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THE TIMES



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Easter Is...



rabbits in fluffy fur, lilies, and decorated eggs. Easter is pretty at Historic Murray Hill this week.

Cheerleader Parents Seek Meeting With Board

A group of parents - representing their cheerleader daughters - spent four and a half hours last Monday night waiting to address the Board of Education. The Board was sitting in negotiation on the 1977-78 school budget with a full complement of Council members from Scotch Plains and Fanwood. After 12:30 a.m. on Tuesday morning, agreement on the budget was reached, and the Board was able legally to hear the parents only on an informal discussion basis, since the Sunshine Law would have necessitated advance notice for any official meeting. In addition to the reaction from parents, cheering advisor Karen McDermott released a four-page statement this week.

Fourteen cheerleaders were chosen at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High in early March, but that decision was later held in abeyance because of complaints from a black teacher at the high school, James Mason, and a large group of black parents, who claimed that the advisor, Karen McDermott, had given chosen names to judges in advance. Later, the Board voted to direct high school principal, Dr. Terry Riegel, to re-do the elections to eliminate any doubts as to the legality of the selection process.

The parents who attended Monday night represented the girls originally chosen. They have now asked that the Board rescind its motion of March 29 and to meet with them. This meeting was set by Board President August Ruggiero for tonight.

The parents stated, by letter to the Board, that they feel their daughters were legitimately chosen, acknowledged by peers and faculty and confirmed by public announcement. Now, they are the ones being penalized, being made "sacrificial lambs in this ludicrous situation."

The parents made four points that they wish clarified. What directives were officially adopted by the Board of Education previously, regarding selection of cheerleaders, twirlers, color guard, and flag squads? Did the Board receive and read a petition signed by 450 people? (This was a petition attesting to the honesty and integrity of advisor

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Fanwood Egg Hunt

Mrs. Easter Bunny will be there, in a fluffy-tailed white costume. Easter eggs will be there, scattered amidst the blades of grass. Prizes will be there. And hopefully, all the kids of Fanwood will be there, too - for the Recreation Commission's Annual Easter Egg Hunt at LaGrande Park this Saturday, April 9th.

The Egg Hunt starts at 9:00 a.m. for pre-school children; at 9:20 for kindergarten and first graders; at 9:40 for 2nd and 3rd grades; and at 10:00 for 4th and 5th graders. The kids will scan the park for hidden eggs, looking for the elusive ones with a special star, designating them as prize-winners. There will be free Easter handouts for everybody, as well.

One of the annual highlights of the egg hunt yearly is an egg-decorating contest. Prizes are awarded according to the four age groups participating in the egg hunt. Each contestant decorates his egg at home and brings it to the park just before the running of the egg hunt. Prizes are awarded for most original, prettiest, and most colorful.

There will also be a picture drawing contest. Children are to draw and color Easter pictures at home, and bring them to the park, with name, grade and address on the back. Prizes will be awarded for Best Illustration of Easter, Best Rabbit, and Most Original.

Got It!



All that advance preparation — and then came the hordes of egg-hunting kiddies at Brookside Park last Sat.! All those hidden eggs were soon found! A repeat is scheduled for Fanwood hunters at LaGrande this Saturday.

School Budget Sliced \$615,900

At approximately 1 a.m. on Tuesday, April 5, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education and the two Councils of Scotch Plains and Fanwood came to agreement regarding a figure for school operations for 1977-78. After five hours of discussion and caucusing on Monday night, which was preceded by several other evenings of similar activity, the combined bodies voted acceptance of a cut of \$615,900 in the budget. The acceptance of the cut avoids appealing the budget to the New Jersey Commissioner of Education in Trenton - a costly and time-consuming procedure.

The amount to be raised by taxation for current expense is reduced from \$9,964,010 to \$4,371,010. Capital is reduced from \$84,400 to \$61,500 and debt service remains the same.

The total reduction represents in Scotch Plains a savings of 28 tax points - 14 this year and 14 next, because the municipality pays schools on a calendar basis. It represents about \$112 less on taxes over the two six-month periods.

Investigation of the budget resulted in scathing criticism of the school budgeting process from governmental leaders. Dennis O'Neill, Director of Finance for Scotch Plains, had gone over the books with a fine tooth comb, and he unearthed, among other figures, an error of \$245,000, overbudgeted in the salary account. O'Neill found that \$9,564,558 was committed to already settled contracts, and that administrative and secretarial increases, which had not been finalized at budget time, had to be added to that,

for a grand total of \$9,619,541 in salaries. The budget provides for \$9,933,820 in the salary accounts.

Outstanding work orders in the capital account was another area of attack. O'Neill challenged that the 1975-76 audit showed accounts payable of \$742,259 as of June 30, 1976, with \$477,527 of this paid as of March 9, 1977, leaving a balance of \$264,732 unpaid. Acting Assistant Superintendent for Business, Frank Hicks, explained that latest calculations indicated \$160,000 in unpaid purchase orders. There are still purchase orders open from the 1975-76 budget, but Hicks indicated, when questioned by O'Neill, that cancelling these work orders would require review and decision by the Board.

The work orders were for Board-initiated authorizations for work, and could be cancelled, he indicated; but it could not be

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