

Volunteers prepare school information booklet

The Farmington PTA's new pamphlet, "Did You Know?" is the result of six weeks of "solid concentration" by volunteers who gathered information on the school district for the group's "coffee and comments" program.

The program was initiated in early January to help inform voters about their school district. It was also meant to help the school board determine the attitudes of the public, especially how they want tax money spent.

Vivian Jurosek, PTA president, said the program has been successful as an information source and she hopes it will be equally successful in getting answers back to the public.

"We wanted to give a well-rounded understanding to the parents in the district. Hopefully, we picked the points they wanted to know," she said.

Suggestions on the pamphlet's content came from PTAs, PTOs, mothers' clubs, principals and brainstorming, she said. Working with the school administration were Helen Prutow, Peg Wright, Mary Lazarton and Tom Balk, who gathered information and assembled the pamphlet.

TO ORGANIZE information-gathering, the district was divided by elementary schools and a "captain" was appointed for each section. In turn, the 17 captains organized brigades of hostesses who held coffees for three to 30 people.

Evening and day coffees were held to include daytime workers—especially men—and obtain more representative views of the district.

To have the information ready before the first coffee, it had to be rush-

ed to an emergency printer. In spite of the hurry, only two mistakes were discovered later in the pamphlet.

In one, the total number of schools should have been 25, including 17 elementary schools, rather than 24 including 16 elementary, as printed.

Also, the state aid reduction was cal-

culated for the 1974-75 school year, rather than 1975-76.

DESIGNED FOR distribution at the coffees, the pamphlets were given to each of the 17 captains and filtered to the moderators. Moderators, referred to as consensus-takers, attend each coffee to

stimulate and guide the discussions, as well as record comments, questions and complaints.

Though most of the conversations centered around school problems, they did not turn into gripe sessions, Mrs. Jurosek said.

"Most of the complaints dealt with academic material. Parents wanted to

know why we didn't have more "straight teaching," and get back to the basics like reading, writing and arithmetic.

"They also wanted to know why the transition from elementary school to junior high was so difficult for their children, and what they could do to make it go more smoothly," she said.

Portions of the information may be available for the next school board meeting. The PTA expects to answer questions raised during the coffees either by mail or through hostesses and moderators.

PTA spreads information

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 tenure was not desirable. What happened when a teacher turned sour? they asked.

"If they have that many parents who ask their kids to be taken out of the class, you'd think they finally would do something about it," said one mother, who believed her son had been deliberately marked down for his ideological differences with the teacher.

"Seems to me that when you have a surplus of teachers, you ought to be able to pick and choose, and have the best," she said.

SURE, THE school board will get complaints about teachers from chronic complainers, but what about the parent who is rarely seen, is known to be a respected, responsible and respectable community member, and who comes in once a year registers a complaint? Only a serious problem would bring these people out they said.

If you're only up there once, they

should think about it rather than chalk it up to a personality conflict of a bad year for that teacher," one woman said.

Progress reports on severe problems were criticized for being too little, too late.

"By the time we get the reports, it's way out of hand," someone said.

They suggested the teachers alert the parents to their child's problems much sooner.

Special education programs were praised, as was Frank Kasun, principal of Gill Elementary School, who was commended for his concern and responsiveness to community teacher and student needs.

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