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# THE TIMES



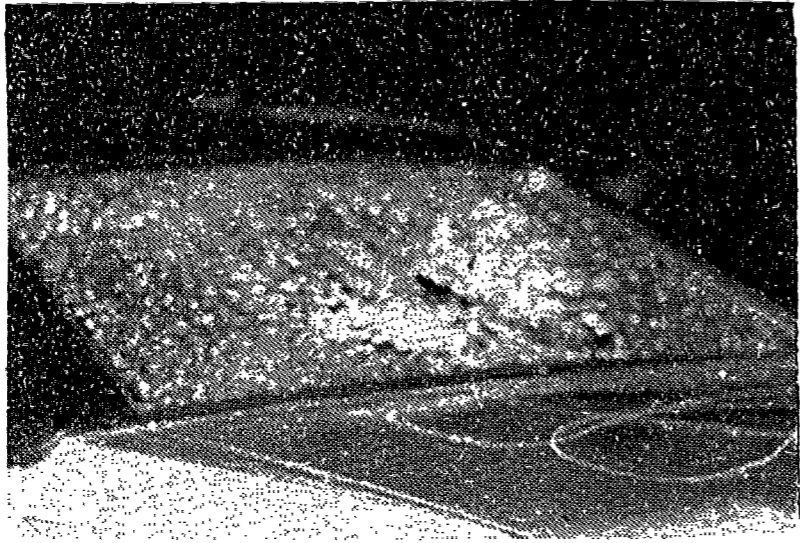
FANWOOD

VOLUME 19 NUMBER 372

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1977

20 CENTS



Smashed windshield and scratched surface of a car, vandalized during last Thursday's meeting of the Board of Education.

## Heated Exchanges Mark Board Of Ed. Meeting

A Board of Education meeting, called for discussion of the high school lunch program last Thursday evening, ended in flaring tempers and a fracas over another issue — the cheerleading squad at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High. As board members entered the meeting room at administration building on Plainfield Avenue, they were greeted with several black citizens bearing large placards, with messages concerning the recent state Commissioner of Education's decision, to reinstate the original cheerleading squad, while retaining the girls chosen at re-trials ordered by the Board.

The move by Commissioner Fred Burke expanded the squad from the 14 girls chosen in the second go-round (11 of whom had been original choices) to 17. However, one of the original girls has changed schools, so that the varsity squad should number 16. At Saturday's opening game, 15 girls appeared on the field.

The signs read, "Burke the Jerk," "Repeat the Decision of Trenton," "Give Carpenter a New Contract — The Only Fair Administrator," etc. At 9:05 pm, after the Board had discussed the lunch at the high school and decided to retain the status quo of closed lunch, the black parents asked to speak. The meeting was officially over, but the Board agreed to hear comment until a 9:30 pm negotiating session.

The black parents spoke, asking Board appeal of the Trenton decision, and they also questioned other areas of concern including racial discrimination, tracking, levels, Title I, and free lunch. One asked why black children are singled out for screening for Title I. It was explained that the federal government, not local authorities, mandates selection of "target" areas, but that choices for the supplementary Title I instruction are based on mental ability, not on financial levels.

Mrs. Marion Jones, who has been in the forefront of the fight regarding cheerleaders since last spring, then attacked Board President August Ruggiero for

his stand on the cheerleading issue. Last week, Ruggiero was quoted in THE TIMES and other newspapers, urging a spirit of cooperation and compliance with the decision of the Commissioner of Education. Ruggiero had argued that the Commissioner's decision was fair to all girls — those chosen for first and second squads.

Mrs. Jones said that Ruggiero had no right to speak, although he claimed his remarks had been personal remarks, and not an official position taken by the Board. The Board planned to discuss the subject as a body on Monday of this week.

"I don't want to hear from you," Jones remarked. She claimed the Board President should be removed from office. She called him a "bigot."

Board member Robert Lariviere was also called bigot and clown by audience members.

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## Car Damaged During Meeting

Mrs. S. P. Lamastra of Old Farm Road, Scotch Plains, decided to attend last week's meeting of the Board of Education because the subject of the meeting was the new closed lunch at the high school. She came with concern, she said, but after hearing the presentation and a report of conditions, she was at rest with the new rules which prohibit leaving school at lunchtime.

Mrs. Lamastra had an unexpected surprise awaiting her when she left the building to drive home. Her automobile, a 1977 Mercury, had been vandalized in the parking lot. Police and Mrs. Lamastra reported that two kitchen knives, found at the scene, had apparently been used to scratch car surfaces. The windshields were smashed, and a rock, thrown through the rear windshield, also damaged an inside area of the car. Antenna and mirror were also damaged.

Mrs. Lamastra said that virtually no surface of the car was left unscratched, and that most of the body will require repair and repainting. She estimated damage totals \$1,600 to \$1,700.

Earlier this year, one administrator's car was broken into and a CB radio stolen, and a Board member's car was scratched and damaged, with antenna broken off. On other occasion, air was let out of tires of cars of several Board members, during a meeting at the Plainfield Avenue school.

## Ruggiero Explains Recent Fracas

President of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education, August Ruggiero, released a statement this week concerning episodes at last week's meeting. He noted that, following the Board meeting, "certain individuals" claimed he pushed a girl student. "I deny having done so and believe I must state the truth about what happened as I know it."

Continued On Page 2

## Raiders Win Season Opener 6-0

Coach Chuck Meredith's debut as Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School coach proved to be a successful one as the Raiders slipped by Elizabeth.

The game was played under poor conditions as there was heavy rain and winds throughout the game. The Raiders used a lot of defense and a 14 yard run by Tony Ebron to down Elizabeth, coached by former Raider mentor Hal Mercer.

The first half ended in a scoreless deadlock as both teams blew scoring opportunities. Each team got down inside their opponents 10 yard line only to have their drive nullified by fumbles. The Raiders put together a long drive in the third quarter. The big play was a halfback option pass by Gary Lepinski to Jeff Nicholens. Quarterback Tony Ebron then went around right end for the score. The P.A.T. was missed.

With the score 6-0 the Raiders defense had to hold Jefferson to preserve the win. They were up to the task as they held Elizabeth off. The defense has given up only six points in three exhibition games and one regular season game. The defense was especially tough in the game when it counted. Jerry Jones, who made a touchdown saving tackle, was the defensive player of the game. He had plenty of help as big Lamont Davis recovered three fumbles to crush three Elizabeth drives. The big play in the game was made by Dave Bello. With minutes left in

the game Elizabeth was moving down field trying to tie the game up. They reached the Raider three yard line and were ready to score when their running back fumbled. Bello fell on the ball and the Raiders ran out the clock.

Coach Meredith was very pleased with his defense. "We have three super linebackers in Doug Siegal, Buddy Hassett and Nick Colarusso," he said. He was also pleased with the play of junior Greg Durant.

About the offense Meredith said, "It was tough to get any offense going in this weather." He also said the offense will get better.

Meredith also feels the team can improve by getting rid of "stupid" penalties.

The Raiders next opponent will be the Tigers of Linden. The game will be played at Linden. The Tigers won their season opener over Cranford 7-0 so the game next Saturday should prove to be a defensive battle.

## Board Accepts State's Cheer Ruling

The Board of Education met on Monday night, first in executive session with the Board attorney, Casper Boehm, then in public, on the issue of a Board position on the recent state decision of New Jersey Commissioner of Education, Fred Burke, to enlarge the varsity cheerleading squad to include girls from the first squad chosen and the second. Only Vincent Shanni voted "no." However, Mr. Shanni indicated that Thomas Fallon, an absent board member, also favored appealing that decision.

Board President August Ruggiero indicated that the Board had discussed the Commissioner's decision and as a body, felt it in the best interests of all girls to participate. Supporting the concept of the expanded cheerleading squad allows all girls the opportunity of participation. "Our main concern is for the girls," he said.

Then, the Board voted to register with Commissioner Burke the negative reactions of the local Board to his comments, that the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board acted in an "arbitrary and capricious" manner. The

majority of the Board feels that they did not act in such a manner, and that no irreparable harm has been done by not allowing all girls to participate.

As things now stand, the varsity cheerleading squad includes 16 girls. Of the original 14 chosen, 11 were rechosen in retrials, ordered by the Board after a teacher-judge and some black parents registered objections regarding the legality of the trials. Three new girls were added. The reinstatement would return three of the girls from the

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### Calendar

Thursday, September 29 — Ad Hoc Committee on School Closings, Meeting on Facilities, Staffing, etc., Park Jr. High, 8 pm.  
Monday, October 3 — Senior Citizen Housing Corp., Scotch Plains — Architect Site Plan Review and Contract Approval Room 202, S.P. Municipal Building, 8 pm.  
Tuesday, October 4 — Monthly Meeting, Scotch Plains Council, 8:30 pm. Council Chambers.

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