



Pressman arrested: Local 13 pressman Frank Brabaneh is handcuffed and arrested by Farmington Hills police after a spitting incident.



Checking it out: Scott Million of Troy holds a so-called "strike paper" to see who has advertised in it, as fellow pressman Mike Reilly of New Baltimore looks over his shoulder.

Strikers, carriers clash at Hills site

BY BILL COUTANT

They picket in the dark with few people and no TV cameras to see or hear their protest.

They are Teamsters, Newspaper Guild members and others protesting the Detroit News and Detroit Free Press at the distribution warehouse on Crestview court on the west side of Farmington Hills.

Unlike fellow picketers at the downtown News and Free Press offices, these 25 or so union members concentrate on one of the regional centers from which carriers pick up their bundled newspapers and deliver them.

"We're going to lose 85 Teamsters out of less than 200 (position)," said striking Teamster Joe DeBono, a Free Press employee for 35 years. "We expected to walk, but we're hoping this one

won't last long."

DeBono was with the newspaper during a nine-month strike in 1967, when the paper did not publish, and in 1980, when the strike lasted a week. DeBono, like many others on the picket line, was less than optimistic about a quick end to the walkout.

"It could have been avoided," said John Lippert, a Free Press Labor writer on the picket line. "There was a glimmer of compromise and some of the unions were pretty close (to a settlement). I think it will either be over in two weeks or it will be a long time."

No one injured here

That's not encouraging for the union members who are now faced with confronting the carriers; they often hired and trained. Although there have not been any serious incidents of violence in Farmington Hills, there have

been five arrests in the city related to the strike, including two for carrying concealed weapons and one for spitting.

The district managers who, before the strike would work from 1 a.m. on to make sure papers delivered from the Sterling Heights printing plant got to the 200 or so carriers who deliver in the area, now find themselves in conflict with most of those carriers. "Scab" is the most often used of the colorful descriptions strikers are calling the people they used to supervise.

"We know where you live, pork chop," says another striker as a carrier loaded with newspapers maneuvers his car through the begrudging picket line along the fence entrance to the warehouse.

"You have to get in their face, let them know this is wrong, that the company is going to do them next," said striker Scott Million.

But a few minutes later, Million, a pressman for 24 years, was able to convince one of the carriers to "give it up." And strikers had some bundles as proof that they win a few.

Customers supportive

Many other carriers have been worried, but are not giving up their jobs.

"I put a letter in the paper explaining the situation to my customers," said carrier Cathy Harris earlier. "Most of them have been supportive."

Harris said the job, which takes about 12 hours of actual delivery time, pays well for the hours. But, she added, because of a football thrown at her windshield by one union member and nails used to flatten a tire on her car as she left, she's changed her hours.

See STRIKE, 7A



Watch that speed: Hills officer Brian DeGrande (left) listens to strikers Frank Bushta Jr., John Colliers and Jerry Gill complain about speeding drivers who ignore stop signs at the strike site.

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