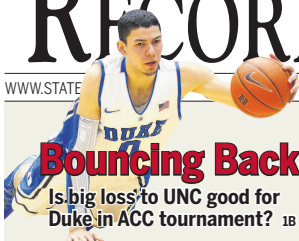


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Bouncing Back

Is big loss to UNC good for Duke in ACC tournament? 1B

Romney takes 3 states, Gingrich 1 on Super Tuesday

5A

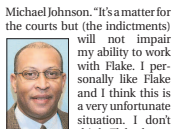
Character Building

Girl Scouts troop learns lesson on giving back 6A

Reaction to Indictments

City council stands by Huggins

BY JIM MCNALLY
jmcnally@statesville.com



Huggins

Michael Johnson. "It's a matter for the courts but (the indictments) will not impair my ability to work with Flake. I personally like Flake and I think this is a very unfortunate situation. I don't think Flake has a malicious bone in his body and my hope is that he will be exonerated."

Huggins, who represents Ward 6 on the council, is being charged with one count of common law aiding and abetting and one count of obstruction of justice, which are Class I and Class H felonies, respectively.

The charges are related to Huggins' alleged knowledge of votes illegally cast by family members in the November run-off between Huggins and challenger J.D. Williams.

Those family members — sister Rhonda Williams, brother-in-law Willie Williams Jr. and nephew Christopher Williams — were indicted for one count each of illegally voting. Christopher Williams also faces an obstruction of justice charge. All of these charges are also felonies.

According to North Carolina General Statute 15A-1340.17, Class H and Class I felony convictions carry minimum prison

sentences of three and four months respectively.

But the question of whether or not Huggins should step down based solely on the indictment was one Huggins' fellow council members did not wish to answer.

"He's the only one who can make that decision," said Councilman Cecil Stallard.

See **HUGGINS**, Page 3A

I-SS

Board says no to cuts in budget

Plan would eliminate school resource officers, counselors

BY PRESTON SPENCER
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The Iredell-Statesville Schools Board of Education rejected the two largest cuts proposed in the first draft of the 2012-13 budget presented by the I-SS central office at Monday's Committee of the Whole meeting. Major slashes to the Student Assistance Program and Student Resource Officer employees accounted for \$425,000 of \$1.3 million in cuts in the draft budget, and board members unanimously voted against cutting either program.

"The money is just going to have to come from somewhere else," said I-SS board member Bryan Shoemaker.

"These programs are too valuable. I-SS cut the number of SAP coordinators from 12 to six last year. Monday's proposal would leave the district with only one SAP coordinator next year. Also suggested was removing resource officers from middle schools, leaving only high schools with them."

"I certainly understand (the board's) position in wanting to support those programs," said I-SS Superintendent Brady Johnson. "I think that's something we all want to do. I think it's the grim reality that we're going to face that cuts have to be made somewhere. We'll certainly follow their lead, but I may have to go back to them and say, 'This is as good as it's going to get. There's just no more areas to cut.'"

See **CUTS**, Page 3A

CAROLINA BALLOON ASSOCIATION

RIDING THE WIND



BETHANY FULLER/STATESVILLE RECORD & LANDMARK

Guinness world record holder Jonathan Trappe flew a cluster balloon over Statesville during the filming of a Japanese variety show.

Crew films as two float with cluster of balloons

BY BETHANY FULLER
fuller@statesville.com

People didn't quite know what to make of a cluster of balloons flying over Statesville on Tuesday during their early morning commute.

Dangling underneath the balloons in a triangle Firefly basket was Guinness Book of World Records Cluster Balloon Pilot Jonathan Trappe and Japanese Comedian Degawa Tetsuro, who were in town filming an episode of the Japanese variety

show "Sekai no Hate Made ItteQ!" (Riddles at the Ends of the Earth) for NTV.

"Imagine you can hold onto the balloons and fly away — what we are doing here is very unusual," Trappe said before the launch.

"When we take off, we will flow with the wind, and we'll ride the wind to destinations unknown."

During the first portion of the flight, Statesville balloon pilot Sam Parks followed Trappe and Tetsuro with the show's host, Erina Matsui, and a director.

The helicopter held another set of cameramen, who followed the cluster balloon flight.

See **BALLOONS**, Page 3A

ONLINE

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Markets

-203.66
Dow Jones
12,759.15

Obituaries

MELVIN LITTLE
NARVIE JOHNSON
LUCILLE HEDRICK
LORIE GOODIN
DR. HARRY WALKER
CHARLIE SCHNEIDER
ESTELLE RICKERT
WAYNE HUIE

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Balloons

From Page 1A

The film crew had a three-day window to make the flight and film segments of Tetsuro preparing to learn to fly at two other locations, including the wind tunnel in Mooresville and inside Dorton Arena at the state fairgrounds in Raleigh.

The tower of latex balloons had been coming together all morning for the flight.

The effort required 90 helium tanks, which would eventually act as the anchors for the helium balloons.

Trappe was meticulous in how he placed the large balloons around the basket.

Statesville was selected as a take-off point because it is the home of Firefly Balloons and Trappe is a native of Raleigh, said Digital Vice President Kei Sugimoto.

The production company also planned to film secondary footage known as "B" roll at the Carolina BalloonFest field behind Statesville Regional Airport.

Trappe, who is currently living in the Philippines, is one of two balloon pilots in the country who take cluster balloon flights. In addition to holding several world records, he has done harnessed cluster balloon flights across the English Channel and the Swiss Alps.

The description of flying

cluster balloons given by Trappe is a combination of the daydream of flying with a bunch of helium balloons and mastering the winds. He used sandbags and the balloons themselves to manipulate his altitude.

Parks, who organized the volunteer crew for the flight, said Carolina Balloon Association can gather a large number of volunteers, who are willing to come up at 1 a.m. to help.

"We can make things like this happen," he said. "That's why Jonathan called me to make this happen."

Parks said Trappe was able to land the basket successfully.

"Everything was a huge success," Parks said.