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Publisher

THE FOUNTAIN HILLS
TIMES

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THE FOUNTAIN HILLS
TIMES

Davis Phinney Victory Summit and baseball

I attended the Davis Phinney Victory Summit in Phoenix on Saturday, Jan. 26.

The all-day event for people living with Parkinson's disease was well attended with some 1000 filling the large ballroom at the Phoenix Convention Center. I rode down there on a bus with 23 other members of the Fountain Hills Parkinson's group.

The morning session was a combination of speakers and movement leaders, who showed us various exercises including a dance that was done to the Michael Jackson hit "Thriller."

To my surprise, the final movement presenter of the morning was a former employee of mine at *The Times*.

Carmen Marrero, a former production artist with our firm, is now working as



Carmen Marrero with Times Publisher Alan Cruikshank at the Parkinson's seminar in Phoenix.

the Art of Movement instructor for Spanish-speaking Parkinson's patients at the Muhammad Ali Parkinson's Center in Phoenix.

She led the group in a yoga laughter routine. Incidentally, she introduced Editor Mike Scharnow to wife Brenda when Carmen was working here.

Davis Phinney, who I had not heard of prior to this event, is the winningest cyclist in American history. He won stage victories in the Tour de France and a bronze medal in the Olympics. After his retirement from racing, he continued working as a sportscaster for ABC, CBS and NBC. In 2000, he was diagnosed with Young-Onset Parkinson's.

Never one to be deterred by life's obstacles, Davis opted to take Parkinson's head-on.

In 2004, he formed the Davis Phinney Foundation. It was created as a way to focus on the promotion and funding of innovative research on the benefits of exercise and other clinical aspects that affect the quality of life of people with Parkinson's.

In the afternoon breakout sessions, I learned that Dr. Ponce of the Barrows Neurological Institute is now performing Deep Brain Stimulation surgery while the patient is asleep. Only a handful of neurosurgeons worldwide perform the procedure under general anesthesia. When I had my surgery, I, like most, was awake for the entire procedure.

Well, now that the Super Bowl is behind us, that means that baseball spring training isn't far off. In fact, pitchers and catchers report next Monday and position players are supposed to be in camp by Thursday, the 14th.

The Diamondbacks' and Colorado Rockies' training facility is the closest to us at the 101 north of Indian Bend Road. The World Series champion San Francisco Giants also train in Scottsdale at their facility located at Civic Center and Osborn Road in old town Scottsdale.

And as we reported in the current issue of *Let's Go!*, the Cactus League games start on Feb. 22.



Photo illustration

I am an opiate addict One woman's tale dealing with painkillers

(Editor's Note: It should be noted that this past week, Jan. 28-Feb. 3, was declared National Drug Facts Week by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The following first person story was written by a Fountain Hills resident who requested to remain anonymous.)

By Patty Jo A.
Special to *The Times*

I am a grateful opiate addict in recovery.

If you had asked me three months ago if I was an opiate addict, I would have responded with a vehement denial. Addicts are in the gutter with dirty needles, sunken cheeks and eyes that can focus

only on how to get their next fix or so I thought.

I am a productive member of society. I've been on some very prestigious boards of directors. I am acquainted with captains of industry. I come from a solid family with values held dear and skipping church was never an option.

My parents were very much in love, at times dancing in the kitchen to music that only they heard. I met and married a young man just a week after he graduated from medical school. We had two sons who have always been blessings. Both are college graduates with bright futures. I was involved in their schools until they left for college. I am a good

mother.

How did I become an opiate addict? It was relatively simple. My doctors prescribed opiates to manage my chronic pain.

A car accident on May 15, 2002 did irreparable damage to my left leg and some of the nerves in my spine. I've had upwards of six spinal operations due to degenerative disc disease.

So, yes, it was responsible of my physicians to treat my true and chronic pain with these opiate class drugs. I've been on morphine, Dilaudid, Percocets, Vicodin and the worst for me, Oxycodone.

When I started to take these, little was known about the horribly addictive nature of these drugs.

All I knew and cared

about was these narcotics gave me the ability to do what needed to be done each day -- laundry, grocery shopping, work, childcare, volunteer positions and yes, sex.

Sinister

Opiates work in a rather sinister manner. Everyone has opiate receptors in their bodies. The best and most simple explanation is to say, for example, we each have two natural opiate receptors in our brains. With opiates, they are manufactured to produce synthetic opiates receptors of unlimited numbers.

The person using this class of drugs long-term will get a physical addiction over time. Some lucky folks realize this early on

and just quit.

Others, like me, feel more pain even though there hasn't been a new injury. We need to take a higher dosage, due to those synthetic opiate receptors tricking our brain into thinking we are truly in more pain. The medical term for this is hyperalagia.

I took lots of different types of opiates post-surgically and took myself off morphine because I recognized the symptoms of both addiction and withdrawal.

I even made my sons, ages 12 and 15 at the time, come into my bedroom to see me in that state, with the hope they would be discouraged from using drugs. So far, it has worked.

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Where to get help

The Crisis Activated Response Effort (CARE) of Fountain Hills often encounters families and individuals who need help in the area of substance abuse. CARE is an emergency-dispatched trauma intervention program.

Its director, Victoria Bertone, has compiled referral information for those needing professional substance abuse help.

"Most of what we distribute is incident specific," Bertone said. "Before engaging in any program, people are always advised to consult with their insurance company to determine coverage." For additional information on CARE/FH, call (480) 478-4030 or Community Information and Referrals at (602) 263-8856.

Detox treatment facilities

- * Community Bridges; Mesa; (480) 962-7711
- * TERROS; Phoenix; (602) 685-6000
- * St. Luke's Medical Center, Phoenix, (602) 251-8535
- * Aurora Behavioral Healthcare, Glendale (623) 344-4444

Intensive outpatient programs

- * Community Bridges, Mesa, (480) 962-7922
- * TERROS; Phoenix; (602) 685-6000
- * St. Luke's Behavioral Center, Phoenix, (602) 251-8535
- * Banner Behavioral Health Hospital, Scottsdale, (602) 254-4357
- * Aurora Behavioral Healthcare, Glendale (623) 344-4444

Residential programs

- * The New Foundation, Scottsdale, (480) 945-3302
- * Agape Youth Ranch, Southeastern AZ, (480) 471-8253

Hotline assistance

- * Marijuana Anonymous, (800) 766-6779; marijuana-anonymous.org
- * Narcotics Anonymous, (480) 897-4636; na.org
- * Alcoholics Anonymous, (480) 834-9033; aa.org
- * Alanon/Alateen, (602) 249-1257; al-anon.alateen.org

24-hour crisis hotline/phone support

- * Maricopa Crisis Line, (602) 222-9444
- * EMPACT, (480) 784-1500; empact-spc.com
- * Teen Link-Peer Counselors (4-9 p.m.), (602) 248-8336, teenlifeline.org
- * Teen Link-automated, (602) 235-9678, teenlifeline.org

Additional information

- * Drug screening-TASC, Mesa; (602) 254-7328; tasc-arizona.org
- * Parents of Addicted Loved Ones (PALS), Fountain Hills; (480) 837-3735
- * Families Anonymous, Scottsdale; (480) 860-8084/(480) 948-3420
- * Alcohol and Drug Information Line, (877) SAMHSA-7; ncaid.samhsa.gov



*Parents: Free drug tests are available

Some parents may wonder what to do when they suspect illegal drug use by their child.

It can be a confusing and stressful situation for a family.

The Fountain Hills Coalition, which focuses on youth substance abuse prevention, has created an "Early Action Kit" for parents who may not know exactly what to do or where to turn.

The kits are available at no cost.

They contain a five-panel urinalysis drug screen, directions on how to administer it, steps to take if the test is positive or negative, local resource information and websites to go to that provide parental support and promote prevention.

The EAKs are easy for

Fountain Hills parents to obtain and designed to be discreet.

They may be picked up at the following locations:

Carma Blackburn, LCSW, 16712 E. Ave. of the Fountains; 480-993-5457.

*Dr. Matthew J. Hum-mel, MD, 16838 E. Pali-sades Blvd., Building C #153; 480-816-3131.

* Deputy Jill Ochsner, FHUSD Resource Officer, MCSO; 480-664-5500 (FHHS).

*Fountain Hills Fire Station 1 and Administrative Offices, 16246 Pali-

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Local 12-step meets

There is some type of Alcoholics Anonymous group meeting in Fountain Hills every day of the week.

Note the different meeting locations and times for various groups.

"Open" meetings may be attended by anyone interested in the AA program of recovery, but only alcoholics share during the meeting.

"Closed" meetings may be attended by AA members only or by those individuals with a drinking problem who have a desire to stop drinking.

Want to stop drinking? Call AA at (602) 264-1341 any day, any time.

Following is the list of AA meetings in Fountain Hills and at the Fort McDowell Indian Community:

Monday

Winners Group, open discussion and beginners, 12 noon, Church of the Ascension, 12615 N. Fountain Hills Blvd.

Friends of Bill W. Group, 12 noon, Holiday Inn on Saguaro Blvd.

Women's Reflection Group, closed, 7 p.m., Fountain Hills Presbyterian Church, 13001 N. Fountain Hills Blvd.

Tuesday

The Eleven at Seven Sunrise Group, open discussion, 7 a.m., The Foun-

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Addict

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I lost my health insurance with the divorce from my sons' father. Due to my health problems, I was unable to get new health insurance. This led my physician to prescribe stronger dosages of Oxycodone to manage my intensifying pain.

He was always very careful to talk with me about the dosages and not once did I go through a month's prescription or beg for more.

By this time, I was well into horribly disrupted sleep patterns. I would sleep for 24-30 hours, then stay up for 48-56 hours at a time. Did I tell my physician about this? Oh, no, not even a little peep out of me. My addiction was carefully guarding its supply source.

My Tormentor

In April of 2012, I was renting a room from a person I will simply call My Tormentor. At this time, I had a wonderful opportunity to purchase a condominium in the same complex. The details are not important. For one reason or another, this person became enraged, threatened my life and property. Thus began my rapid downhill slide into the abyss that is addiction and true prescription drug abuse.

Having been in an extremely abusive marriage for nearly 30 years, my reaction to My Tormentor was classic. I became anxious, nervous, losing hope and, in the end, the will to

live.

My Tormentor took me to court for more money than was due. My day in court was a nightmare. I'd been up for at least 48 hours; I'd taken some Valium to deal with the anxiety, a couple of extra pain pills and probably more. Though my verbal skills are normally above average, I believe I only had a deer-in-the-headlights look about me.

My Tormentor won big time.

As the days started to cool, I was served with a protective order from My Tormentor. This person had gotten it on the basis of a text I sent that was rather creative, yet inappropriate.

What My Tormentor hadn't mentioned was that I apologized via text for this offensive text.

By this time, I was getting caught further and further in this vortex of self-medicating for the increasing anxiety. My Tormentor called the police on me with frightening consistency.

In my head, I kept hearing a rhythm and would pound it on a little drum I had, the walls, whatever was close. Time had little meaning to me at this point. I began to experience opiate black-outs.

The authorities

On a day in mid-November, the police were called out twice. The first time I was in my pajamas and robe. I was warned that if they came back, they would be taking me directly to jail. I've never been to jail or been threatened with such.

I vaguely remember taking a handful of pills, wanting only to get some sleep. I remember being hot, taking everything off and sliding into bed.

I was awakened by a police woman trying to get into my place through my bedroom window and telling me I needed to answer the door. From that point it's very hazy. I remember being terrified of this big police officer who kept yelling at me to sit down.

I know that I was not dressed. My accidental overdose was rapidly moving through my body. I was having a hard time understanding what was going on. I was shaking from head to toe and teeth chattering due to this beligerent male officer.

I know that I really wanted to put some clothes on, yet was scared to death of this guy.

I know I gave those officers a very difficult time when they were just doing their jobs.

Thankfully, the fire department, ambulance and paramedics came. They all got an eyeful of my not-ready-for-primetime body.

I'm not sure who made the decision to take me to the hospital instead of jail, but they saved my life. I am eternally grateful to those wonderful professional men and women who saw to it that I got the medical treatment I needed.

The short version of the next 30 days include detoxifying at a federally funded facility in Mesa, where I was told by hardcore heroin addicts that they would rather get off of heroin than oxycodone.

Rehab, 12 Steps

On the evening of Thanksgiving, a group of three people brought in a 12-step meeting.

I talked to a woman in that group, mentioning the rehabilitation facility that was an option for me. She gave me the best advice, telling me that if I could get a bed at this place, I should do whatever was needed to take it.

I spent 26 days in the rehabilitation facility, getting up early, attending classes, group therapy and sessions with both a counselor and chaplain.

It was like working 60 hours a week, while learning to deal with the emotions that all addicts learn to suppress with drugs and alcohol.

I learned the power of forgiveness, of myself and others. I came to understand my part in the chaos that became my life. I was able to repair the damage to relationships I hold dear.

I understood that it was only when I gave up the resentments I harbored up to my God or Higher Power that I could lead a life that is filled with peace.

I still have pain, but it is approximately 80 percent less than what I endured on the opiates. It seems crazy, but it is true.

I am working with my physicians to find non-narcotic ways to deal with it. My chart is flagged with NO NARCOTICS.

My recovery journey is filled with hope, joy, laughter and the ability to live life on life's terms.

I go to 12-step meetings at least five times a week. I work hard at doing the next right thing, whatever

that might be. I keep my feet firmly planted on Terra Firma.

I can do nothing about the past, it's done with.

AA

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tains, a United Methodist Church, 15300 N. Fountain Hills Blvd.

Winners Group, open discussion, 12 noon, Church of the Ascension.

Fort McDowell AA group, open discussion, 7 p.m., Fort McDowell public safety building, 10755 N. Fort McDowell Rd.

The Fountain Hills Group, closed step, 8 p.m., Fountain Hills Presbyterian Church.

Wednesday

Winners Group, open discussion, 7 a.m., Church of the Ascension.

Winners Group, open discussion, 12 noon, Church of the Ascension.

Friends of Bill W. Group, 12 noon, Holiday Inn on Saguaro Blvd.

Men's Group, closed discussion, 7 p.m., Fountain View Village, 16455 E. Avenue of the Fountains, second floor, Maricopa Room.

Thursday

Winners Group, open,

Tomorrow will take care of itself as it always does.

Today, just for today, I can stay sober.

speaker, discussion, 6:30 p.m., 12 noon, Church of the Ascension.

Young 'N Sober Group, open, speaker discussion, 6:30 p.m., Fountain Hills Presbyterian Church.

The Fountain Hills Group, closed, topic, discussion, 8 p.m., Fountain Hills Presbyterian Church.

Friday

Winners Group, open, discussion and beginners, 12 noon, Church of the Ascension.

Fort McDowell AA Group, open discussion, 7 p.m., Fort McDowell public safety building.

Saturday

Living Sober Group, open, speaker, topic, 8 a.m., Fountain Hills Presbyterian Church.

Sunday

Eleven at Seven Sunrise Group, open discussion, 7 a.m., The Fountains, a United Methodist Church.

1-6-4 Group, open, big book, discussion, 7 p.m., Fountain Hills Presbyterian Church.

*Kits

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sades Boulevard; (480) 837-9820.

More information about the coalition is available at www.fhcoalition.org or email fhcoalition@me.com.