

Fisher named new superintendent

Picked to lead schools in close vote

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In a 6-3 vote, the Cleveland County Board of Education moved Tuesday to name Dr. Stephen Fisher as the county schools' new superintendent. Fisher, currently the as-

sistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, will be awarded a four-year contract and assume the role on July 1.

In explaining her vote to pick Fisher, the board's vice chairperson Shearra Miller said that the selection and interview process was exhaustive and that she learned a lot about



Dr. Stephen Fisher

Fisher in the last several weeks.

"I saw strengths in Dr. Fisher I had not seen before," she said. "I saw a vision in Dr. Fisher that I had not seen before. I look forward to working with him in the

future."

The three dissenting votes came from Donnie Thurman, Jr., Danny Blanton and Roger Harris, all of which said they would nevertheless support Fisher, who is 39, and respected his qualifications and character despite favoring other candidates who were up for the top education job.

See FISHER, 7A



Allen Williams and Annmarie Fulbright were crowned KMHS 2014 prom king and queen at Saturday nights festivities at the LeGrand Center. See more photos on pages 6-7B.

Downtown KM shops to sponsor Senior Day

Starting in June, most of the shops in downtown Kings Mountain will offer special discounts to seniors, 60 and older, on the first Wednesday of each month, during regular store hours.

These business owners have come together to promote their stores, and each other, in a joint effort to market Kings Mountain to Kings Mountain. Organized by Nicole Smith at Mike's Great Finds, the shopkeepers have developed a system to realize what merchandise each carries so they can direct shoppers to the items they want.

"I've purchased multi-card racks and we are sharing business cards that shoppers can pick up from each one," she said. They are also looking into special flags to place in front of their businesses on Senior Wednesday to remind shoppers to come in for the specials.

A 'membership' card is also in the works, to give to shoppers as recognition of their participation in helping local merchants stay in business and keep Kings Mountain's downtown alive and prosperous.

"Look for our ad in next week's Herald, and a map pinning the 47 businesses that are participating in our first Senior Wednesday on June 4."

Honoring those who serve Veteran remembers a people who paid a steep price for freedom

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While fighting in the Vietnam War, Abraham Ruff learned a powerful lesson in loyalty, toughness and sacrifice.

His U.S. Army Special Forces unit was up against the North Vietnamese Army in the treacherous jungles of the divided nation. Danger lurked at every turn. But his men found a valuable ally in the members of an indigenous Vietnamese tribe.

That band of people — called the montagnard, or Mountain People, from the French — served as interpreters and lookouts during those hostile times when "you felt like you were all alone, didn't speak the language and were surrounded by the enemy."

Ruff, who joined the Army in 1960 at 18 and retired in 1980, was able to enjoy a reunion with some of the members of the montagnard who helped his unit and others survive that difficult war on the other side of the world. Three of the montagnard — also known as the Degar — met him and other members of his Green Beret team in Charlotte. Two are in poor health and the third is a minister in Greensboro. They emigrated to the

United States after the brutal proxy war, but not after the conquering communist forces imprisoned and mistreated them for years.

Ruff will be speaking about his experience with the montagnard at Dixon Presbyterian Church this Sunday 11 a.m. and his aim is to connect the bonds he made and the sacrifices he witnessed to Memorial Day here in the United States and the sacrifice Christ made for those who believed in him.

"The montagnard are a simple people," Ruff said. "They live off the land and don't make use of much technology. They are like the Native Americans of this country when European settlers were getting here."

And the montagnard have suffered the same persecution and indignities as Native Americans did, Ruff said, who has seen their mistreatment first-hand. "They harshly imprisoned them ... and they burned their books."

"A lot of people don't understand that serving your country sometimes means making the ultimate sacrifice," Ruff said. "The montagnard know this."

Ruff served in Vietnam with the Army

See RUFF, 8A,



Jimmie Johnson, six-time Sprint Cup NASCAR champion, nears the finish line in Saturday's big race. See more photos on page 12B
Photo by DAVE BLANTON

Memorial Day observance set for Monday

Captain Frank Sincox, retired Kings Mountain medical doctor who served in the Medical Corps US Navy, Reserves and with the Marine Corps for 42 years, will make the address at Monday's community-wide Memorial Day observance at 10 a.m. at Patriots Park.

Sincox practiced medicine for 50 years prior to retirement. In Kings Mountain he has been active in the Rescue Squad, Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club, Civil Air Patrol, Cleveland County Health Department, Kings Mountain Hospital, church activities, and on mayoral committees.

Also participating in the service will be KMPD Chief Melvin Proctor, who will give the invocation, Sheriff Alan Norman who will lead the pledge of allegiance, Justin Morrow who will sing "The National Anthem" and trumpeter Paul Fulton who will play "Taps."

Piper Jane Gulden will play special music including "Amazing Grace" and the KMPD honor guard will post and retrieve the colors.

Mayor Rick Murphrey will welcome guests and preside, introduce the speaker and lead the presentation of a red, white and blue memorial wreath at the close of the ceremony.

Budget meeting Thursday night

City Manager Marilyn Sellers will present the 2014-15 city of Kings Mountain budget to city council Thursday night at 6 p.m. at a special meeting of city council at the H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Life & Conference Center.

Last Thursday city council heard projects presented by department heads, some of which may be included in the budget projections to be presented by Sellers on Thursday.

The 2014 benefit overview by Human Resources Director Randy Patterson showed four medical option plans for the 200-plus city employees, two of which are of no cost to city employees. He proposed a change in medical administrator (healthgram) and provider network (CIGNA/Express Scripts) and noted new reporting requirements under President Obama's Affordable Care Act which removes pre-existing conditions exclusions.

He recommended a benefit strategy to reduce future claim costs, including encouraging employees to use new care venues (on-site clinics, retail clinics, mobile units) and employee participation in city sponsored programs on employee and family education benefits. Employees will be encouraged to take health screenings for cholesterol, blood pressure, etc. and participate in fitness programs with attention on weight management.

Energy Director Nick Hendricks who heads up the gas and electric departments, gave a review of several projects, including Smart Meter, as did other department heads in preparation for Thursday's budget presentation.

Battling out a triathlon victory

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Sunny weather, fierce competition and a dash of celebrity marked the 15th annual Over The Mountain Triathlon on Saturday as elite athletes from around the state and region raced through the challenging course that covers four counties in two states.

The overall winner of the 37-mile course, which includes swimming, biking and running segments, was 27-year-old Matthews resident Matt Patton, finishing with a time of 2 hours and 13 minutes.

"I loved it. It's a really challenging course," said Patton, a two-time All American swimmer at the University of Michigan and a member of the Olympic Swim Team who ran his first Over The Mountain race on Saturday. "The (bicycle)

climbing played to one of my strong suits."

The course for the race, which begins at 8 a.m. at Moss Lake, consists of a 1-mile swim across the lake, a 30-mile bike ride and finishes with a 10K race through parts of downtown Kings Mountain and along Phifer Road. This year's race drew 175 participants.

The city employs dozens of volunteers to mark the course and its many turns through the countryside, state parks and city streets.

Six-time Sprint Cup champion Jimmie Johnson had a strong showing in the grueling Olympic-style race. The popular NASCAR driver won his 35-39 age group in the Triathlon just hours before heading to the Charlotte Motor Speedway to compete in the All-Star Race, where he wound up

See TRIATHLON, 8A



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