

A camp for kings

Green Country Chess club to host chess camp at Tulsa Tech

By NATALIE MIKLES
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After Lynne Chapman offered to lead the chess club at Monte Cassino, 15 kids signed up. By the end of the first year, there were 50 kids, and by the following year, the club was bursting at the seams with 150 kindergarten through eighth-graders.

Chapman took the large turnout as a sign that she should be teaching chess full time.

Five years later, she's president of Green Country Chess and a chess teacher to children and adults alike.

"I've played all my life and enjoyed it all my life. But when I started working with the students at Monte Cassino who wanted to play, it brought that excitement back," Chapman said.

Chapman is also the director of the four-year-old Green Country Chess Camp, running Wednesday through Friday. The camp draws children — kindergarten through high school — from across the region.

Chapman's ties to the state and national chess communities have brought big names from the chess world to the local camp, held at Tulsa Technology Center's Broken Arrow campus, 129th East Avenue



Lynne Chapman

and 111th Street.

This year, two acclaimed chess instructors are part of the lineup. Bruce Pandolfini teaches private lessons to the world's best students, Chapman said.

He is perhaps best known, even to those who don't know a thing about chess, as the inspiration for the coach character, portrayed by actor Bin Kingsley, in "Searching for Bobby Fischer."

David MacEnulty, who was the first full-time chess teacher for New York City Public Schools and has coached students to national championships, is also attending.

"Quite a few students recognize these names. There are a lot of people from other states that come to the camp because of the instruction," Chapman said. "There are very few (chess camps) that he does, but he likes Tulsa. The kids just adore him," she said of Pandolfini.

Each day of the camp, students attend a workshop with either Pandolfini or MacEnulty. Parents, coaches and teachers also have the opportunity to attend workshops with the two, in subjects including game analysis, chess-in-schools and chess training.

Three Tulsa chess supporters are being recognized by the Green

Country Chess Club for their support of chess education.

They are Joe Gaudet, general manager of Southern Hills Marriott, John M. Acken with CityWeb and Joyce Parrish of B-Original.

Chapman said the camp, which runs from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., is filled with games, logic puzzles, chess-related artwork and of course, plenty of competitive chess.

"A lot of times, parents are very surprised — their children have been at chess camp all day and they still want to come home and play chess," Chapman said.

Denise Mason, parent of a 9-year-old camper, said her son began playing at age 5, while in kindergarten. Surprisingly, chess wasn't something he had seen at home.

"Malcolm learned to play checkers really fast and then wanted to play chess. I couldn't teach him, so I asked if he could take the class at his school," Mason said.

Malcolm plays chess a few times a week. But he plays his handheld computerized chess nearly every day.

Austin Smithe is already ahead of many children. At 5 years old, chess is his favorite game.

"He picked it up at a Christmas party where some older kids were playing," said Stella Smithe, Austin's mother. "The next day, he knew how to set up the board."



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Five-year-old Austin Smithe will attend camp for the first time this year. Smithe was a quick learner to checkers and wanted a more challenging game. Now he's hooked on chess.

Chapman offers chess lessons throughout the year at area schools.

After-school classes at Monte Cassino are open to children

throughout the Tulsa area.

An eight-week course is \$100. For more information, visit the Web site, www.greencountrychess.com or call 254-8880.