

## Friends worked to save teen who dove into lake

### Boy Scout training, CPR help after 15-year-old suffers broken neck

By **EMILY FORD**  
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SALISBURY — Thanks to the quick thinking of his friends and CPR skills of a recent Eagle Scout, Gavin Littleton, 15, survived an accident Wednesday night after he dove into shallow water at High Rock Lake.

The rising sophomore at North Rowan High School remains in critical condition at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center with a spinal cord injury.

Littleton was scheduled to undergo surgery today to insert pins into his broken neck, said his grandmother, Karen Littleton.

"We are asking for prayers," she said. "If love could heal him, he would be home today."

When Nick Cornacchione earned his lifesaving merit badge last year with Boy Scout Troop 401 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, the East Rowan High School graduate and Eagle Scout said he never thought he would use CPR.

That changed Wednesday night on High Rock Lake.

Littleton, son of Todd and Jennifer Littleton of Salisbury and Gina Littleton of Charlotte, and his friends planned to camp at the lake near the dam. They beached Littleton's family pontoon boat and went swimming behind the boat.

#### 'It happened so fast'

While Cornacchione swam to a nearby cove, Littleton and Thomas Tucker climbed onto the boat. Zach Lemmon

stayed in the water.

Littleton stood on top of a four-foot-tall swim pad on the boat, the boys said. Tucker said he realized Littleton planned to dive into the water.

"I said, 'Don't do this, don't do this,'" Tucker said.

Littleton, an accomplished wrestler and tennis player, intended to make a shallow dive but went straight down, Tucker said.

"He dove too deep," he said. "As soon as he dove in, I thought, oh my God. This is not good."

Littleton did not surface.

When Lemmon reached the spot where Littleton entered the lake, he found Littleton unconscious under about three feet of water.

Lemmon pulled Littleton from the muddy bottom and lifted him to Tucker.

"I was worried that it was too shallow for a dive, but it happened so fast," Lem-

See **TEEN**, 6A



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Gavin Littleton, far right, poses at the Greenway 5K with friends after convincing them to run in wrestling singlets. Left to right, Zach Lemmon, Thomas Tucker and Nick Cornacchione helped save Littleton's life Wednesday after a diving accident.

## Pedal power



WAYNE HINSHAW/FOR THE SALISBURY POST

Cyclist Charlie Brown wins the Master's Race in the Crossroads Classics.

### Race series returns to Rowan this weekend

By **HUGH FISHER**  
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SALISBURY — "Eighty-five racers on the course!" was the track announcer's shout just after 9 p.m.

Thursday, as a pack of bicyclists streamed from the start/finish line up North Main Street.

Not quite single-file, flowing like a river, they rounded the curve onto East Council Street and soon were

out of sight.

The five-race Crossroads Classic stormed back into Salisbury on Thursday, and will return with two

See **PEDAL**, 3A

## Woman dies in wreck

### Three also hospitalized after collision near county line

By **KARISSA MINN**  
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MOUNT ULLA — A woman died and three people, including a child, were injured Thursday morning in a two-vehicle wreck near the Rowan-Iredell county line.

According to the N.C. Highway Patrol, a silver Toyota passenger car ran off the road to the right while traveling south on N.C. 801 toward Mooresville. Investigators say the driver, a 33-year-old woman, overcorrected as she steered the car back onto the roadway, striking a gold Chevrolet HHR station wagon going in the opposite direction.

The Toyota spun around and came to rest facing backwards, with the front driver's side crumpled in, while the Chevrolet slammed sideways into a tree.

Emergency responders initially said the 45-year-old driver of the Chevrolet was pinned in the vehicle and they were trying to get her out, but she died before they could. Witnesses said the woman was conscious and speaking when rescue crews arrived.

No names were released Thursday. A Highway Patrol trooper said authorities were trying to contact family members, and charges are pending.

Kim Campbell, of Mooresville, was driving north on N.C. 801 toward Salisbury when she came upon the accident around 7:45 a.m., just seconds after it happened.

Campbell reached the Toyota as a man jumped out of the passenger's side and threw open the back door.

"He grabbed his baby and screamed, 'She's un-

See **WRECK**, 5A

## Graduation rates up in Rowan

### Kannapolis City Schools sees figure decline

By **SARAH CAMPBELL**  
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The Rowan-Salisbury School System's four-year graduation rate climbed to an all-time high of 81 percent this year, according to data released Thursday by the N.C. Department of Public Instruction.

That's up from 77 percent last year.

"That is a significant jump, but we're not satisfied because we want it to be higher," said Dr. Jim Emerson, chairman of the Board of Education. "But we're moving in the right direction."

The Kannapolis City

school district, which has only one high school, saw a decline in this year's graduation rate from 85 percent to 83 percent.

But both school systems boast rates higher than the statewide average of 80 percent, the highest rate since the state first began reporting data in 2006.

Almost all of the traditional high schools in the Rowan-Salisbury district, with the exception of Carson High, saw increases. Carson's graduation rate fell from 87 percent to 85 percent.

Henderson Independent, the school system's alternative high school, also experienced a drop from nearly 35

percent to 27 percent.

The Rowan County Early College has the highest graduation rate in the county with more than 95 percent of students who started ninth grade in 2008-09 completing in four years or less. The school graduated its first class earlier this year.

Principal Cindy Misenheimer said staff at the Early College takes a proactive approach in making sure students receive a diploma.

"It's really being willing to do whatever you have to do to keep them in school and noticing if something is beginning to go wrong," she said. "It's really very personal for us here when we lose a kid."

South Rowan's graduation rate grew the most, jumping

See **RATES**, 2A

## Number of schools meeting expected growth down

By **SARAH CAMPBELL**  
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Twenty-one of the Rowan-Salisbury School System's 35 schools met or exceeded expected growth during the 2011-12 school year, according to the ABCs of Public Education accountability report released Thursday by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

That's down from last year when 23 schools met such goals.

The trend was the same for the Kannapolis City school system, which had five of its 8 schools meet targets, down from six the previous year.

This year's report uses Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO), replacing Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which has been dubbed an

"all or nothing" accountability model.

The new measure sets proficiency targets for each student subgroup rather than having one target for all subgroups.

Subgroups include Asian, black, Hispanic, multiracial, white, economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient and students with disabilities.

Ellen Boyd, spokeswoman for Kannapolis, said there aren't that many differences between the two standards.

"(AMO) has a more realistic expectation for each subgroup," she said.

The goal of the AMO model is to reduce the percentage of non-proficient students by one-half within six years. Under AYP, the goal was to have 100 percent of students proficient by 2014.

"Everybody realized the all or nothing AYP was an unrealistic goal," Boyd said.

The ABCs report is based on reading and math end-of-grade tests in third through eighth grades; science tests in grades five and eight; and end-of-course tests in English I, Algebra I and Biology. Cohort graduation rates are also factored in.

#### A closer look

Under the new standards, Knox Middle School will no longer be categorized as a low-performing school. Instead, the school becomes one Rowan-Salisbury's six priority schools.

Koontz, North Rowan and Isenberg elementary schools along with North Rowan middle and high will also take on

See **GROWTH**, 2A



Today's forecast  
90°/70°  
Chance of storms

#### Deaths

Peggy Y. Motley  
John G. Woollett  
Elizabeth Thomas  
Frank W. Kirk Jr.

Adeline T. Bowles  
Tracy W. Deal  
Charles R. Simone

#### Contents

Bridge Classifieds	11B	Deaths	4A	Second Front	3A
Comics	10B	Horoscope	11B	Sports	11B
Crossword	10B	Opinion	10A	Television	11B
		Home & Garden	8A	Weather	12B