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Byers charged with murder, denied bond

Hannah Carol Bickley, 17, loved to talk on the telephone and text her friends. A



Hannah Bickley

graduating senior at Cherryville High School, she also worked at a restaurant and wanted to be a nurse.

Aaron Rashun Byers, 19, charged with the teen's murder, made his first court appearance Monday and was denied bond.

Byers had allegedly told Shelby police that he and Bickley had been robbed, and she had been shot. Police later



Aaron Byers

suspected the shooting was accidental and that Byers pulled the trigger in an attempted robbery in Shelby. Byers was charged with

murder, attempted armed robbery and possession of a firearm by a felon.

Pauline Bickley of Kings Mountain said her granddaughter had texted her father, Guy Bickley of Kings Mountain, several times on Saturday, the last time when she was leaving her job. She said Hannah had loaned her car to her boyfriend and he was picking her up from work.

At 2:38 a.m. Saturday, officers with the Shelby Police Department responded to a call about a possible armed robbery and shooting on Holder Drive in Shelby. En route, officers were flagged down on Broad Street by a man (later identified by police as Byers) who said a woman inside his vehicle had been shot on Holder Drive.

Officers found Bickley inside the vehicle with a single and fatal gunshot wound.

"Hannah loved her family and we all loved her," said her grandmother Pauline Bickley. The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information about the case is asked to call Crime Stoppers at 704-481-8477.

Budget workshop set for Thursday

Kings Mountain city council will take a first look at the proposed city budget for 2014-15 Thursday at a budget workshop meeting at 6 p.m. at the H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Life & Conference Center.

City Manager Marilyn Sellers will conduct the meeting and present her budget proposal to the seven members of city council. The preliminary manager's budget contains no increased fees in budget year 2014-15. However, last year

city council okayed a 7 1/2 percent increase in water/sewer fees for three years ending in 2016 to pay for the \$34 million water improvements projects for which the city borrowed money to pay for major improvements.

Workers are getting close to the finish line of a \$5.2 million waterline rehabilitation project that affects pipes from Battleground Avenue to Phifer Road, some of the pipes 80 plus years old. The water improvements plan will also bring a new 36 inch water transmission line from Moss Lake to Kings Mountain with some \$9 million in bids approved recently.

The budget is expected to be conservative.

OTM Triathlon Saturday

NASCAR champion Jimmie Johnson expected to be among competitors

This year's 15th annual Over the Mountain Triathlon on Saturday, May 17 will begin at Moss Lake with a one mile swim, a 30 mile bike ride through four counties and two states and finish with a 10k run through the streets of Kings Mountain. With close to 300 triathletes competing in this "point-to-point" race, is there a good place to watch the action?

Ellis Noell, Special Events Director for the City of Kings Mountain, has a few places in mind for a great vantage point of all the race segments. "Our triathlon race is Olympic length, which means that over this long race course, there are a number of places to watch and cheer these amazing triathletes."

His recommendations: -- The swim starts at the beach area behind the Moss Lake Office on Oak Grove Road where the swimmers take off in the waves. A great viewing point is on one of four piers at the boat landing. -- The swim

finish on the New Camp Creek Church Road at the large, new handicap accessible fishing pier, providing a great panoramic view of the lake as the swimmers pass by and where the triathletes will begin a hearty jog up the hill to their first transition area where they will mount their bicycles at that staging area and begin the challenging 30 mile bike portion.

-- The halfway point of the bike portion, at the water station at the Superintendent's Office at Kings Mountain National Military Park. This is the only water that's provided on the bike course. The water bottles will be handed-off by a group of Boy Scouts.

-- The third transition area, from the bike portion to the run course. Railroad Avenue in downtown Kings Mountain will be blocked off with racks for the triathletes to drop off their bicycles, put on their running shoes and head out for the final leg of the triathlon, the 10k

run portion.
-- The finish line at Patriots Park. Lots of excitement here, beginning
See OTM, 7A

Work underway for Wal-Mart



Construction workers are on the scene at Kings Mountain Plaza with heavy equipment readying to demolish the old Winn-Dixie Store and area to make way for a new Wal-Mart Marketplace which will include a grocery store and pharmacy. The entire area is off limits to traffic and enclosed, with signs directing traffic to nearby businesses. City officials have not been notified of the date that the buildings will be razed but with the good weather it could be soon.

Photo by DAVE BLANTON

Teacher pay, coal ash top the agenda for area lawmakers

ELIZABETH STEWART
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Area lawmakers return to Raleigh Wednesday (today) for the start of the 2014 short legislative session.

The local delegation agrees that teacher pay, coal ash, and budget adjustments top the agenda.

The House and Senate will begin the 2014 session at noon.

Representing this area from Cleveland and Rutherfordton and portions of Gaston County are Rep. Tim Moore of Kings Mountain, chairman of the committee on rules, calendar and operations of the NC House, Rep. Kelly E.

Hastings of Cherryville, Rep. Mike Hager of Rutherfordton, and Senator Warren Daniel of Morgantown.

Wednesday morning representatives of the North Carolina Association of Educators and supporters of public schools will come together for a day of action at the legislature. Organizers want to send a loud and clear message to the General



Moore



Hastings

Assembly: "We love public schools and are ready to fight for them." The AFL-CIO will sound off for equality for public education and for a clean environment at 10 a.m. on Bicentennial Mall across from the legislative building in Raleigh. They will lead the second Pots & Spoons protest.

"I am very hopeful
See LAWMAKERS, 7A



Hager



Daniel



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