Cindy Gravitt, a Troy resident, had three young children in tow while she picketed. Gravitt said she's worked as a waitress for 16 months.

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"You get a little more angry (picketing)," she said. "It brings people closer together. We'll be back in there. He's

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Bank robber nets \$1,500

A lone, ostensibly unarmed man walked into the Comerica Bank branch on Maple near Telegraph with a note in a paper bag and walked out with at least \$1,500 just after lunch-time Tuesday.

him the paper bag. He asked the employee if he understood the note, police said.

The man was described as white, 5-foot to 5-foot-9-inches tall, with dirty blond hair, a mustache and other facial hair. He wore a blue and white Detroit Lions visor, a T-shirt, blue jeans and a brownish Members Only-style jacket, Bloomfield Township police reported.

When the teller asked the robber, "I want it all," police reported. The teller told police the man touched himself in the jacket, possibly indicating a weapon. However, no weapon was seen and no threat of violence was made, according to Lt. James Anas.

He walked up to the first teller in the bank at about 2 p.m. and handed

AFTER THE TELLER put \$1,500-2,000 in the bag, the man walked quickly out of the front door.

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