

Summer fun in jeopardy for kids

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

It is the dead of winter, but summer is already on Tameka Carter's mind.

The 11-year-old lives in Happy Hill and each summer competes on the neighborhood swim team.

"We have fun at the pool," she said. "We can't go to a hotel pool or a private pool. This is the only place we have to go to swim."

But this year the romps in the Happy Hill pool enjoyed by Carter and her friends are in jeopardy as leaders consider whether to temporarily close that pool and others to help to balance a city budget that got much tighter last week after it was announced that Winston-Salem would not be getting an expected \$8 million from the state.

In all, Gov. Mike Easley decided to withhold more than \$200 million in payments from dozens of local governments to try to make up for the state's budget shortfall.

Like their neighbors to all directions, Winston-Salem officials spent part of last week crunching the numbers to devise ways the city could make up for the loss, although Mayor Allen Joiner and members of the Board of Aldermen still hope to sway the governor into rethinking his decision.

But until that happens, several cutbacks have been proposed, including closing the pools at Happy Hill, Mineral Springs and Reynolds Park for the summer; eliminating late-night programs at city recreation centers; and permanently closing the Northampton and North Hills recreation centers.

The city's Park and Recreation Department is not the only department that could feel the heat. Other proposals include canceling the upcoming police



The North Hills Recreation Center is one of the smallest recs in the city.

Photo by Courtney Gaillard

recruit class and eliminating bulky item pickup until the summer.

Alderman Vivian Burke said everyone should keep in mind that at this point nothing is written in stone. She said she has not ruled out the possibility that Easley could change his mind and forward the city's millions so that no services will be affected.

Burke also said that it is possible that some private money could be secured to help save some of the recreation programs if the city was forced to enact some of the proposals.

The directors at the Northampton and North Hills centers chose not to comment on the proposals. Nick Jamison, the director of parks and recreation, said the two centers were probably proposed for closing because they are smaller than most centers and have limited hours and programs.

Jamison is also keeping in mind that the proposals are just that - proposals.

"No final decisions have been made....Nothing is a given," he said.

He added that whatever the future holds for his department, the staff will forge ahead and work hard with what they are given or left with.

"There are no easy answers (in the budget crisis). We have to leave this to the elected officials," he said.

At least one of those officials is not happy about the proposals that have been made so far. Alderman Vernon Robinson held a news conference a day before the proposals were made to announce ways he thought the city could make up the difference.

Robinson hoped that his colleagues would be led by the budget crisis to end what he calls corporate welfare (city money given to private businesses to spur the city's economy and create jobs) and the practice of awarding nonprofits hundreds of thousands of dollars in city money.

Robinson also suggested that Easley dip into the cash-laden Golden Leaf Foundation, which was established with money the state received from the tobacco settlement.

Regardless of what the aldermen decide, Robinson, a Republican, said anger should not be directed at the board but at Democrat Easley.

"Many of the people that supported the governor the most (during the 2000 election) are being hurt by the pool closings and the rec. closings."

Robinson favors the idea of encouraging residents to lobby Easley. There is talk of putting a postcard inside of water bills that residents can use to complain to Easley about the decision. Robinson is planning meetings with governmental bodies in towns in Forsyth County to discuss other plans of action.

As of press time, the Board of Aldermen was planning to further discuss at a public hearing Monday at 7:30 p.m.

Jones

from page A1

ing from Duke in 1992, Randy Jones won a national push competition to earn a spot on the two-man team.

Jones and Brian Shimer finished in 13th place at the 1994 Olympics. Jones was also part of the four-man team that was favored to pick up a medal, but the team was disqualified midway through the competition.

Before the 1998 Olympics the team fared well and appeared headed for a medal. However, it finished .02 seconds short of the bronze. Jones took some time off from the sport, started a computer business in Atlanta and got married to his fiancée, Cheri. Shortly thereafter he began training for this year's Olympic Games.

"He's not a quitter," the elder Jones said. "He never considered not coming back. Randy has always been driven to complete whatever task is at hand."

The Joneses, who have been there to support their son at each of the previous two Winter Games, are hoping the third time is the charm. The United States is hoping to capture a medal and break a drought that has existed since this country's last medal in 1956.

The prospects look good. Jones' team stood atop the World Cup standings for most of this year before pulling out of the final two events. But it has been surrounded by controversy recently because team member Pavle Jovanovich was recently disqualified from the Olympics for failing a drug test.

But that hasn't diminished Jones' hopes.

"I think they still have a good chance to win," the elder Jones said. "He's very optimistic and we are also."

It seems really odd that an athlete from Winston-Salem would be part of the Winter

Games, especially considering that Jones was introduced to bobsledding so late in life.

Jones grew up with the dream of playing professional football or enjoying an international track career.

Jones began playing football in the Winston-Salem Tiny Vikings Pop Warner program. He also ran track for the Roadrunners Track program. By the time he arrived at Glenn High School a reputation as a top-flight athlete had preceded him. At Glenn, Jones helped lead the Bobcats to a state 4-A track championship. Jones also claimed state titles in the 100- and 200-meter dashes. He led Glenn's football team in rushing for two seasons and earned a football scholarship to Duke.

At Duke, Jones played tailback and is the school's leading career kickoff returner with 1,890 yards and three touchdowns. He was also the MVP in track, scoring in the ACC meet in the 100-meter dash all four seasons. He also holds Duke records in the 100-meter dash, 200-meter dash and 60-meter dash. He also excelled in the classroom, earning a degree in mechanical engineering.

Although Jones has used his technical background to establish himself in the computer business, athletics is where his passion lies. Winning an Olympic medal would do much to satisfy him in that area. Jones, now 32 years old, realizes that his career henceforth is coming to a close, and that makes for a sense of urgency at this year's Olympics.

The 1998 competition figured to be the coming-out party for the U.S. Bobsled Team.

Although the fourth-place finish might have been satisfying for some, it wasn't enough to satisfy Jones.

"He wants to get that medal," said John Jones, who retired from R.J. Reynolds. "He's always been very goal oriented."

Center

from page A1

the community set the plateau for which the center can begin an extensive probe into multifaceted approaches of minority health care research and solutions.

After greeting those in attendance in songs of various languages, Angelou explained that if ever she got the chance to compose music she would write about "daybreaks in Winston-Salem, North Carolina."

Angelou shared her intention to wholeheartedly participate in the molding of the center, stating that when advisory board member Velma Watts approached her about the idea for the center two years ago, Angelou said that she wanted to use her name for the center "only if all of me can be engaged - my thoughts, my hopes, my energy, my intelligence."

"How can we really make this country more than what it is today?" Angelou said about her hopes for the center and its promise to focus on the quality of health care needs for all people of color. "Let us bring our best to our best for our best."

Richard Dean, president of health sciences at WFU, said the creation of the center and its purpose of formulating a model for minority health care will set the national tone and trend for the medical field at large.

"We are a perfect community to initiate a new approach to solving these issues," Dean said. "I look forward to becoming the leader in creating successful solutions to these disparities rather than remain behind or even in the path of followers to failed quick fixes to these unfulfilled promises in our society."

Dean went on to comment on the lack of minority students and faculty at the School of Medicine, saying that he hoped to extend the racial makeup of the local medical community so that those seeking medical assistance can find researchers, educators and doctors who look like them. With Angelou's longtime commitment to minorities and the underserved, Dean expressed his hope that she will serve as a great link to those who are often overlooked.

"I believe that the recognition of one's own ignorance is the first step through (the) path of knowledge to help

others. Dr. Angelou has committed to bring that knowledge to all of us, to give us an avenue of learning and to be the bridge to provide a con-

nection between the constituency and our commitment to discover and implement those solutions," Dean said.

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