



SCOTCH PLAINS

THE TIMES



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Paddy's Day Harpist



Alix Ledford brought her harp to the Scotch Plains Library Monday night, offering traditional Irish strains for a pre-St. Patrick's Day program.

Scotch Plains Council OK's Annual Budget

The Scotch Plains Township Council gave approval to a 1977 municipal budget, but final approval will be held off for a short period, awaiting state approval of very minor changes. The public hearing on the \$4,595,926 budget drew a few people on Tuesday night, but there were no negative comments regarding any specific spending areas within the budget.

The total general appropriations are up by \$309,296 over 1976, but the taxes required to support the new budget drop by \$345, due to increases in revenues.

Council was questioned regarding state-mandated cap ceilings on spending. Carl Lynn asked what the total budget increase was, and was told the budget has increased by a total of 7.8 percent. The cap ceiling limitation is applied to operating revenues, and expenditures from revenue sharing are excepted from the five percent cap limitation.

The major areas of increase over 1976 include general government salaries and wages, up \$34,319; insurance and other expenses, up \$89,274; municipal debt service, up \$143,027.

The reserve for uncollected taxes is set at \$834,649, up \$24,254. As explained by officials, the reserve is set at 93½ percent. Actual experience has shown that the collections run about 97 percent. However, as pointed out by Council members, when 97 percent is collected, the county and the school district get their full 100 percent. The township must allow for a cushion in the event of failure to collect. Lynn asked what procedures were followed on delinquent taxes, and was told that foreclosure is employed after a certain period. There is a penalty applied on late tax payments, also.

In other actions, Council argued once again along political lines, on the issue of senior citizen housing. The Democrats

introduced — an approved, 3-2 — a resolution serving as the official letter of intent to make necessary zoning changes, tax abatement, and acquisition of land for senior citizen housing. The letter of intent is the next official step required toward establishment of such housing here, the Democrats explained. The township thereby pledges to legislate appropriate and applicable zoning ordinances for the housing and, if tax abatement is required during the life of the federal state mortgage commitment, the township accepts the responsibility. Mayor Wodjenski, Councilman Robert Griffin and Council Noel Musial, all Democrats, favored the resolution.

The Republicans voted no. Alan Augustine read a long position paper last month outlining his question of proven need, and reiterated that he stands on this position. Larry Newcomb said the question of tax abatement has never been discussed. While the Democrats indicated that the letter of intent was a simple and necessary step toward filing an application with HUD for a senior citizen housing grant, Newcomb felt there was a more involved commitment of a serious and binding nature. "We've never discussed publicly tax abatements," he said.

Democratic Councilmen noted that tax abatement will be used to induce a developer to come into town. In lieu of taxes, the developer pays a fee to the township, it was said. The township intends to acquire Old

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School Board And Budget Elections On Tuesday

Voters in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood community go to the polls on Tuesday, March 22, to register opinion on a school budget for 1977-78, and to elect three new school board members.

Three incumbent board members — President Darrell Brownawell, and Frank Festa from Scotch Plains and Robert Carlson from Fanwood have all chosen not to seek re-election. Mrs. Leonia Reilly, who has served on the board in the past, is uncontested for Carlson's Fanwood seat.

In Scotch Plains, there are five candidates. Two of them are wives of current board members. Mrs. Ann Fallon and Mrs. Arlene Shanni seek to join their husbands on the board. The two husbands have one more full year to serve in their three-year terms. Robert Lariviere, Robert Perry and George Larkin are the other two candidates for the two Scotch Plains seats.

The budget, set at \$14,212,581, as compared with a budget of \$13,216,422 last year, will require \$500,604 less in school taxes to support. The budget maintains existing programs, with some staff cuts for declining enrollments, others to stay within state mandated cap ceilings.

The Board of Education has applied \$213,000 in surplus to the proposed budget.

Polls will be open from 2 to 9 pm next Tuesday.

Mayor, Carpenter Wrangle On Budget

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education released a "budget bulletin" this week, headlined with an indication that school taxes are going down \$500,000. The budget bulletin includes comment from Superintendent Dr. Reigh Carpenter noting his pleasure over the \$500,000 reduction in property tax levies, and a statement from Board President Darrell Brownawell that the budget reflects absolute necessary costs.

Residents received another budget bulletin during the same week — from Mayor Anne B. Wodjenski of Scotch Plains. In her budget bulletin, Mayor Wodjenski addressed herself not only to the Scotch Plains municipal budget, but to the 1977-78 school budget as well — a move which has drawn comment, both pro and con.

Wodjenski, in her Mayor's message in the Scotch Plains flyer, emphasizes that "in spite of an actual 10 percent decline in pupil enrollment since 1974 and an projected enrollment decline of 25 percent by 1980, the school budget is up by over \$1,968,000, or 7.8 percent. "If school budget increases of over one million dollars are permitted by the taxpayers, only

the very wealthy will be able to withstand the tax impact. When one also considers that in total the school and county levy 933 percent more taxes than the township, it becomes apparent that the taxpayers must voice their objections and concerns to the appropriate elected officials now, and again at the polls on March 22, 1977."

See excerpts from statements of mayor and superintendent in next week's paper.

Wodjenski's message represents the first time a Mayor has officially taken a written position, within a township release, on the subject of school budgets. Although in recent years,

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Girls' Sports Today... Many Choices, Rewards

"I'm involved in a sport every day, from before school opens in September until June, with no days off between seasons," said Tonia Dillon, Class of 1978, Scotch Plains-Fanwood High.

"Basketball takes a lot of my time, but I really like competition. On the court, we learn respect for each other, working together, getting to know a coach better," Robin Nicholson, Class of 1977, Scotch Plains-Fanwood High.

"On a varsity team, you really learn to win and lose. I often wish some of my friends were on teams with me, because it's in sports that you really get to know your classmates differently. You know how it feels when you really work hard and win — and when you lose, you know winning isn't the only thing in the world," Margee DiSalvi, Class of 1978, Scotch Plains-Fanwood High.



ROBIN NICHOLSON

These are the words of modern athletes — the girls of 1977. There was a time, so familiar to mothers to today's daughters, when the term "Girls Sports" meant maybe one girls' high school basketball team. Back through the years, the options were few. A girl could be a cheerleader, if she were lucky; or maybe she could

play intramural basketball; or wait around the gym door for boy athletes. Today, however, the odds are just as likely that you might spot a boy carrying the athletic bag or waiting at the gym door for one of today's young female athletes. They've come a long way, baby, the girls of 1977. They're involved intensely in their own sports programs, and the scope of girls' sports grows daily, limited only

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ATTENTION KIDS
There is a FREE
GREAT ADVENTURE
coming
Look for details next week.

Calendar
Thursday, March 17 — Bd. of Education, Monthly Meeting, Terrill Jr. High, 8:00 pm.
Friday, March 18 — Candidates Night, Bd. of Ed. Candidates, sponsored by Alert Parents for Good Schools, S.P. Library.
Tuesday, March 22 — Bd. of Education elections, on budget and board candidates.
Tuesday, March 22 — Demonstration, Faberge Easter Eggs, S.P. Library, 10-11 am. Free!

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