



Fond memories of NBTF fav Lou Myers

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Photos by Layla Garms

Joycelyn Johnson argues a point with County Commissioner Walter Marshall.

(Below) Rev. Paul Lowe addresses county leaders.



Home value dips spark anger

BY LAYLA GARMS THE CHRONICLE

Dolores Watson purchased her home on North Cameron Avenue for \$91,300 two decades ago. The dwelling is now valued at \$21,600, according to the Forsyth County Tax Administration's most recent reevaluation. The 76 percent decrease in her property value is a big issue for Watson, a UNC School of the Arts employee.

"If I wanted to take out a home equity loan at this time, I wouldn't be able to, and I'm under water," she stated. "I actually owe more on my house than it's worth."

Watson is not alone. Ninety three percent of Forsyth County residents saw a decline in their property values following the 2013 reevaluation, according to tax assessor John Burgiss, who met with a room full of disgruntled homeowners Monday evening at the Government Center. The meeting, which was hosted by County Commissioner Everette Witherspoon, was said to have been intended only for a few homeowners, but word got out and more than two dozen residents flocked to the building, seeking answers about what for most of them was a significant drop in their



See Homes on A3

Parmon: current session is the worst

Local Democratic members of the General Assembly frustrated by GOP's moves

BY LAYLA GARMS THE CHRONICLE

With the election of Republican Gov. Pat McCrory, the North Carolina Legislature became a supermajority, with Republicans controlling the House, Senate and the Governor's Mansion, and local Democrats say they are feeling the effects of that change in Raleigh.

In November, prior to the start of the 2013-2014 session, Parmon had voiced concerns about Democrats' ability to get any progressive legislation passed.

"I think we're going to see a complete right wing agenda trying to be accomplished, and having the General Assembly under Republican control, the governor will just rubber stamp the legislation," she told The Chronicle shortly after her election to the NC Senate's District 32 seat. "I'm afraid that we're going to see the kinds of things that we've seen in Washington in the last few years in terms of gridlocks and a lot of fighting."

The senator said last week that her fears have been confirmed. The Republican majority has been busy. So far, they have moved to end the state earned income tax credit for working families and slashed unemployment benefits, reducing the maximum number of weeks a person can draw unemployment from 26 to 20, and cutting the maximum weekly payout rate from \$535 to \$356.

In addition, lawmakers have refused to set up the exchange program that would allow the state to assist people in choosing insurance plans under the Affordable Care Act and rejected the proposed expansion of Medicaid, leaving 500,000 people who are eligible for the benefits across the state uninsured. Gov. Pat McCrory told MSNBC's Chuck Todd Friday that he was against the extension because he feels the state's Medicaid system is "broken."

"The fact of the matter is we need to reform the way we spend money in government, and there is so much waste right now. For example, in our Medicaid, we just found over \$2 billion of wasted money and bad administration over the last two or three years," the governor said. "We've got to look at how to spend money more efficiently ... before I expand the system, I've



Parmon



Hanes

New arrivals in the Art District

BY TODD LUCK THE CHRONICLE

Umoja African Crafts and 6th & Trade Clothing Boutique are settling into the Downtown Arts District.

The boutique, named for its location inside of a building at the corner of Sixth and Trade streets, opened several months ago. Umoja opened its doors last April.

"We're just trying to bring together different cultures, different backgrounds, different environments and give them a cool place to shop," owner Isaiah Jackson said of 6th and Trade, his first business venture.

The boutique carries a variety of clothing from various brands. Jackson said he sells fashion inspired by the hip hop, country and rock 'n roll music scenes.

Jackson, a New Jersey native with a longtime love of fashion, said that owning a store was always been a dream. He saw it realized after meeting Ron



Purity Ruchugo at Umoja African Crafts.

See Shops on A8



Isaiah Jackson at his 6th and Trade.

Common Ground

Photo by Layla Garms

Native Americans and African Americans dance together during the first ever "Our Shared History: African American and Native American Roots and Connections" at Old Salem Museum and Gardens on Saturday. Read more about the event on page A10.



See Lawmakers on A10

Churches urged to link the poor with healthy food

BY LAYLA GARMS THE CHRONICLE

In America, even the food system is biased, with poor communities of color struggling for fresh produce and other things many Americans take for granted.

"We have a food system that's unhealthy and unjust," said Fred Bahnson, director of the Food, Faith and Religious Leadership initiative at Wake Forest University.

The initiative sponsored last week's "Food, Faith



Fred Bahnson

See Food on A7

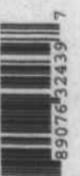


Photos by Layla Garms Cancer Services' Felecia Bennett-Giles addresses as fellow panelists Kevin Oliver and LaTonya McIver look on.

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