

Letters

(cont. from page 8A)

Island in 1959. President Obama had not been born yet.

The patient's statement that he had just come from Liberia didn't register. They didn't keep up on world medical news. Doctors without Borders warned the U.N. last January that Ebola had exceeded their capacity. My point is that the ER staff's ignorance multiplied into fear all over this country. Politicians played on that ignorance or were ignorant as well.

My oldest granddaughter excelled and exceeded standards on the third grade CORE tests. If parents want to pull out of CORE because they think the work is too hard for their children, and their child failed the first test last year, those parents should go look in the mirror and figure out where they failed.

They also need to face the fact that the children who have CORE learning will continue to get the better jobs. U.S. companies like Microsoft will continue to bring in young people from foreign countries to fill positions that Arizona students do not qualify for due to educational deficiencies.

I seem to recall that Arizona businesses warned Governor elect-Ducey that they weren't going to hire unqualified high school graduates anymore.

Ebola was a true wake-up call. There is a big wide world out there, and being isolationist and ignorant isn't going to cut it anymore anywhere. Do those who voted for Diane Douglas have any conception how behind educationally Arizona really is? Recall her ASAP.

Surprise

A letter from:
Debbie Skehen

Last Saturday night I had dinner in a private dining room in Fountain Hills with seven wonderful friends, and what a pleasant surprise we all had.

Chef Matt Hastings prepared a surprise four-course dinner for us with wine. It was a perfect evening in every way. After dinner we all applauded Matt for the wonderful meal and tasteful surroundings.

Where did we eat? In the private dining room at Fountain View Village. If you want to truly enjoy a gourmet dinner in refined surroundings, call and ask for Matt. He will dazzle you with his enthusiasm and suggestions.

Museum welcome

A letter from:
Arlie Denomme

The River of Time Museum appreciates all that you, Fountain Hills residents and friends, donate and offer to this wonderful museum. Come, visit and enjoy our museum, enjoy our history, enjoy our Riverbank Store and its stories, facts behind all that is on display.

Amazing Holiday Mart, now in its sixth year of offering things from the past and present - to have you smile, can't resist temptation of giving to others to enjoy during this coming season of Thanksgiving and Christmas. Holiday giving at the finest.

Meet our wonderful volunteers, always smiling and helping you, helping others. This is our welcome to you at the River of Time Museum. Come, visit and enjoy.

Wave to us, we are in the Thanksgiving Parade, cheer our Time Travelers, cheer our friends and volunteers. Dec. 12 is our Home for the Holidays, read more about it. Thank you.

Drugs

(cont. from page 1A)

percent in 2012 and down to 23 percent in 2014.

That downward trend was consistent with cigarettes (14 percent in 2010 and now 8 percent); marijuana, 17 percent in both 2010 and 2013 and now 14 percent; and prescription drugs, 9 percent in 2010, 11 percent two years and this year down to 4 percent.

"These results are fantastic," said Shelley Mowrey, Fountain Hills Coalition director.

"It is community coalition work at its very finest."

Carole Groux, who remains executive director of the coalition but now lives in Maryland, pieced together the coalition more than four years ago after winning a federal "Drug Free Communities" grant over a five-year period.

She credits the DFC funding as critical in paying for coalition expenses and allowing so many programs and prevention activities to be launched in recent years in Fountain Hills.

Representatives from various community sectors meet on a regular basis and a coalition board was established to guide drug and alcohol prevention programs in Fountain Hills.

Sector leaders include town, Sheriff's Office, School District, business, faith and parent group leaders.

"With prevention, sometimes it's difficult to know it's working, can you see results?" Mowrey told sector leaders last week.

"It's a fight for our kids. You need a clear vision and a plan. That's what this coalition has. It's absolutely outstanding. Everything is moving in the right direction."

Some of the programs and activities organized or sponsored by the coalition the past four years include Safe Homes Network, Text-A-Tip, Middle School Madness, teen essay contests, speakers, student assemblies, parent forums, Red Ribbon Day, party patrols and more.

Highlights

In Arizona, according to the AYS survey, alcohol remains the most commonly used substance among teens.

After alcohol, marijuana and tobacco along with prescription drugs are the most used substances in the state.

Statistics show that more teens smoke marijuana than they do tobacco.

The biggest drops the past few years in Fountain Hills have occurred with prescription drugs (a 57 percent decrease) along with cigarettes (43 percent) and then alcohol (35 percent drop in usage).

"Because of you," Mowrey told sector leaders, "fewer kids are using drugs and alcohol. Because of you, there has been a huge impact in this community."

Deputy Jill Oschner, school resource officer with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, said that the number of juvenile arrests has decreased in the community for substance and alcohol abuse the past three

years.

Coalition board member Bob Ditta said everyone's help with the coalition has made a big difference, but he remains concerned about apathetic parents in the community.

"We've got to continue working with parents and educating them about the dangers of drugs, what their kids are doing, hosting parties, that sort of thing," he said.

Survey results also showed significant change from 2012 to 2014 when comparing Fountain Hills teenagers to their peers around Arizona and the country.

In 2012, Fountain Hills teens were above the state and national averages for marijuana use in the past 30 days, but those numbers changed for 2014.

Today, local teens are about 1 percent below their state peers and 2 percent below the national average.

They also now rank below the state and national averages for alcohol and cigarette usage.

The most common source of obtaining alcohol for teens is at parties, then parents and the liquor cabinet at home.

Those "access points" dropped between 2012 and 2014, however, from 63 percent down to 48 for parties, 24 to 21 for parents and 25 to 14 percent for "home" access.

"The survey also shows the number of kids binge drinking, driving under the influence and riding in a car with someone who has been drinking are all moving in the right direction,"

Mowrey said.

"They are all moving downward."

Coalition officials remain worried about the presence of the medical marijuana dispensary in town, the growing trend of e-cigarettes, the continued presence of underage drinking (parties are now being moved out of town partially because of the success of Text-A-Tip) and the push for statewide legalization of recreational marijuana use.

Statewide, the survey found a downward trend since 2010 of youths who engage in risky behaviors such as riding in a car with someone who has been drinking, showing up at school impaired, carrying a gun and gambling.

Also statewide, more teens are getting marijuana from someone with a medical marijuana card. In 2012, this number was 11 percent throughout Arizona and in 2014 it was 14 percent.

"Five years later, it's great to see the same level of energy and enthusiasm with this coalition," said Coalition Board Member Dwight Johnson.

Mowrey concluded, "We've got to keep our foot on the gas pedal."

Groux said the unique makeup of a coalition can make the difference in the field of substance abuse prevention.

"All youth deserve to live in a community where the adults come together to do all they can to protect them," she said.

"The collaboration of a community is key. Prevention is not something that can be managed in one sector."

Mrs. Meehan honored



Fountain Hills Unified School District Superintendent Tom Lawrence announces the naming of the FHUSD Learning Center in honor of long-time principal Joanne Meehan.



Joanne Meehan unveils the plaque announcing the dedication of the Learning Center in her honor, "for outstanding and dedicated service to the students of the Fountain Hills Unified School District."



Board member Melanie Anderelli gives Meehan a quick hug in gratitude for her three decades of service to the local district.

Free drug testing kits are available

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

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 that provide parental support and pro-

mote prevention.

They may be picked up at the following locations:

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

*Dr. Matthew J. Hummel, MD, 16838 E. Palisades Blvd., Building C, No. 153; 480-816-3131.

*Deputy Jill Oschner, FHUSD Resource Officer, MCSO; 480-664-5539 (FHHS).

*Fountain Hills Fire Station 1 and Administrative Offices, 16246 Palisades Blvd.; 480-837-9820.

More information about the coalition is available at www.fhcoalition.org.

Drop expired drugs

Residents from Fountain Hills and the Verde communities are reminded that a drop box is available during office hours at Town Hall for disposal of unwanted or expired prescription medications.

The twice annual "take-back days" are being phased out, so officials collaborated on installing the drop box at Town Hall.

It was a joint effort with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, Town of Fountain Hills and Fountain Hills Coalition.

The drop box was installed in the Town Hall lobby on the wall just outside the Sheriff's Office entry.

The box is similar to a mail box with a slot at the top to pull open and drop in the unused prescriptions.

The box is secured, allowing only a Sheriff's deputy to open it. The items found in the box are

destroyed along with a general report from the deputy saying when the box was opened and that the items were destroyed.

Liquid medicines, syringes and similar items are not acceptable for this drop box.

Lt. John D'Amico with the local MCSO substation said the box has been used steadily since it was installed earlier in the fall.

"We're finding we often have to empty it twice a week," he said. "Often times once a week is not enough. We're averaging about 30 pounds a week."

Approximately 1,000 pills make up a pound.

Residents are reminded it would be helpful if the pills are kept in their original vials (with personal information removed). Loose pills dumped in the box make it more difficult for collection, D'Amico said.

Holiday tips on teens, drinking

What would you guess is the biggest day for underage drinking of the year?

New Year's Eve? Spring break? Prom night? Homecoming?

Actually, according to the National Center on Addictions and Substance Abuse, more young people drink on the day before Thanksgiving than on any other day of the year.

Shelly Mowrey, director of the Fountain Hills Coalition, said that as adults are in a rush to get ready for the big feast, they often overlook the fact that their homes are stocked with an assortment of alcohol for the holidays.

"And as older friends and siblings come from college for Thanksgiving and want

to 'party' with their friends, it is also a dangerous time for our young adults," she said.

The Fountain Hills Coalition urges parents and adults to help their teens have a safe, alcohol-free holiday season.

Here's what parents can do:

- Offer to host non-alcohol and drug-free gatherings for kids.
- Monitor or lock up alcohol in the home.
- Call ahead when your teen is going to a party and ask who will be supervising and if alcohol will be served. If you are hosting the party, welcome calls from other parents to discuss the event.



Coalition drawings

The Fountain Hills Coalition sponsored three cash drawings during the football season to boost attendance and increase awareness of coalition programs. The season's last winner was Shane Chalmers, center. Presenting the check were Dwight Johnson and Maria Perreault from the coalition. Additional cash drawings will be held during the boys and girls basketball and soccer seasons along with baseball.



Above That Club

The Above That Club at FHMS recently elected officers for the school year. They are, from left, Christian Stein, vice president; Marcus Fonville and Gina Woods, co-presidents; and Hannah Barsema, secretary. The Fountain Hills Coalition founded and sponsors the Above That Club and other school activities designed to build upon refusal skills of students and minimize risky behavior and choices. The Above That Club is an extracurricular program open to sixth through eighth-graders at FHMS. The club meets bi-weekly to discuss and role play ways to stay above the negative influences of alcohol and drugs in addition to playing games and having fun.

Special occasion?

Put your event on the Spouts page of the Fountain Hills Times!
Call 480-837-1925

