

Contract awaits ratification
 Last minute settlement allows schools to open



THE STRIKE was settled in a last minute negotiation session Tuesday and the doors opened Wednesday for the first day of school as usual. Students hurried in to the Cass City Intermediate School when the doors opened for the first time for the 1980-81 school year.

Students in the Cass City district who thought they would get an extra day of vacation Wednesday got a surprise. So did teachers who thought they would be walking picket lines. School started Wednesday, the scheduled first day, the result of a tentative agreement reached about 11 p.m. Tuesday. Indicative of the last minute nature of the agreement, teachers met at 4 p.m. Tuesday to work out their plans for picketing and get their picket signs. They had voted Aug. 22 to strike if no contract agreement was reached by the scheduled first day of school. Tuesday morning and early afternoon, they attended the regular day before start of school orientation sessions for all teachers. The tentative agreement, according to Phyllis McCoy, chief negotiator for the teachers, will get them a 10 percent increase for each year of the three years of the agreement, plus those not at the top of the pay scale will continue to receive their annual increments. The 10 percent pay boost

means starting pay for a teacher this year with a bachelor's degree will be \$12,013. Teachers with 13 or more years of experience and a master's degree will receive \$20,869. Supt. Donald Crouse said Wednesday morning he hadn't had time to add up the total cost to the district of the financial settlement. The teachers, represented by the Tri-County Bargaining Association (TCBA), had sought a two-year agreement. The board also agreed to pay the premium for the Michigan Education Association affiliated MESSA Super Med II health insurance plan, another teacher proposal, plus the present dental plan. Teachers who choose not to receive the health insurance coverage, presumably because they are covered by a spouse's plan elsewhere, can apply the money that would otherwise pay for health insurance for an annuity. The board first made its economic proposals which the teachers accepted at a negotiating session that ran from 7 p.m. last Wednesday to 4 a.m. Thursday. **THE HANGUP WAS OVER** what Ms. McCoy referred to as "teacher protection" issues, some of which would have cost the district money. A compromise was reached in the last minute bargaining. The TCBA was seeking binding arbitration for teachers the administration was seeking to discharge. The compromise was that teachers fighting discharge -- if they have tenure -- will be given a choice between appealing to the State Tenure Commission or binding arbitration. There will be no change for teachers who haven't taught long enough to obtain tenure; their only option will be to fight dismissal in the courts. Ms. McCoy said she was surprised when the board gave in on that issue even partway, because supposedly that was one they were adamant about resisting. The teachers wanted duty-free lunch hours, but only elementary teachers got it. Secondary staff members will continue to have duties on a rotating basis. **THE OTHER MAJOR** item the teachers were seeking, they didn't get. That was that when vacancies oc-

curred, they would be posted so present staff members could get first crack before the district hires outsiders. At present, teachers interested in another assignment must so indicate during the spring semester. The position of the school administration was that posting vacancies would lengthen the time needed to hire new staff and for that reason, would reduce its chances of hiring the best possible teachers during the summer. **MAKING THE LAST MINUTE** settlement easier to reach was the fact that the chief negotiator for the teachers and school board were both at the same place Tuesday evening. Ms. McCoy, an MEA representative in Flint, is also the chief negotiator for the Tuscola Intermediate School District professional staff. Hired negotiator Al Luce of Saginaw is the chief bargainer for the Cass City and the Tuscola Intermediate Boards of Education. Intermediate district negotiating sessions began in Caro at 4 p.m. that day. **NO SETTLEMENT WAS** reached in those talks (see adjoining story), but about 7 p.m., Ms. McCoy said, she and Luce agreed that they probably could reach a settlement for Cass City before the evening was over. She said she made an offer

in behalf of the teachers, which Luce accepted, their private negotiations taking about a half hour. Meanwhile, the other members of the Cass City teacher negotiating team had been asked to stand by at the local MEA office, in case the intermediate district negotiations ended early and there was the possibility of negotiations in Cass City. Crouse called school board members to the high school at 8 p.m. when it appeared there would be a settlement. Ms. McCoy and Luce made telephone calls to their respective team or board when appropriate and by about 11 p.m., everyone had agreed to the tentative settlement. The board will vote on the agreement at its regular meeting Monday if the final contract language can be written in time. **THE TCBA BARGAINING** council, composed of one representative from each of 14 local education associations that belong, must first approve the agreement. After that, the Cass City teachers must have the proposed contract in writing for a minimum of five days before voting on it. Their chief negotiator thought it would take 7-10 days before they vote. Of the 11 districts being represented by the TCBA in

bargaining this fall, Cass City was only the second to settle. (North Huron was the first.) "I wouldn't say surprised," Ms. McCoy said of the last minute settlement that averted a strike, "but very pleased." "Everyone got something we can live with and that's the purpose of bargaining," Crouse also said he wasn't surprised by the late settlement. "We were so close on Friday, I was anticipating there was a good chance for a settlement." The teacher negotiating team members notified their fellow teachers as soon as there was a tentative settlement and the district handled notifying other employees by phone to tell them to report to work Wednesday. Although there was some confusion, Crouse said, it appeared only a very few students may have missed the start of school because they thought teachers were on strike. The Bad Axe radio station, WLEW, after being notified school would start Wednesday, originally broadcast that teachers would report that day, with classes to start Thursday. Channel 5 television in Saginaw, until corrected, broadcast Wednesday morning that teachers were striking.

Mrs. Crouse fighting school job rejection

Mrs. Joyce Crouse filed a complaint with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights in Saginaw Tuesday afternoon because she was denied a position as special education teacher in Cass City High School. According to Mr. Weatherby, at the civil rights office, Mrs. Crouse said, after the complaint is registered it's out of my hands and the State of Michigan will pursue the case against the Cass City School Board. Mrs. Crouse said that she had Ernest Walpole, Caro attorney, attend a special meeting of the board last Thursday to explain to the board the legality of the situation. Walpole told the board that not hiring Mrs. Crouse was sex discrimination and that there is now precedent in districts for hiring spouses in at least two incidents. Mrs. Crouse is currently hired by the Huron County Intermediate District. Meanwhile, Principal

Russell Richards said that he is awaiting direction from the school board for filling the special education teaching vacancy. The problem is that the school might end up hiring and paying two teachers for the same position, Richards said. At the special meeting positions previously adopted by various board members were reaffirmed. Voting to honor a contract extended to Mrs. Crouse were President Geraldine Prieskorn, Dr. Ed Scollon and J.D. Tuckey. Voting against were Dr. E. Paul Lockwood, Dick Albee, Theresa Burnette and Dean Hoag. Before the official vote a telephone poll was taken. Several board members were called by Mrs. Prieskorn and others by Superintendent Don Crouse. At that time four persons appeared

in favor. Mrs. Prieskorn said she asked if there was an objection to hiring Mrs. Crouse and that at that time 4 had no objections. One of the four, Hoag, said that what he said at the time of the phone call was that he had no objection to interviewing Mrs. Crouse. At a meeting held Tuesday, Aug. 26, Hoag said that he was against hiring Mrs. Crouse and he voted that way in the balloting held Thursday. The remaining trustees that voted against the contract had said, "no," when called on the phone. After the interview by the principal who offered a contract to Mrs. Crouse the superintendent started to take it to various board members for signatures. It was then that the conflict was discovered.

2 teens' spree ends in arrest

Two Kingston boys will be appearing in probate court after a wild Friday night and early Saturday in which they stole a pickup truck and two cars and drove two of the vehicles into ditches. The pickup truck was parked at the Kingston State Bank on M-46, after having been repossessed. The keys were in the ashtray. According to Caro State Police, the two boys, one 16 and the other 15, were driving the vehicle northbound on Phillips Road, south of Bevans Road, when it went off the east side of the road, struck a mailbox and then a small tree. That was at 2 a.m. The two boys then went to the home of Louis Wenzlaff, 2751 Phillips Road, Kingston, and took one of two cars parked in front. They didn't get very far. When Wenzlaff reported the theft to the sheriff's department at 5:27 a.m., the deputy soon found the car in the ravine on the east side of the road, just south of Wenzlaff's home. The boys then returned to the home, it was later learned, and took the second car parked there. It was found later Saturday parked in the driveway of a vacant home on Jane Please turn to page 18.

Willy demoted at wastewater plant

After 25 years as superintendent of the Cass City wastewater treatment plant, Nelson Willy was demoted by the village council Tuesday evening. At a special session, the council members voted unanimously by voice vote to hire a new superintendent with class B certification for the plant. Willy, presently licensed to operate class B plants, will be allowed to stay on as an employee should he be willing to do so. Until a new superintendent is hired, he will remain as superintendent. The council's decision was made at the end of an almost two hour meeting, all but the first and last few minutes of which were conducted in closed executive session. During that time, Willy met with council members a half-hour the first time, about one minute the second and about 10 minutes the last time. Council members made no mention at the conclusion of the meeting why they took the action they did and afterwards, Village President Lambert Althaver declined comment. Willy, after emerging from the first session with

the plant until 1966, expressed varying emotions while the council deliberated his fate. "The good Lord Please turn to page 18. the council, said the accusation against him was, "I cannot supervise men." Council members did have praise for his technical abilities, he said. What spurred the council was the resignation of Ken Miller as assistant operator at the plant, after about 18 months on the job. He recently passed examinations for his Class D license. His resignation was accepted by the council Tuesday, effective the day before. The plant has one other employee, a laborer paid with federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act funds. Presumably another factor in the council's decision was that sometime during the final three months of 1981, the greatly enlarged and modernized sewage treatment plant will go into operation, which will take at least four men to operate and possibly five or six. Probably two men will be certified plant operators. The present plant is classified Class C but the new one will be Class B as it will have a larger treatment capacity and third treatment stage. The present plant only has two stages. Willy, who worked alone at

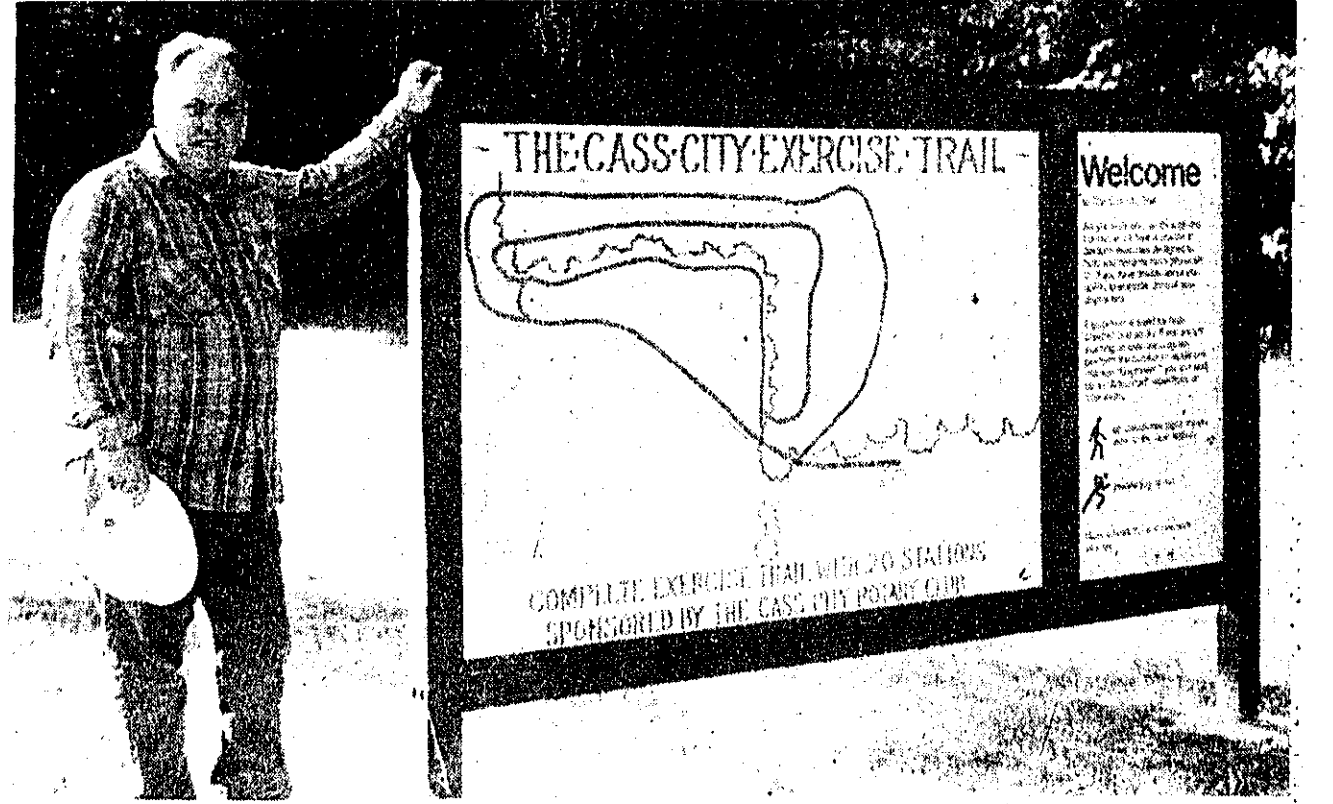
Strike delays skill center opening

The new \$4 million Tuscola Area Skill Center didn't open as scheduled Wednesday morning because the teachers employed there by the Tuscola Intermediate School District, plus special education teachers and nurses were on strike. The strike became a certainty when contract negotiations ended about 12:15 Wednesday morning, when bargainers reached an impasse. "The money just wasn't there," said Phyllis McCoy, chief negotiator for the professional staff. Seventy-five percent of the members of the Tuscola Intermediate Education Association (TIEA) present at a meeting Monday night, voted to strike if no settlement was reached, she said. There were 80 persons there, which was all of the intermediate district's special education staff and nurses plus some skill center teachers. Most of the non-economic language had been settled when the talks broke off early Wednesday. "Once the money is out of the way, the other non-economic issues will fall into place," she commented. One of the non-economic issues that was resolved was that teachers in the skill center are now recognized as part of the bargaining unit. The intermediate board's last economic proposal, Ms. McCoy said, was an 8 percent pay increase for each year of a two-year contract, plus teachers not at the top of the pay scale would continue to receive their annual increments. The Tri-County Bargaining Association, which is representing the teachers, is asking 10 percent the first year (plus annual increments) and 2 percent plus a cost of living increase of from 6-8 percent, depending on the inflation rate. Dr. Bruce Dunn, the intermediate district superintendent, confirmed those were the figures each side is proposing. At Tuesday's session, he said, 12 of 14 issues were resolved, leaving only salary and fringe benefits to settle. Negotiators met last Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, and, he said, a lot of progress had been made.

With picketers marching outside the district's buildings, he referred to the strike as illegal and chastised teachers for ignoring "the legal channels of using state mediation or fact finding in an attempt to reach an agreement." As of Wednesday morning, he said the intermediate school board was not planning any action other than bargaining to end the strike "and I don't know if and when we would." "At some time in the future, we will have to get to the table to get this ironed out . . . I just can't say when." No new meeting date has been set. "We just called off bargaining because we couldn't reach agreement," Ms. McCoy said. Speaking to the Chronicle early Wednesday, she left open the possibility the teachers may ask for the next negotiating session, possibly yet that day. She thought she would probably meet with the TIEA members Wednesday afternoon to review the status of negotiations "and take direction from there."

Would-be bandit gets surprise

As of Wednesday morning, the search was continuing for a man who attempted to rob the Whoopee Bowl store in Unionville Friday, but left with an injured left cheek. Steven Goodro told Unionville police that the man entered the store at 4:20 p.m. carrying a brown paper bag. He came up to the counter, pulled a .32 caliber revolver out of the bag and asked for money. Goodro's response was to pull a tire iron from under the counter and swing it at the would-be robber, hitting him in the left cheek. The man commented, "Only fooling," and left the store. He got into what is believed to be a 1971-76 Chevrolet Monte Carlo, blue with a white top and a lot of rust, and left. The suspect was described as white, about 23 years old and 160-70 pounds, 6-foot tall, with blond medium length hair and a blond mustache. He was wearing a blue and gray plaid flannel shirt and blue jeans. The driver of the car had shoulder length blond hair. Investigation is continuing by the sheriff's department and Unionville police.



ROTARIAN KEN JENSEN, the key man in the construction of the Cass City Exercise Trail, takes time out to pose with the sign showing how the trail works. Dedication is set for 2 p.m. Sunday.