

Students take care of business

► A Rotary Club of Tulsa camp makes the free enterprise system fun.

By DAVID HARPER
World Staff Writer

TAHLEQUAH — A group of enterprising Tulsa-area high school students gathered fairly far from home Saturday to learn, have fun and make the world a better place.

On a perfect spring weekend, the average teenager — and just about anybody else — would probably rather be goofing off.

However, 80 above-average local students assembled in the heart of the hills near Tahlequah to take care of business at Camp Enterprise.

The Rotary Club of Tulsa conducts the camp, which is an intensive program designed for high school students to explore the fundamental challenges, opportunities and obligations of the free enterprise system.

This year's event began Thursday and concludes Sunday.

Mason Barber, a 17-year-old junior at East Central High School, said he was enjoying his stay.

"It's pretty cool," he said.

Ryan Thomas, an 18-year-old student at Evangelistic Temple School, said that lessons learned at Camp Enterprise have shown him a

lot of the basic principles of how the business world works.

The program is designed for high school juniors. However, Thomas is one of the seniors who returned to the camp this year to act as counselors.

Jessica Utley, 17, a senior at Cascia Hall, said that the juniors "take into consideration what we say" because of that prior experience.

Samantha Powell, 18, said she attended the camp in 2007 as a junior after she heard about the program from a friend.

Powell, now a senior at Charles Page High School in Sand Springs, said she had "no idea what I got myself into" initially but soon found the camp to be fun and educational.

"I learned a lot," she said. "I got a better picture of what the free enterprise system is."

Utley said Saturday that "last year when I came back my mother was impressed that, as a junior in high school, I had learned so much crammed into 3½ days."

Janelle Beard, chairman of this year's event held at the Salvation Army Heart O' The Hills campground and conference center outside Tahlequah, said most of this year's 80 participants come from public or private schools in Tulsa.

She said counselors at local schools recruit "the cream of the crop" to gauge their interest in applying for the camp.

Beard said that the stu-

dents who are chosen typically are involved in a lot of activities at their schools, excel in their studies and are college-bound.

Still, she said, the participants aren't necessarily planning on getting MBA degrees or being entrepreneurs.

For example, East Central's Barber is planning on being a scientist. He said one of the main things he has learned is that just about any profession connects to commerce.

"If you have to deal with money, you have to deal with business," he said.

Beard said one of the main things the participants do is compete against each other in a team business simulation game called "Titan."

Harvie Roe, who coordinates the "Titan" competition, said the realistic game teaches the participants organizational and marketing skills used in the business world.

Beard said that a recent addition to the camp has been to feature a real-world component that ties in to the Rotarian goal of "service above self."

This year, the Camp Enterprise students are getting involved in a Rotary Club project designed to help build water wells in Nicaragua.

David Harper 581-8359
david.harper@tulsaworld.com



Morgan Bozone, a 17-year-old Webster High School junior, listens as Tulsa businessman Paul Brothers speaks Saturday to participants in the Rotary Club of Tulsa's Camp Enterprise.

MIKE SIMONS/Tulsa World

OSU-Tulsa hosts image workshop

The public is invited to a free workshop on "Building and Maintaining a Positive Image" on Thursday night at Oklahoma State University-Tulsa.

Chaz Kyser, author of "Embracing the Real World: The Black Woman's Guide to Life After College," will talk about traits needed to succeed professionally and traits that prevent employees from advancing in their careers, a news release states.

The workshop will begin at 6 p.m. at OSU-Tulsa, 700 N. Greenwood Ave., in North Hall 150.

Kyser is a freelance writer and editor and a journalism instructor at Langston University, according to the news release.

For more information, call Mary Hujak at 594-8453.

Literacy group to train new tutors

WAGONER — The Wagoner Literacy Group will host Open Minds training from noon to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at the Carnegie Library, 102 S. State St. in Wagoner.

The goal of the Open Minds program is to train new tutors for teaching writing and reading skills to adults.

Subjects will include learning styles, teaching strategies and using computers.

Drinks, snacks and all materials will be provided.

RSVP is requested. Call 485-2741 or e-mail whitgroup@yahoo.com.

SLIDE:

Authorities have yet to figure out what caused the movement or whether any more is likely.

FROM A-19

lines runs through the area.

Vilner points to an exposed manhole that connects to a sanitary sewer service line buried 14 feet down. On one side of the manhole, the soil is flush with the cover. On the other side, the soil is four feet lower.

Outside of the obvious concern presented by ground movement, Vilner said, there are health and safety concerns.

The slide has separated a

gas line, which has burst twice. Oklahoma Natural Gas Co. added pipe above ground to bridge the severed line.

A large electrical transformer also sits on the ground. Having shifted several times, it leaks fluid, Vilner said.

An American Electric Power-Public Service Company of Oklahoma official said the fluid was tested as recently as Friday and determined not to be harmful. The company is monitoring the situation.

Vilner notified the Mayor's Action Center. Frustrated by its lack of response, he spoke to City Councilor John Eagleton. A council committee discussed the issue last week.

Vilner said he told the city a year ago about small cracks in the soil on the hill but was ignored.

Eagleton, who lives in the neighborhood below the hill, said there is insufficient information to determine what

caused the slide.

"I don't know what we as a city can do, but we're going to find out," he said. "This is unprecedented in anything I've ever seen in Tulsa."

A city engineer said Friday that there is no doubt that something has caused the soil to be disturbed over an area of 80 to 90 feet after more than 30 years. The hill is between 30 and 35 feet high.

Paul Zachary, the Public Works Department's deputy director of engineering, said this is the only active landslide that he is aware of in the city.

"There is definitely a slip plain, and something has greased it so that all of the soil resistance was able to shear off in the manner that it has," he said.

For now, he said, it "appears that the slide has terminated."

Zachary said early assessments, including comments from a geotechnical firm,

led officials to believe that the slip line doesn't stretch below the houses downhill or as high as under the Vilners' home. The question is: How far under the Vilners' pool area does it stretch?

"It is not like the whole hillside is on the slip plain. I think what the residents are envisioning are slides of California, and I don't think that is the case here," he said.

Vilner suspects that the sewer line may have leaked into the soil over time, causing the slide.

City officials, however, say the slip line is above the sewer line and that no movement has been detected on that line. That would likely occur if the line was involved, they say.

"There is a whole lot of activity going on out there because of the easement, and we are getting with all the utilities and finding out what they have been doing," Zachary

said.

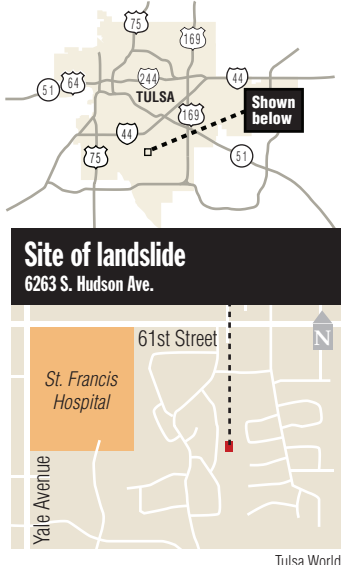
The Vilners had their pool redone two years ago, and that might have contributed to the situation, he said.

"Right now, we just don't know. We are trying to find those answers," he said.

Whether this landslide is an act of nature or the result of a combination of activities by the homeowner and public utilities is unknown, but officials are seeking answers.

Meanwhile, the Vilners and their neighbors say they're on edge, not knowing whether more movement is to come.

P.J. Lassek 581-8382
pj.lassek@tulsaworld.com



JUDGE:

Thompson will pursue reinstatement of his judicial pension, an attorney says.

FROM A-19

\$93,474.12 pension — or \$7,789.51 monthly.

Thompson is still entitled to nearly \$300 in monthly retirement benefits for having served in the Legislature between 1974 and 1980.

However, Thompson's lawyers appealed the revocation of his judicial pension, claiming it wouldn't be fair to deprive him of the money until the appeal of his conviction is decided.

Last September, the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals rejected Thompson's appeal and let his convictions stand.

Joe Fox, the general counsel for the state retirement system, said it's up to Thompson's attorneys to pursue the move to have his pension reinstated.

The last hearing on the matter was in March 2007, at which time the state-retirement appeal was continued indefinitely.

Thompson's attorneys had wanted to delay the hearing until their client could attend the meeting himself.

One of his lawyers, Rob Nigh of Tulsa, said they would definitely pursue the reinstatement of the ex-judge's judicial pension.

Meanwhile, news of Thompson's impending release was met with conciliatory tones

from the special prosecutor in the case and trial judge McCall.

Lead prosecutor Richard Smothermon said Thompson has paid his debt to society "and it's time to let him out of the box."

"It's time for Creek County, the state and everyone else to

put this behind them," Smothermon said.

McCall offered much the same sentiment.

"All I would say is that I'm hoping everyone can put this behind them and move on," the judge said.

"It was a difficult circumstance for the judge and his

family, for the victims and families, and the court system in Creek County in general," McCall said.

"Justice has run its course, and I'm hoping we can put this all behind us."

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manny.gamallo@tulsaworld.com

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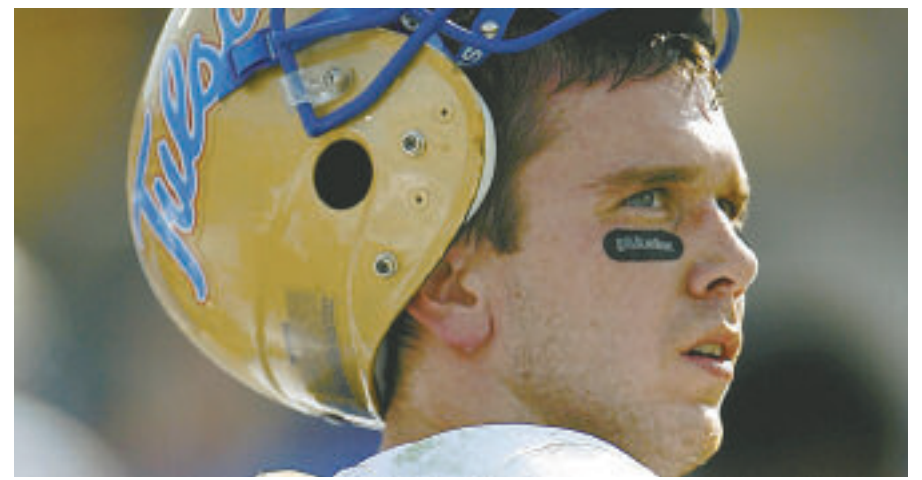
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