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Publisher

THE FOUNTAIN HILLS  
**TIMES**

# Inside

- Sports
- Religion
- Clubs
- Business
- Legals
- Classifieds
- Fountain Spouts

**B**  
Section

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## Weather, birds, Movie in Park & Rose's 70th

No foolin', the weather has been great so far this year.

We haven't had a day in the 90s to date and most of the highs have been in the 70s and 80s. In fact, we only had one day in March when it didn't reach at least 70 degrees. It was only 63 on March 2<sup>nd</sup> following a big rain the day before when we got two inches. (2.8 inches here at the office.) And that has been it for rainfall this year.

Last week we passed the anniversary date of our earliest 100-degree day in recorded history when it reached the century mark on March 26, 1988.

For you snowbirds, you can take those facts back home with you and impress your friends with the weather you enjoyed this past winter. But don't turn your back on them. You're likely to be hit by a dirty snowball, thrown by someone who lived through the third coldest winter in history.

I had a strange morning one day last week. It all began with our friendly woodpecker telling us he is back. At the first hint of light, he begins his rat-a-tat pecking on first one metal chimney then the other. He makes a laughing sound in between.

Then, I was just sitting down to eat my cereal for breakfast when I heard another bird fly into the closed kitchen window. I checked to see if he was O.K. I couldn't find anything on the ground.

Then, a few minutes after I sat down to finish my cereal, I heard a tapping sound coming from the arcaidea door behind me. I turned around, and there was a quail pecking on the glass as if he wanted to come in. I got up, but he ran away. In all my years of living in the desert, I've never seen a quail do that.

Well, there should be a big crowd at Fountain Park Saturday night.

The popular "Movie in the Park" activity is featuring "Frozen," the popular Disney movie is the top-selling children's animated movie of all-time.

It is based on Hans Christian Anderson's beloved fairy tale, "The Snow Queen." Showtime is 7 p.m. but if you have small children, you may want to get there early. The costumed characters of Elsa and Anna will be available from 5 p.m. to showtime for photos. It's free admission to the town-sponsored event. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets.



Rose Barringer's 70th birthday party, held Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, had many tales about her days of operating the Silver Stein, including this 1992 photo of a "Sweet 16" party. That's me as King of Rock and Roll with Rose.

There was lots of reminiscing going on at the 70th birthday party held Saturday at the Am-Vets building for Rose Barringer.

It was a familiar setting for Rose, since she operated the Silver Stein in that building on Enterprise Drive for many years. She thanks her family, friends and the Am-Vets for putting the whole thing together.

## "Just don't start"



Megadeth co-founder David Ellefson spoke to students at Fountain Hills High School about his drug addiction and alcoholism in two lunchtime assemblies March 25.

## Mega drugs lead to mega rehabs Rock star talks to students

By Linda McThrall  
Let's Go Editor

Being a rock star comes with a certain set of expectations.

Fans have expectations. The star has expectations. Society has expectations.

Especially with a band like Megadeth. A heavy metal, hard-charging group which looks, well, like trouble to many.

David Ellefson, a co-founder of the band, knows that kind of trouble, and he brought his story to Fountain Hills High School students in two lunchtime assemblies March 25.

Ellefson, a recovering alcoholic and drug addict, started his life in Minnesota, a self-described "Lutheran kid, organ player

and school bus rider."

His appearance at Fountain Hills High School was part of outreach efforts by Teen Addiction Anonymous and Fountain Hills Coalition.

As he became more and more immersed in the world of music, including playing in bands in his hometown, Ellefson told students he began experimenting with alcohol and drugs.

And while he ended up addicted to cocaine and heroin, Ellefson said his "gateway" drug was alcohol.

"I was 15 when I started drinking," he told the young audience. "I started smoking pot when I was 16, and just followed that with cocaine and heroin."

Despite his addictions, Ellefson continued an upward climb in the music business. In his early 20s, he was touring the world, playing to large audiences and was just steps away from playing stadium-sized shows.

Then it began to fall apart.

"Heroin is an insidious and sneaky drug," he said. "And I was completely strung out on it."

Megadeth was in England at a premier heavy metal festival, then called the Download Festival. Some 107,000 people saw the show. Ellefson played, then checked himself in to rehab.

For a year and a half, he was in and out of rehabilitation. And as he tried

*"Now I am 24 years sober. But it is one day at a time."*

- David Ellefson

to break his addictions, Megadeth "just stopped. No Megadeth while David is in rehab," Ellefson said.

He said he didn't hit bottom until he had been in rehab three times. He said everyone's worst point is different, but he knew when he had hit his, and he was ready to change.

"And I said, 'Lord, please help me,'" he said.

Ellefson is an active participant in Alcoholics Anonymous and prescribes to the 12-step program. He often goes to a "higher power" for help, and he knows that he is an addict and will battle his addictions for the rest of his life.

"When I finally hit that bottom, I woke up the next day, and I didn't do drugs and I didn't drink," he said. "And I didn't on day two, or on day three. And now I am 24 years sober. But it is one day at a time."

Ellefson said the fraternity of sober musicians is growing all the time.

"I have a lot of friends in the business who are just like I am," he said. "And sharing this saves us."

Trying drugs and alcohol is no different than playing Russian roulette, Ellefson said.

"You don't know if you are going to take a drink, then get in the car to drive home and kill somebody, or kill yourself, but it happens," he said.

"And you don't know if smoking pot one time isn't going to lead to more. But

I can tell you this: the best way to be absolutely sure is to just not start. Just don't start."

Ellefson said addiction is "kind of a funny thing. Addiction is a lie. It likes to get you alone because when you are alone, that addiction will talk to you and try to take you back to it."

"And addiction, while it can make you feel unique, completely takes away our uniqueness. We're like any other junkie. Using alcohol and drugs is an equalizer. We just blend in. So the best part of us goes away."

Ellefson said his relationship with AA and with his higher power are what get him through each day.

"Your higher power is with you wherever you go," he said. "When you are in trouble, you ask for help. It may sound kind of mystical, but it works."

Students lined up after the first assembly to shake Ellefson's hand and to thank him. He was accessible and gracious and talked to each student. A young woman in the audience came up to him in tears.

Ellefson told her to wait for him to finish meeting the others and he would be there to talk. She walked up the stairs to the back of the room and sat down, tears streaming down her face.

But as Ellefson had told the students, she was not alone. He was ready to help.



The Fountain Hills Coalition and Teen Addiction Anonymous at Fountain Hills High School hosted David Ellefson, a co-founder of the heavy metal band Megadeth, at the high school. Coalition board member Dwight Johnson, left, Ellefson and TAA faculty coordinator and school nurse Paula Goblet met after his first presentation.

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