

# Students make Union jobs like no other



Above, Orley Cookson, a union food service employee, takes time during his lunch break to read the Bible in the basement lounge. Teri Herbel, left, and Duke Schneider work the counter at the Union Square.

One of the best parts of working in the Nebraska Union is the students, union employees say.

Whether they meet students daily while serving them food at the Union Square or have contact with them only occasionally to help plan events, employees said working at the union is different from any other job.

Story by Jonathan Taylor  
Photos by Mark Davis

Not all of the more than 50 union employees get to meet students every day. But busboy Dan Dolan has been talking to Union Square and Crib patrons for the past five years.

While cleaning up after students, he makes several acquaintances each year. And although he can't remember all the students' names, Dan said he can place just about everybody's face and is good enough friends with a few to

receive gifts such as buttons, and a shirt from members of Farmhouse fraternity.

When Dan missed a couple of months work because of illness, students asked about him and sent cards telling Dan they missed him, said Millie Leach, Union supervisor.

It was nice to be missed, Dan said, but the feeling is mutual.

"When anybody goes (graduates), I cry," he said. "I miss them."

Betty Vodehnal has been the Nebraska Union's cash and ticket manager for 20 years. Although she infrequently has direct contact with students — helping run ticket sales for concerts and shows — she said she sees enough to know how students have changed over the years.

During the late 1960s and 1970s, those who came to college were still unsure of what they wanted to do, Vodehnal said. Now, she said, students have "more direction."

For Union Square cashier Duke Sch-

neider and his supervisor, Leach, students provide a working atmosphere unavailable anywhere else.

"It's different from any place I've ever worked," Schneider said, despite Union Square's similarities to other fast-food restaurants.

Leach said it is the small talk at the restaurant counter that leads to friendship between employees and student regulars.

Schneider, who is a UNL graduate student, agreed, saying that the influx of more foreign students at UNL since he was a student here in the 1950s has made for a "cosmopolitan atmosphere" on campus.

Schneider also noted that UNL students seem to study harder than they did when he was an undergraduate student.

"They're a pleasure to serve," Leach added, citing many students' honesty — especially those who always seem to come up a little short when paying for food.



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