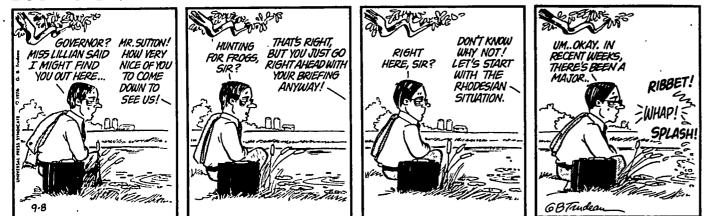
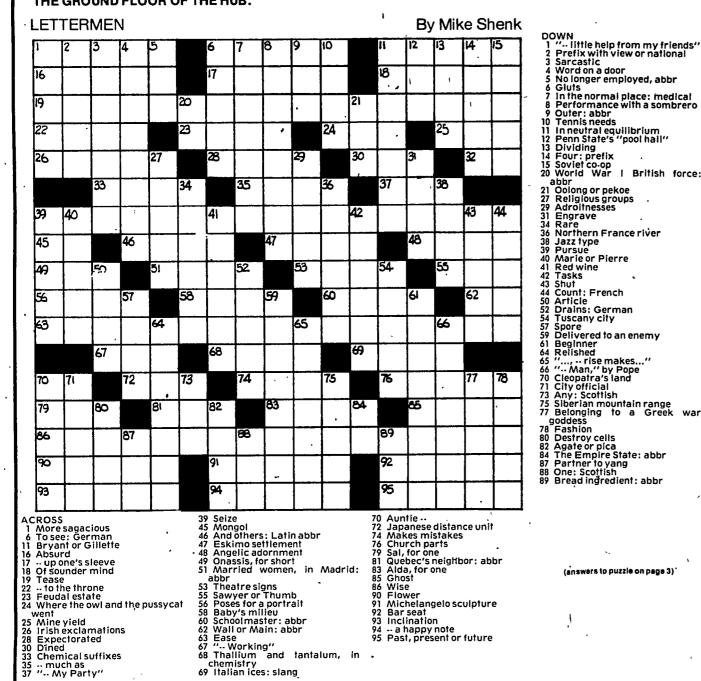
4-The Daily Collegian Wednesday, September 8, 1976

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Philly's school teachers approve 2-year contract

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PHILADELPHIA (AP) - Public school teacher's in Philadelphia accepted a new \$57.9 million two-year contract yesterday. But those in 30 Catholic high schools rejected a much smaller wage offer and voted to strike.

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Elsewhere across Pennsylvania three other school districts were struck yesterday, bringing the total to 18. In another 152 districts contracts remained unsettled with strike threats pending

All told, the strikes affected 5,507 teachers and 134,768 pupils across the state.

Most schools were scheduled to open today and tomorrow but in some districts where negotiations continued, opening was delayed up to a week to permit talks to continue.

The Philadelphia public school settlement, reached after all-night bargaining session, affected 14,000 teachers and 8,000 aides and secretaries.

The pact, providing for the first pay hike to be paid next February, was swiftly and overwhelmingly ratified by members of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers. The 285,000 pupils report tomorrow.

The contract provides a 6 per cent pay hike Feb. 1 plus 2 per cent more in fringes, another 3 per cent in pay next Sept. 1 and 5.5 per cent in salary and 2 per cent in fringes Feb. 1, 1978.

Teacher salaries now range from a starting \$8,900 for those with a bachelor's degree to \$22,600 for those with more than 10 years experience and a doctorate.

The school board estimated the agreement would cost \$12 million next year and another \$45.9 million in the second school year.

The current school budget shows a shortage of \$66 million. and there was no indication where the additional funds to pay for the new contract would be obtained.

Only City Council can raise taxes and last spring it imposed the largest single increase ever in real estate and wage taxes to wipe out a \$150 million deficit. Mayor Frank L. Rizzo had indicated there was no more money available for the schools.

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia offered its lay teachers, who comprise more than 60 per cent of the parochial high school faculties, a three-year contract providing increases of around three per cent. The teachers voted 784-127 to strike.

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The other strikes begun yesterday affected 726 teachers in the Pennsbury District of Bucks County, with 12,803 pupils; ' 125 teachers in Penn-Cambria, Cambria County, with 2,700 pupils, and 300 teachers in Kiski Area, Westmoreland County, with 5,995 pupils.

The Philadelphia Catholic high school teachers, scheduled to report to work today, instead planned to be there with picket signs to keep out delivery trucks and any faculty members who might decide to go in.

However, the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Francis B. Schulte, superintendent of the archidocesan schools, which also has 140,000 elementary pupils who are not affected, said the high schools would remain closed until there is a settlement.

"The attempt to keep schools open in similar situations only led to conflict and division which was in no way beneficial to the students or the teachers," Schulte said in a statement. Our hope is to make a fresh start when the strike is settled."

An archdiocese spokesman said a high school teacher with seven years experience now earns \$11,000, around \$4,000 less than a public school employe, and would earn \$13,824 at the end of the proposed three-year pact.

Schulte said that any pay increase would have to be paid by the parents who now spend \$500 a year for tuition.

John Reilly, president of the Catholic teachers group, said the contract rejection was great, adding: "I think it's about if time that we let them know where we stand.

At Pennsbury, where the largest number of public school teachers in Pennsylvania are striking, the issue was money. Teachers are asking for a 12 per cent increase. Present wage scales were not available.

A spokesman for the Bucks County district said classes would open today as scheduled but that pupils would be sent home if enough teachers honor picket lines.



