

# Opinion



Michael Scharnow  
Editor

## Summer, theater, finances

I have a love-hate relationship with summer. I love the change of pace, a chance to slow down a little bit and catch up on things I've been putting off since summer.

My calendar isn't so full, the special events slow down, the hectic pace tapers off. I can jump in the swimming pool and relax. How about a cold beer or margarita?

Yet the summer heat and schedule present their own issues. Mainly, sweat. And plenty of it. And we always have to sweat through employee vacations, time off, finding interesting news to fill the paper.

Like I said — a relaxing and still challenging time of the year.

I attended my first "Prizm Award" ceremony at the Fountain Hills Theater Monday evening.

All I can say is theater folks know how to have fun... I was there accepting a community award from FHT on behalf of the Noon Kiwanis Club. The Prizm Awards are internal awards as voted upon by FHT season ticketholders.

Best actor and actress, best production, costumes, that sort of thing.

It's a look back at the season behind and a celebration of all things theater. Everyone associated with the theater loves all aspects of theater production. They support each other and they believe in their "cause." Well done, Fountain Hills Theater.

And the Noon Kiwanis Club is proud to have been a financial supporter of the theater since the 1990s. They do wonderful things for the youth in this community.

The Town Council took a little time last week to honor retiring Town Manager Ken Buchanan.

Ken, I think, has been a calming influence within town government the past few years during a time of uncertainty and potential upheaval.

The town is clearly out of the Great Recession, but things will never quite be the same, either.

The building growth is picking up, but questions remain if the town can keep up in a timely manner with all the plan reviews and other details associated with working with developers and builders.

Plus, as evidenced by the front-page story, questions also remain about long-term issues such as street maintenance.

The town has very little flexibility when it comes to raising revenues, and Arizona municipalities seem quite hamstrung by the Legislature in this area.

Fountain Hills is doing "OK" in terms of offering services and other municipal priorities, but is it "excelling"? Those in favor of limited government and decreased costs say the town is doing enough. The condition of many of our streets say otherwise, and young families say otherwise as well.

It will be interesting to see how it all plays out over the next year. The Civic Association is launching a "visioning" process. We asked this question last summer, and it still holds true today: "Where, exactly, are we headed?"

### No turn on red?

A letter from:  
Jeffrey Burch

If we are not going to enforce the no turn on red at Palisades and Shea, then let's get rid of it. Seriously....

Town Council and law enforcement should do one or the other.

I use the intersection frequently and feel foolish sitting there while most drivers totally ignore the two red arrows and three signs. Really most completely ignore it.

### Marijuana facts

A letter from:  
Shelly Mowrey  
FH Coalition

There is a lot of misinformation and distorting of facts around marijuana and youth in Arizona and in our own town. A recent letter to the editor stated that marijuana use is down in Arizona, but the author failed to tell Fountain Hills residents that not a single student in Fountain Hills took the survey that was quoted.

As the director of the Fountain Hills Youth Substance Abuse Coalition, our number one concern is our kids and we are concerned about our kids and marijuana.

In the survey that Fountain Hills youth do take, one out of four of those students who smoke marijuana said they got marijuana from someone with a medical marijuana card. That's double the state average and a 35 percent increase since 2012. Alcohol, tobacco and prescription drug abuse are down in Fountain Hills, but marijuana is flat.

Five other facts:

1. Today's marijuana is dramatically stronger than the marijuana of past decades. In some cases, the marijuana is five times as strong as the marijuana of a generation ago.

2. Marijuana now comes in cookies, brownies and candies. They are called edibles and can lead to poisoning and hospitalization. One incident was recently reported on in *The Fountain Hills Times*.

3. Science clearly shows regular marijuana use in teen years can lead to a drop in IQ.

4. One out of eight youth who smoke marijuana started in elementary school.

5. You can prevent your child from using marijuana.

There has never been a time when we have had so much science and research about the harms and risks of marijuana. Take the time to talk with your kids. We're here to help. You can find our website at [fcoalition.org](http://fcoalition.org).

### Myself alone

A letter from:  
Ray Wells

I never thought I would write an opinion letter about religion, but with it being a long front page article in *The Fountain Hills Times*, and perhaps a couple of rational letters in last week's paper, I decided to write my two cents.

I thought we already had enough diversity in this town, or is the word "diversity" with the various

political groups. When I first saw the "Fact or Fiction" ad in the paper I asked myself, "Why?" The question "Why does it matter that Jesus..." reminded me of a certain politician saying, "What difference, at this point, does it make?"

Being raised in a Methodist church, but having been a member of a Presbyterian church since marriage, I decided to attend both a Fact and Fiction church service to see what was going on.

I felt welcome and comfortable with both services, and felt that Jesus would have been happy to attend either one. That's not to say that I would agree with everything said in either one, but I respect the right and freedom to worship their own way.

As for me, Thomas Jefferson said it best, "Say nothing of my religion. It is known to my God and myself alone."

### Holy Bible

A letter from:  
Jeff Dover

The recent exchanges described in *The Times* between local church entities parallel our national political dialogue.

So-called "progressives" maintain the patently absurd view that the U.S. Constitution is "living, breathing document" — meaning that it's subject to reinterpretation at any given time, depending on who is in power and what meaning suits them at the time.

The normal view held by sober (and honest) people is that the words mean what they mean and there is plenty of supporting documentation to back up those meanings, not the least of which is a common understanding of English language. The discussion among the churches here is similar.

Apart from Christ himself, the Bible is the foundation of Christianity. For a pastor to say that the Immaculate Conception is "an outdated myth" is out of line. When will he later decide that feeding all the people at the Sermon on the Mount is "an outdated myth"? What about the resurrection? What about raising Lazarus?

Finally, at what point does Jesus become just another guy — according to the whims of current fashion? When Jesus becomes just another guy, why worship him? When our Constitution means whatever you want it to mean, why have one?

Like our Constitution, the Bible, too, is a foundation. When you start tinkering with foundations, you put entire structures at risk.

### Love, not hate

A letter from:  
Bill Schweers

Last week Ann and I and several other members of The Foundains, a Progressive United Methodist Church, traveled to Phoenix to attend a celebration of religious freedom at the Phoenix Islamic Center.

After parking, everyone had to walk past a young man who was speaking through a free-standing

portable electric megaphone. He was screaming that all Muslims were rapists, murderers, thieves and worse. While I will defend his right of free speech, this did not stop me from saying a silent prayer: "May his batteries go dead!"

Once inside the mosque, attendees respectfully took off their shoes and then sat and watched as people kept streaming through the doors. Men and women of all ages, teenagers and children, coming together with smiling, excited faces, wanting to show support and respect for our Muslim neighbors.

And, why were we there? Why all this outpouring of kindness and compassion?

Because just three days earlier a group of mean-spirited ruffians, many wearing guns and military garb, stood outside this very mosque attempting to goad any kind of "violent reaction" from those wishing to attend worship services. And nothing happened! Peace and quiet prevailed.

So here we were. Hundreds and hundreds of concerned, like-minded, caring people coming together to say "No!" to religious intolerance and bigotry. Saying "No!" to the use of foolish and narrow-minded words like "apostate" to describe anyone who dares to think differently.

As the program progressed speaker after speaker representing many faiths and religious organizations spoke of love and understanding and acceptance and unity.

While the words resonated with great meaning throughout the hall, what has stuck in my mind is the simple yet powerful image of the Jewish Rabbi standing beside the Muslim Imam who was standing beside the Evangelical pastor, who was standing beside the Episcopal priest, who was...

### Love & hope

A letter from:  
Suzanne & Reece Stigler

Weekly, we enjoy the letters. What a variety. Some are very informative, others are emotional and not always factual, but interesting.

As we read in *The Times*, not everyone sees eye to eye on any given subject. Likewise, denominations vary in their beliefs and presentation of religious

# Our viewpoint

## Funding street maintenance

It's too bad voters several years ago did not approve a \$30 million bond package intended to replace or repair most streets in Fountain Hills. We sure could use the money today.

Yes, \$30 million is a lot of money and obviously a significant bond package that we're not used to in this community. Distractions such as a possible roundabout and other issues took voters' eyes away from the core message — our streets are crumbling, and they continue to deteriorate on a daily basis.

We're currently seeing the benefit of a subsequent bond approval of a smaller amount to totally re-do Saguro Blvd., but lost in the big picture is the fact that many other streets are in similar condition.

Since failure of the \$30 million package, the town has implemented a pavement management plan and made other cuts to help fund that plan. But it isn't enough. The north and northeastern part of town — thought to only take a year or two to complete — will now take three to four years to complete because of funding issues.

The money just isn't there to do all the work. And more work is needed as the days go on. Areas previously only needing slurry seal now need total replacement, which is more expensive.

With seven pavement management zones in the community, the town may be playing "catch up" with street maintenance for years and years to come. The \$30 million package would have caught us up within a period of a few years. Now "Plan B" is in place, and it's not looking optimistic.

If more revenue sources are not found, don't be surprised if another bond packages comes forward within a few years strictly for street work. The current system is not sustainable.

matters. Sunday or Saturday churchgoers nod in agreement, but deep down many have unanswered questions. That's where Christianity, truth or fiction, comes into our midst. We are pleased that eight Fountain Hills clergymen stepped forward to invite people to join them in their services and seeking God's truths.

Their format has brought much discussion and interest. Mainly what we really believe and why. Fortunately, Americans can still think for themselves and express their opinions. No government harassment or hostile intervention and threats.

There is strong concern that time is short. We do not want anyone to know the horrors of war, oppression or maybe even death for what they believe.

Perhaps it is easier to ignore all this and put aside, live it up and enjoy life. Who cares? Amazing people do care what you believe. We have lived throughout the country (16 years in Fountain Hills) and been active members of various churches.

We have found people to be understanding, compassionate and had one desire to hear the truth. How does it relate to our lives? We believe that in the Spirit of Jesus we can find comfort and hope in His Word, sharing in His agape love.

### Wellbeing

A letter from:  
Dina Galassini

The town has survived for many years without added street lights. Are the lights solely needed to house SRP's router/cell towers? Am I correct to say, the people will pay for the street lights, SRP's network, and each property will receive a new bill to assist the town out of debt?

We'll receive a lot more according to 205 scientists ([www.emfscientist.org](http://www.emfscientist.org)) released 5/11/15. Scientists can't all be "quacks." Yet are we?

Dr. Magda Havas, PhD, Environmental and Resource Studies, Centre for Health Studies, Trent University, Canada:

"One of the most serious environmental pollutants affecting the health of human populations and resulting in chronic illness

(cont. on page 7A)

## Online Poll

[www.fhtimes.com](http://www.fhtimes.com)

**THIS WEEK'S QUESTION**

Do you favor a year-round school calendar?

Yes  No

**LAST WEEK'S RESULTS**

Are you planning a trip out of the country this summer?

14% Bon voyage    86% Home sweet home

Take our weekly online poll on the home page of our website,  
[www.fhtimes.com](http://www.fhtimes.com)

*This is not a scientific public opinion poll. Polls expire Monday, 5 pm.*

## THE FOUNTAIN HILLS TIMES

(USPS 060-750)

Owned and published every Wednesday by  
Western States Publishers, Inc.  
P.O. Box 17869  
Fountain Hills, AZ 85268  
(480) 837-1925 Office  
(480) 837-1951 Fax

**For news updates use  
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Postmaster send address changes to: The Fountain Hills Times, PO Box 17869, Fountain Hills, AZ 85269-7869  
Send subscription rate and address changes to: P.O. Box 17869, Fountain Hills, AZ 85269-7869  
Periodicals Postage Paid Class at Scottsdale, Arizona.

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**Letters deadline noon Monday**

All letters must be submitted by noon on Monday to be considered for publication in that week's edition. They are to be dropped off at The Times office, 16508 E. Laver Dr., Suite 101, mailroom, P.O. Box 17869, Fountain Hills, AZ 85269-7869 or faxed to 837-1951. Letters also may be e-mailed to [mike@fhtimes.com](mailto:mike@fhtimes.com).

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