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Wednesday, April 24, 2013

\$1.00

Volume 40, No. 17 • 32 pages • 2 sections



Times photo by Barb Charzuk

## Jumping through hoops

Scott Sinquiah, a member of Grass Roots dancers, performed Sunday, April 14, the opening day of the 25th edition of the American Trails International Symposium. Other members of his family also performed hoop dances. The large trails convention was held at the Fort McDowell Radisson Resort. For additional pictures and stories from the symposium, please see Page 1B.



Times photo by Mike Scharnow

## Special lady

A giant 95th birthday and community contribution celebration was held Friday evening for Eleanor Bentson, the mother of Town Councilwoman Cassie Hansen and local teacher Pam Aister. A large crowd gathered at the Presbyterian Church to honor this special lady. For more about the event and Eleanor, please see Publisher Alan Cruikshank's column on Page 1B.

## Relay for Life on weekend

The community is invited to participate in the annual Relay for Life of Fountain Hills this weekend.

It will be held at Fountain Park near the Splash Pad starting at 5 p.m. Saturday and going through the night until 5 a.m. Sunday.

Relay For Life is a unique, family-oriented event that is fun and is well attended by members of the community to raise money in the fight against cancer.

Relay is a story of hope, honoring cancer survivors and uniting people in more than 4,600 communities across the country in the battle against this terrible disease.

Participants camp out overnight to enjoy music, entertainment and walk a loop in support of their friends and loved ones.

"It's a truly amazing event," said local organizer Tina Hachey.

The benevolent funds help the American Cancer Society fund research, advocacy, educational materials

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## FireRock golf club may be sold to Mickelson's group

Members debating future of private course

By Barb Charzuk  
Times Reporter

Golfer star Phil Mickelson and his management firm have made an offer to purchase FireRock Country Club.

MCO Properties President Jeremy Hall said the purchase offer was unsolicited. He declined to say the purchase bid but sources who did not want to be identified said Mickelson placed \$1 million of a \$5.5 million purchase price in escrow to buy the town's first and only private golf club.

The award-winning 6,984-yard, par 72 championship golf course designed by golf course architect Gary Panks is accessed off Shea Boulevard.

Under an agreement with MCO, the membership has the first right to acquire the golf course if the developer receives and considers a purchase offer, said Hall.

Golf clubs, closely intertwined with real estate development, have felt the pain in the recent down Arizona economy with the overdevelopment of golf courses.

FireRock Country Club has been operating at a deficit, volunteered a member who preferred not to be identified.

Some homeowners worry about the financial viability of members acquiring and maintaining the course. If the golf course were to fail, their property values would be diminished, one homeowner said.

Members have until the end of May to decide, according to Hall. Keith Vanvelkinburgh heads an acquisitions committee. His

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## \*Dispensary hours won't change

Adjustment Bd. rejects variations

By Bob Burns  
Times Reporter

The Board of Adjustment split its decisions on four variance requests from the operator of the medical marijuana dispensary in Fountain Hills.

The board met April 16 and denied requests from Mark Steinmetz of Nature's AZ Medicines, Inc. for a change in the permitted operating hours and to have an ATM machine on the premises.

The board also determined there was no need for a variance to allow the dispensary to offer water and coffee to its clients.

A request for a variance to allow an outdoor seating area adjacent to the dispensary was granted.

Steinmetz told *The Times* he may appeal in Maricopa County Superior Court the

board's decision regarding operating hours.

The town's ordinance had set hours in which a dispensary could operate as 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Steinmetz had requested a range from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

He was requesting the adjustment to allow patients with traditional jobs more flexible hours to visit the dispensary, which is located on Enterprise Drive and could be open by June.

A woman told the board she has a medical marijuana card and would be unable to get to the dispensary between the hours allowed by the town. She would need to wait for her husband to get home from work.

The hours in the town's ordinance are far too restrictive, Steinmetz said. He added that other jurisdictions are allowing much longer hours for dispensary operations.

Town Senior Planner Bob Rodgers said the rules in

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## Drop off prescription drugs on Saturday

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in cooperation with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office is inviting people to turn in their unused or expired prescription medications this Saturday, April 27.

Residents can dispose of prescription medications safely at this upcoming "drop-off" day.

People will find deputies available to take possession of the drugs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Town Hall parking lot, 16705 Avenue of the Fountains, at La Montana Drive.



Times photo by Bob Burns

Janet Stocks and Ricardo Maldonado honor their new friendship forged from their common experiences from the Boston Marathon.

## Marathoners recall Boston bomb tragedy

By Bob Burns  
Times Reporter

Fountain Hills residents Janet Stocks and Ricardo Maldonado had experienced the thrill of personal achievement at the Boston Marathon last week only to have their euphoria dashed by a horrific tragedy that

devastated the iconic race. Maldonado had a particularly good day. Personally he finished the race in two hours, 38 minutes, a personal record and good for fifth overall in his age category.

He and his fellow run-

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# \*Dispensary

(cont. from page 1A)

other jurisdictions are not relevant to whether the request for a variance meets the criteria prescribed by state statute.

During the public hearing process there were several people representing the substance abuse coalition in Fountain Hills.

Dwight Johnson said the coalition works hard to convince teens marijuana is not good for them.

“With extended hours to a time teens are out of school, they will be tempted to purchase marijuana from cardholders,” Johnson said.

Maria Perreault said that teens are led to believe marijuana is not harmful and with greater availability there is greater chance it will get into the hands of youths.

Board Chairman Paul Ryan stated prior to the hearing that the board had no jurisdiction related to the medical marijuana law and urged speakers to keep their comments relevant to the zoning variance criteria.

Ryan ultimately asked coalition members to keep to the subject at hand on three occasions.

Susan Goodwin, an attorney representing the board, said the town’s regulations concerning hours comply with the state medical marijuana statute.

Goodwin said it is the burden of the applicant to prove that they meet the criteria for a variance.

Board Vice-Chair Carol Perica said she does not believe the applicant meets any of the four criteria and moved to deny the variance request on operating hours. The vote was 5-0 to deny the request.

## Other issues

There was a relatively

brief discussion related to the request to allow an ATM.

Doug Hebert, a member of the coalition and retired DEA agent, said the reason the ATM machine was requested is that banks will not deal with marijuana dispensaries and allow them to accept credit or debit cards, which makes them a strictly cash business.

The town ordinance states there cannot be more than \$200 left overnight at the dispensary.

Ryan said it would not be likely that there would be less than \$200 in an ATM machine, and moved that the request did not meet the criteria for a variance.

That vote to deny was also unanimous.

The board did vote to allow an outdoor seating area adjacent to the dispensary site to remain.

The outdoor area has been on the premises for years and is used by other tenants in the building complex.

Both the town and Steinmetz agreed that the area should not be used by dispensary clients. Steinmetz agreed to use video surveillance of the area and post it with signs telling dispensary patients not to use the area.

Board member Nick Sehman inquired why Steinmetz asked for the variance if he was able to agree with the town on how to handle it. Steinmetz said he did it at the request of the landlord who wanted to be confident the seating area could remain.

The board determined that request met all four criteria for a variance and voted to grant it.

Steinmetz said he expects to be ready to open the dispensary, which is located at Enterprise and Colony drives, around the first of June.