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'Madness' is back

A new school year has started, and that also means it's time for Middle School Madness.

The teen-oriented program offers music from a DJ, football and basketball throw, Xbox, games and contests, pizza and other fun activities – all for free.

Open to students in sixth through eighth

grade, Middle School Madness is made possible by the town's Community Services Department, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office and the Fountain Hills Coalition.

The first "madness" is set for Friday, Aug. 23, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Middle School multipurpose room.

Information: 816-5170.

Always on call

R.N. DeGroot helps victims of car crash

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

It was just about midnight June 23 and Mari DeGroot was settling down for the night.

She heard a loud crash outside and happened to pull back shades from a bathroom window and saw the running lights from a vehicle that had crashed into a wash across the street.

A critical care nurse for 28 years, DeGroot did not hesitate -- her professional persona kicked in and she headed out the door in flip-flops and pajamas, crossed the street and headed into the wash where the car had come to rest against a tree.

It was a moonlit night, so forgetting a flashlight was not too much of a hindrance, although her 20-year-old son Mike was close behind with a flashlight.

DeGroot heard a man's voice saying they needed to get out and when she reached the vehicle she found the man in the passenger's seat with cuts to his forehead



Assistant Fire Chief/Fire Marshal Dave Ott presents Mari DeGroot with a Certificate of Citizen Recognition at a recent Town Council meeting.

and the driver, a woman, slumped unconscious across the front seats.

Neither was wearing a seat belt, according to DeGroot. She pulled the woman upright into the seat and found she was

barely breathing and had facial trauma. She called back to confirm her husband had called 911 and help was on the way.

"I just held her head steady, keeping her airway open, until the medics got

there," DeGroot said.

It turned out that medically the man was in worse shape than the woman. Both spent some time in intensive care

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Ruben Balderas wins Fort McDowell election

Ruben Balderas has been elected to serve as the next president of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation.

Balderas is a former Tribal Council member serving from 2008 to 2012.

He has been employed by the Fort McDowell Fire Department.

Balderas is to serve out the remainder of the term of the late president, Dr. Clinton Pattea, which expires January 2016.

The Fort McDowell Election Board was to finalize

the results of the election on Tuesday, Aug. 20, and Balderas is to be sworn in on Thursday, Aug. 22.

In the special election held Thursday, Aug. 15, to name a replacement for Pattea, Balderas received 151 votes easily outpolling the three others on the ballot.

Gerald Doka received 91 votes, former Tribal President Raphael Bear received 48 votes and Nimrod Thomas Sr. received 39 votes.

Fountain's pumps still giving town some problems

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

The Town Council has approved the transfer of \$20,653 in funds to cover the cost of repairs to one of the Fountain pumps at Fountain Park.

It was recently discovered that one of the three pumps was not working properly and the electrical contractor that works on the pumps was contacted.

The pump was removed and taken to the shop of Precision Electric for trouble shooting and repairs.

It was discovered that a faulty valve had caused the pump to malfunction resulting in a broken shaft.

Community Services Director Mark Mayer told the council the valve would be replaced with a different type of equipment so it will

be less likely to malfunction in the future.

The cost of replacing the valve is \$3,961 and the work to repair the shaft is \$16,691. The funds are not available in the Community Services budget and need to be transferred from the Administration Department contingency line.

Councilman Henry Leger told Mayer he has concerns about the vendor. He noted that all three pumps for the Fountain have been rebuilt since 2010, all with one year warranties that have expired.

"I think we need to be getting a little longer life out of these when they are rebuilt," Leger said. "Is there any way to extend the warranty, at no additional cost?"

(cont. on page 12A)

*Drug Coalition battles on

School start spurs programs

Now that school is back in session, the Fountain Hills Coalition is gearing up for another year of drug prevention efforts.

The coalition, funded by a five-year federal grant, seeks to bring various "sectors" together in the community to bring down the rates of underage drinking and illegal drug use.

Executive Director Carole Groux remains at the helm, bringing together sector leaders and other representatives for a meeting Aug. 12.

The coalition is bolstering its Safe Homes Network, an effort to encourage community parents to talk to one another and pledge not to serve alcohol to underage teens.

"This is a best practice in the prevention world," Groux said.

"It helps parents feel it's OK not to serve alcohol to their kids.

"We want to promote the parent who is taking a stand."

The group is maintaining its "Above That" club at

the Fountain Hills Middle School, encouraging students to make positive decisions and empower them to refrain from trying drugs.

Plans are in the works to stage another "Red Ribbon Day" at FHMS Oct. 10 to spread the anti-drug message.

The coalition continues to fund the Text-A-Tip program in cooperation with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, an anonymous way for teens and residents to text in suspected teen parties and other tips.

Capt. Joe Rodriguez, local commander for MCSO,

said the Text-A-Tip program has proven to be effective and a deterrent among teens.

"We're already seeing evidence that kids are having fewer parties here in town, though it may be driving them elsewhere," he said.

"High schoolers definitely know about this program..."

"This program isn't necessarily about the arrests, but it does help increase awareness, us talking to parents, prevention work, that type of thing."

Mayor Linda Kavanagh said other community members need to educate themselves on the tip program and how to use it, emphasizing it is a valuable tool.

Officials are coordinating with the high school and Maricopa County Attorney's Office to bring the KISS FM "Friday Night Football Patrol" to town on Sept. 20.

That is another anti-drug program that encourages teens to make pledges against underage drinking

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County holds line on overall tax rate

In a unanimous vote Monday morning, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors followed its tax-cutting pledge and set an overall tax rate no higher than last year's, resulting in a nearly \$33 million cut in property taxes for county residents.

The rate for the combined county-controlled operations will be \$1.46 per \$100 assessed valuation.

Board Chairman Andy Kunasek, R-Paradise Valley, was pleased with the outcome, triggered two months ago when the board adopted a general fund budget \$89 million lower than the previous year's.

"What we have done is balance the desire to lower property taxes during a time of lingering economic hardship with the increasing needs of the organization, especially criminal

justice and law enforcement," Kunasek said.

"It was a good, sound conservative budget and it has resulted in another drop in county taxes for our residents. It was not easy, but it was accomplished."

Supervisor Clint Hickman, R-Goodyear, echoed that sentiment.

"Now, just as the economy is turning positive, it is the right time to relieve our citizens of any additional tax burdens."

And Mesa Republican Steve Chucuri, another first-term supervisor, said the vote affirmed his highest priority upon taking office -- not to raise tax rates.

"There was great pressure, given the continued decline in assessed valuation, to raise rates and bring in greater revenues,"

(cont. on page 12A)

Fire station expansion OK'd

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

With unanimous Town Council approval Aug. 15, work is expected to begin by early September on a

1,400-square-foot expansion of the Palisades Boulevard fire station.

The council voted 6-0 to support the \$390,953 contract with Vertical Build, LLC of Scottsdale. Councilman Dennis Brown was

absent.

Development Services Director Paul Mood told the council Vertical Build was the lowest of nine project bidders. He said that two alternates for the project, painting the entire building and some landscape work, put the bids over the \$420,000 budget so they were eliminated.

The planned addition is to serve as a crew bunk room on the north side of the existing equipment bays.

Fire officials say they need to better accommodate female firefighters and the ambulance crew.

The project includes the removal of an old mobile home with that space being converted to parking.

A communications tower at the fire station is to be relocated by Rural/Metro prior to the start of the addition.

Mood said the project is on a 120-day schedule making a completion date early in January 2014.



Contest winner

Audrey Burk, right, is congratulated by Kay Kinder of Fountain Fashions for being the latest winner of a weekly drawing for \$100 in 'Times' bucks as part of the paper's summer coupon contest. Please see full contest rules and discount coupons on Page 5A.

INSIDE THIS WEEK

Verdes:

Fighting fires before they start.
See Page 11A

Meals:

Program helps the homebound.
See Page 1B

Football:

Nick Montalbano (pictured) and teammates gear up for the season.
See Page 2B



WEATHER

| | H | L | P |
|-----------------|-----|----|----|
| Tues., Aug. 13 | 104 | 74 | -- |
| Wed., Aug. 14 | 107 | 75 | -- |
| Thurs., Aug. 15 | 107 | 83 | -- |
| Fri., Aug. 16 | 110 | 82 | -- |
| Sat., Aug. 17 | 108 | 81 | -- |
| Sun., Aug. 18 | 108 | 81 | -- |
| Mon., Aug. 19 | 108 | 81 | -- |

For weather updates and forecasts go to www.fhtimes.com



* Coalition

(cont. from page 1A)

and more.

With homecoming set for Oct. 4, it's another high-visibility event on the radar for school, law enforcement and coalition officials.

Claudia Talledos, a local parent and teacher, made a presentation to the group about drugfreeworld.org, an organization she has been working with since March.

Talledos said the group provides many valuable anti-drug materials and she is available to various community groups to make presentations.

Community Services Director Mark Mayer said more Middle School Madness events have been scheduled, giving younger teens a chance to hang out on a Friday evening for positive activities.

D.J. Lott, director of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Scottsdale, McKee branch in Fountain Hills, said his enrollment is climbing and the branch's teen center is growing.

"We've adjusted the hours a little bit and are finding some teens are hanging around in the evening, so that's encouraging," he said.

While coalition officials were discouraged that the local medical marijuana dispensary opened its doors on Enterprise Drive this summer, they continue to work behind the scenes to fight certain public perceptions about marijuana.

Kavanagh said her husband, State Rep. John Kavanagh, plans to launch efforts to place an initiative on the November 2014 ballot.

The measure would change the medical marijuana law to allow only patients with certain ailments that have been

approved by the FDA to obtain a medical marijuana card.

Opposing efforts are also reportedly under way to place on the 2014 ballot a measure to legalize marijuana for recreational use in Arizona.

Mayor Kavanagh said she has peppered state health officials with many questions surrounding the existing medical marijuana law, adding that many of them have gone unanswered.

Groux said the coalition must continue to plow ahead with its mission.

"Our focus is on our youth and educating them on these issues," she concluded.