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## \*Teen drinking, marijuana use higher than state average

By Michael Scharnow  
Times Editor

A recent survey among Fountain Hills High School students shows that local teens drink alcohol and smoke pot more often than other Arizona teenagers.

According to Arizona Youth Survey data, marijuana usage among sophomores is 8 percent higher than the state average.

Alcohol usage rates in Fountain Hills jump 24 percent between eighth and 10th grade as opposed to 14 percent statewide.

The anonymous survey was administered here in

early February. The Arizona data is from 2008.

Just over 10 percent of seventh graders responded that they had drank alcohol within the past 30 days, while that figure jumps to nearly 48 percent among FHHS seniors.

Among sophomores, nearly one-quarter of them had smoked pot in the past month.

Carole Groux, director of the Fountain Hills Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition, is on a mission to increase community awareness about drugs, eliminate drug ac-

(cont. on Page 4A)

## \*Parents warn town about 'harder' drugs

By Michael Scharnow  
Times Editor

Several concerned parents gave impassioned pleas to the Town Council last week, urging members to fight substance abuse among youths wherever they had influence.

"My family is in turmoil every day," Richard Platt told the council during call to the public March 4.

"The use of major drugs by our children is far beyond anything you can imagine."

His daughter is getting

treated for heroin addiction.

Several town officials are already involved with the Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition, but the parents said more resources are needed here.

Elizabeth Espiritu said her 18-year-old daughter fell victim to heavy drugs and has been struggling for two years.

"Before she was an addict she was a good student, a cheerleader, into sports, she was always happy,"

(cont. on Page 4A)

## Tunnel vision of golf...



Times photos by Ryan Winslett

The High School Falcons golf team heads to the first tee box at SunRidge Canyon to begin the 2010 season. For story and more photos, see Page 6B.

## ... to water hazards of disc golf



Three-time world champion Des Reading came from Austin, Texas, to take part in the Memorial Championship Disc Golf Tournament and Experience event, hosted out of Fountain Park. Reading was joined by hundreds of fellow amateur and professional disc golfers for the week-long event. For more photos, see Page 16A and Page 2B.

### Election Results

Go to our Web site at [www.fhtimes.com](http://www.fhtimes.com)  
to view results from Tuesday

## \*TEENS: Survey shows high percentage

(cont. from page 1A)

cess and stop parent enabling.

What disturbs her the greatest is that most teens said they are getting their alcohol at parties (59 percent of seniors and 45 percent of eighth graders).

Nineteen and 18 percent of sophomores and seniors, respectively, said they obtained alcohol from their parents.

Groux and the state director of Students Against Destructive Decisions plan to make a presentation before the Town Council March 18 to push for a social hosting ordinance.

Such an ordinance would hold parents liable when a teen is caught drinking on their property, which is

stricter than current state laws.

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America last week released a study showing alcohol and marijuana use among teens on a national level is on the rise, ending a 10-year decline.

The annual survey showed the number of teens in grades nine through 12 who reported drinking alcohol in the previous month rose 11 percent last year, with 39 percent (about 6.5 million teens) reporting alcohol use.

That is up from 35 percent, or about 5.8 million teens, in 2008.

The national study also found use of the party drug Ecstasy on the rise.

Six percent of teens surveyed said they used Ecstasy in the previous month, compared with 4 percent in 2008.

Locally, a small group of parents went before the Town Council last week to warn of the dangers of even harder drugs, such as heroine (see separate story).

They say heroine is much cheaper than street prescription drugs and easier to obtain than alcohol.

Groux is alarmed by parents who feel that drinking alcohol is a "rite of passage" for teens or that hosting a party is an acceptable practice.

She stresses that alcohol affects a teen brain differently than an adult brain.

The American Medical Association in 2003 stated that alcohol in teen brains can "seriously damage long- and short-term growth processes."

Alcohol use may impair memory, learning, decision making and impulse control, and it greatly increases the risk of addiction.

Children who drink are 7.5 times more likely to use any illicit drug, 22 times more likely to use marijuana and 50 times more likely to use cocaine than children who never drink.

Research also shows that parents generally underestimate the extent of teen drinking and its negative consequences.

## Report liquor violations

Citizens who take the time to report possible liquor law violations provide valuable assistance to the Arizona Department of Liquor Licenses and Control.

The "Report Liquor Violations" tab on the agency's homepage ([www.azliquor.gov](http://www.azliquor.gov)) receives complaints daily.

Complainants may remain anonymous.

The most common complaints include selling/serving liquor to underage persons, over-serving clients, serving/selling liquor without a license, consuming liquor while serving/selling, false or hidden ownerships of liquor license and problem bars referred to as "swamps."

When underage consumption or service is suspected, the DLLC encourages residents to

report concerns to the Underage Drinking Hotline.

The hotline is a quick, easy and discreet way to report complaints of liquor licensed establishments that may be selling to, or purchasing alcohol for, minors.

The Underage Drinking Hotline number is 1-877-NOT-LEGL or 1-877-668-5345.

The agency's investigations division, a team of sworn police officers who specialize in Arizona liquor law, provide follow up on each complaint.

Often complaints reveal liquor law violations that result in one or more arrests, fines assessed and other compliance actions that may restrict the use of the liquor license (temporarily or permanently), or a combination of all three.

## \*PARENTS: Hard drugs a problem, too

(cont. from page 1A)

Espiritu said.

"Her addiction has brought so much turmoil into our family in every way imaginable.

"My daughter has had three major overdoses, the last of which we found her lifeless body in Ashbrook Wash....

"Having to hold your lifeless child in your arms, or to get to the hospital and be told she might not make it through the night, or to watch her have drug-induced seizures, is something I would hope no other parent would ever have to go through."

Since the emotional pleas came during the call to the public, the council could do little in terms of response.

Mayor Jay Schlum said he appreciated the courage and sharing from the families and spilling their

"heartfelt" stories for the community's benefit.

Later in the meeting, the council was finalizing a list of goals and objectives for the year, and members brought up fighting substance abuse.

Under "public safety, health and welfare," members added a goal concerning working with the coalition and striving to become a drug-free community.

"I know when I was on the School Board we had the CattleGuard Alliance with Fort McDowell," Councilwoman Ginny Dickey said.

"Secrecy is a challenge in a small town like ours. It's not total denial, but you are close. People are willing to help each other out, but on issues like this, it's a big hurdle because you are a small town..."

"I'm all for going forward with the substance abuse issue under our goals."

Platt said most in the community have no idea of the extent of the problem.

"We're talking major drugs that are easier to get than alcohol," he added.

"Maybe the garbage issue should just remain on the back burner right now. We have much more serious problems. Our children are going to need to be pulled away. Please wake up..."

"Our daughter is coming home (from rehab) to this drug-infested town.

"We can't possibly explain the stress, the ongoing emotional strain, financial strain, insurance nightmares that we are experiencing.

"We moved to Fountain Hills because we read it was one of the top places to raise a family.

"If the community doesn't wake up to our major drug problem, we will be on the bottom of the places to raise a family and so will your home prices."

Espiritu said her daughter is currently clean and sober but fights cravings every day.

"We send our kids to school thinking they are safe, however, our kids are getting the drugs at school," she added.

"I've had meetings at the school and those I've spoken to agree there is a problem, but they only can tell me that there's not enough funding to

have full-time officers in the bathrooms."

She also urged the Sheriff's Office to not only go after the "big" drug dealers but to concentrate on the "little" ones as well: "These small dealers are the ones that are killing our kids."

Espiritu said it's unfortunate that a movie theater hasn't opened here but that smoke shops have opened in town that sell pipes and other drug paraphernalia.

"We need to get our priorities straight and help our kids because they need us," she said.

"These kids are doing heroin, Ecstasy, cocaine, OxyContin, tranquilizers, morphine, you name it.

"It's here in our town and it's very accessible. Let's get help for our kids and get drugs out of our town so we can all have a better future."

Another parent, Mary Walsh, is from Scottsdale, and her 19-year-old son graduated from Desert Mountain High School on the other side of the McDowells.

"My son got involved with heroin, and I personally know 20 boys in his graduating class addicted to heroin," she said. "Three of the boys are from Fountain Hills.

"Who would have ever thought that something like this could be around? No one thinks it could happen to you..."

"Whatever help you can do to let other parents know it is there would be helpful. This stuff is cheap. It's way cheaper than pot.

"We need to let people know."

## Geo-cache, other hikes scheduled

Enjoy springtime in the hills as the Parks and Recreation Department and the Sonoran Conservancy are offering a schedule of five different guided hikes that reveal various aspects of the many splendors of the desert.

Mark the calendar to participate in one or more of these outings in the desert.

On Saturday, March 13, there will be a GPS-Geo Cache and Map Reading demonstration with Paul Appeldorn.

Saturday, March 20, Birds of the McDowells is the subject with Kathe Anderson.

Saturday, April 10, the physically challenged are invited to catch a ride into the Preserve.

On Saturday, April 17, geology of the McDowells will be the subject with Dan Gruber.

Hikers are urged to bring plenty of water, a sunshade, and put on good hiking footwear.

All hikes are from 8 to 11:30 a.m. There is also a \$2 Maricopa County McDowell Mountain Regional Park entry fee required for all hikes leaving from the Golden Eagle Trailhead.

The March 6 hike begins at the Golden Eagle Trailhead located at the entry to the Eagle's Nest development off of Golden Eagle Boulevard. The March 13, March 20, April 10 and April 17 hikes begin at the end of Eagle Ridge Drive.

Register with Preserve stewards 15 minutes prior to hike departure. Pre-registration required for April 17 hike as well as the April 10 shuttles. To register call Carol Ayres at 480-837-8290.

## Walking Club still here

The Fountain Hills Walking Club will meet at 8:45 a.m. Friday, March 12, at the Presbyterian Church on Fountain Hills Blvd.

From there, the group will carpool to the Botanical Garden trail in Fountain Hills since it features a rather small parking lot.

Carol Ayres will serve as

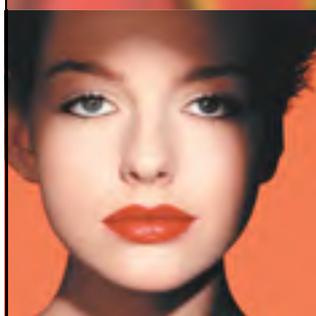
guide for the short hike.

Also, the group's next breakfast meeting has been set for Friday, March 26, starting at 7:30 a.m. at the Community Center.

All are welcome to join the group for food, fun and fellowship for only \$3.

The Walking Club is open to anyone.

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