

# \* Prom precautions a success

By Michael Scharnow  
Times Editor

Although not without blemish, school officials feel the recent high school prom was a success and additional public awareness of safety issues improved student conduct.

Fountain Hills High School Principal Tom Lawrence announced before the traditional spring event that new parental permission slips would be needed.

The slips announced that two off-duty Sheriff's Office deputies would be at prom equipped with portable breathalyzers to deal with students suspected of drinking alcohol.

Lawrence told the Fountain Hills Coalition last week that one larger rented bus accommodating about 30 students refused to transport the teens from the event because evidence of alcohol was found after they were dropped off at the Scottsdale resort.

"Things weren't as bad as proms have been in

previous years," Lawrence said.

Student government (STUGO) leaders felt that the administration's push to crack down on alcohol consumption caused some teens to use Ecstasy and cocaine to avoid alcohol testing on site.

"We're not sure to what degree that occurred," Lawrence said. "There were over 300 kids at the event. We didn't see any evidence of that."

Carole Groux, coalition director, said, "My first thought is, you don't negotiate with terrorists."

"The rumor mill among kids is viral. One child says something and then it becomes 'everyone.' It's not unusual to hear that."

Lawrence said that STUGO leaders were told that if it were true, then future proms may be jeopardized.

"We're not backing off on some of this stuff," Lawrence said. "It's up to the students to follow up on this."

School resource officer

Dep. Jill Oschner said, "I don't buy it that we're scaring kids into harder drugs. If it happened, it was a very small percentage of the kids...probably kids who did it in the past."

Groux said beefed up enforcement will eventually help to change the norms.

"Our goal is not to put a black mark on a student or wreck a kid's life," she said. "Our goal is to keep kids safe."

"We want to change the norm that these types of events are just for partying...."

"It will take decades for parents not to think this is OK. This is a hard position for Mr. Lawrence to be in, and we applaud him for his efforts."

"Every kid deserves to be in a clean and sober environment, especially school events."

Officials will huddle soon to discuss the upcoming Falcon Fiesta, which is an overnight celebration for graduating seniors following commencement exercises in late May.