



SCOTCH PLAINS

THE TIMES



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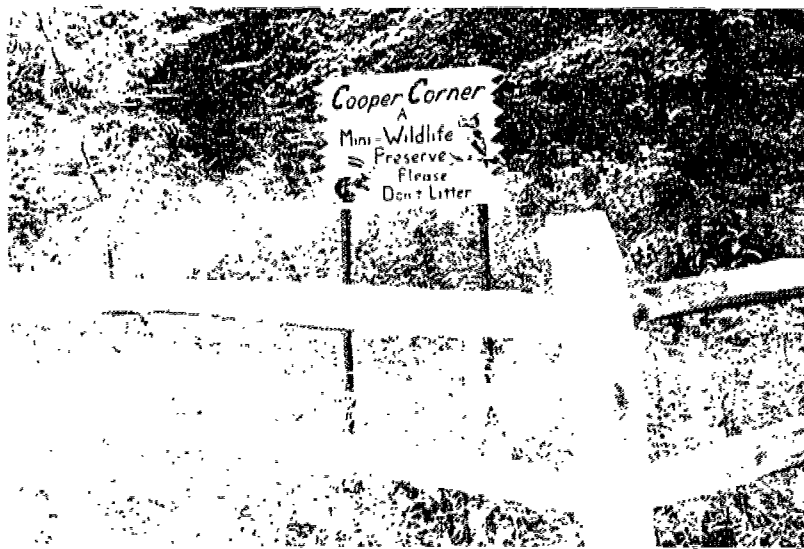
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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1977

20 CENTS

A Mini-Preserve



A wildlife preserve's a spot where trees and wildflowers, animals and birds live a free and unthreatened existence. It needn't be all that big. One Scotch Plains family has its own wildlife preserve, and they aim to try to keep it, undamaged and protected. Toward that end, the J. Craig Baileys, of 1470 Cooper Road, at the southwest corner of Cooper and Terrill, have erected a cute sign, to let the world know about their mini-preserve. The sign, shown above, was created by Mrs. Bailey. It announced, "Cooper Corner - a Mini-Wildlife Preserve, Please Don't Litter."

If you're jumping to conclusions that it is the students, from two nearby schools, to whom the message is directed, you're wrong. Sure, kids drop hamburger wrappers and soda bottles in the property at the corner. But the Baileys can clean that up without too much trouble. It's the adult world they're trying to educate. In recent years, people have urged cutting of weeds and trees in the undeveloped corner. What's more, the Baileys have experienced dumping of road materials, utility equipment, etc. in the "woods."

"So many people originally moved to Scotch Plains for its rural character," Mrs. Bailey said, "but then they want to see trees and 'weeds' cut down. In our opinion, there are no 'weeds,' because wildflowers are God's gift." The family is anxious to preserve their corner, which some think is an undeveloped lot. What's more, they want to educate the public toward their way of thinking.

Blackout Dims Bus-Funding Discussion

Two citizens were in the midst of strong objection to public support for private school transportation on Tuesday night, when a power failure caused a blackout at the Plainfield Avenue administration offices of the Board of Education, and a cancellation of the remainder of the meeting. Only a few business items were awaiting action on the agenda of the special meeting, called mainly for adoption of a long list of personnel actions.

Bob Lee, a citizen, noted items for approval which included transportation of children to private schools outside the community. Were these transportation costs for handicapped children? No, Lee was told. The items up for approval included busing of students to Holy Trinity School in Westfield and Wardlaw Hartridge in Plainfield.

Richard Bard, acting for Board President August Ruggiero, who was not present, explained to Lee that the state mandates a transportation allowance of \$200 to parents of every child in a private school within 20 miles of the school district. Parents must pay tuition costs.

Bard noted that the school district paying the transportation grants is reimbursed by the state. School officials provided numbers.

Direct bus service to private schools is provided by the district to 90 students, while money is given directly to parents for another 195 students.

"But if we are providing a good public school district, and parents elect to send a child to an

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Calendar

Tuesday, September 6 — Scotch Plains Township Council, regular monthly meeting, Municipal Building, 8:30 pm

Wednesday, September 7 — Fanwood Borough Council, Special meeting for approval of intern, discussion of plans for multi-purpose building, hear appeal of Norman Geuder on appeal of Bd. of Adj. variance.

School Enrollment Study Yields 'Surprising' Figures

Lee Named B'ball Coach

Bill Lee, who has spent ten years as Physical Education teacher and basketball teacher at Terrill Junior High School, moves up a notch this season, to assume a coaching post at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School. Lee replaces Joe Coleman, who resigned from the coaching post after last year's season.

Lee coached the eighth grade team during his years at Terrill, leading two teams to undefeated seasons. He also coached



football and baseball at Terrill.

At the high school, he'll be Assistant Football coach as well as basketball, at least for the first year. He'll see how the dual

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Attention S.P. Landlords

Scotch Plains Director of Finance Dennis F. O'Neill announced this week that landlords who have not rebated or credited eligible tenants with their New Jersey Tenants Property Tax Rebate are subject to substantial fines and penalties under state law.

All Scotch Plains property owners were mailed a postcard

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Group Projects Student Numbers Thru '82-'83

By the 1982-83 school year, just five years hence, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood school district is highly likely to be faced with substantially lower enrollments than are being experienced today ... and, more important, with thousands fewer students than were housed in local schools during the "Peak" enrollment years of 1969-70. An Ad Hoc Study Committee, named in May to consider the closing of a School(s) in September of 1978, found enrollment projections "surprising."

Back in 1969-70, there were eight elementary schools, with a peak enrollment of 4360, a capacity of 4,188 (with 25 students per general classroom) and 15 substandard classrooms. By 1976-77, seven years later, there were seven elementary schools, and an enrollment at the elementary level total of 2993 — down 1367 from the overcrowded late sixties. By 1982-83, according to a carefully detailed study prepared by the Ad Hoc Committee, the total at the elementary level alone will be down 2,000 children from the peak — just over half of the peak if projections hold.

The two junior highs peaked in 1970-71 — a year behind the elementaries, at 1899 students, attending two junior highs with a total capacity of 2107. By the past school year, 1976-77, the enrollment dropped by 223 to 1676, and total junior high enrollment is projected at 1154 for five years hence — 1982-83. The projected total drop at the junior high level, from 1970-71 to 1982-83, would be 745, or over one third.

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See Table
on Enrollment
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In secondary schools, the same patterns follow (as they are throughout the state and the

DATES TO REMEMBER

September 14 — Public Hearing, School Enrollment Figures and Projections, Terrill Junior High, 8 pm.
September 29 — Public Hearing, School Facilities, Park Junior High, 8 pm.

Still No Action On Old School One

As attention focuses this week upon enrollment projections for the years ahead, and possibility of school closings, the single school which has already been abandoned here, stands a blatant reminder of what could come in years ahead. Old School One was phased out as a school facility three years back — not due to declining enrollments, for at the time a decision was made to replace the elderly turn-of-the-century schoolhouse, kids were at an all-time peak. The school was discontinued as an educational facility because of its age, and the limitations of educational opportunity available there.

Today, old School One is a very visible facility, boarded up and empty looking, in the middle of the downtown Scotch Plains business section. The subject of the old school is to be on the agenda for consideration by the Scotch Plains Township Council in one of its future meetings.

The Board of Education held a public sale of the building in the spring, and it was sold for \$185,000 at public bid, with sale dependent upon the new owner obtaining a zoning change from the current business status to a designation which would permit apartment development.

However, before the Board's move went through, another agency of the taxpayer, the Scotch Plains Township Council, moved in with an announcement that the town was having the property appraised, with the possibility of condemnation.

The township had wanted to acquire the property for senior citizens housing, but was not in a position to commit money to that project until application for FHA money for establishment of a senior citizen complex had been made. At the time of the public sale, the township's

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