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Garrou, Baxter remember meeting differently



Linda Garrou is going for her fourth term in the Senate.

Garrou says challenger told her he was dropping out of race; Baxter says he only took break

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

There is some contention this week in the once sleepy Democratic primary race for the 32nd N.C. Senate seat.

Three-term incumbent Linda Garrou said her challenger, 27-year-old college professor Antonio Jermaine Baxter, told her that he was suspending his campaign. But Baxter, who is running his first-ever campaign, said he made no such statement and is still very actively campaigning to dethrone Garrou in the July 20 primary. Both candidates agree that they met July 3 for breakfast at the McDonald's on Hanes Mall Boulevard.

Garrou said that her campaign manager set up the meeting after Baxter called her to say that he was suspending his campaign. Baxter

admits calling Garrou. He said he simply wanted to meet Garrou because the two had never met before face to face. Baxter said he and Garrou discussed issues at the meeting, including his desire to run a positive race.



Baxter

He said he told Garrou that he would take a "break" from his campaign. He said the break was so that he could go on vacation for the Fourth of July with his family. Baxter said never did he give Garrou any indication that he was going to stop his campaign altogether.

"I did not realize there would be spins and twists. I should have realized that dealing with a politician," Baxter

said. Garrou was shocked Monday when told that

See Senate on A9

Parmon advised Kerry on VP pick

Representative lobbied for N.C. senator during meeting

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

State Rep. Earline Parmon likes to think that she played a small part in Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry's decision last week to pick Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina as his running mate.



Parmon

In May, Parmon had the chance to rub elbows with Kerry at the Democratic Leadership Council in Phoenix, Ariz., where she encouraged him to pick the N.C. senator as his running mate. Edwards' small town roots, says Parmon, prove he's a man of the people. His appeal, she says, is the fact that he's not a Washington insider like many other politicians.

"I thought Sen. Edwards was the best candidate, even though he was only a one-term senator. He's very intelligent. He's a fast study," said Parmon. "He understands the issues of the people....I think he can relate to the average person."

Smart Start programs in North Carolina were also a topic of conversation for Parmon and Kerry. She says the senator from Massachusetts was very interested in how the preschool preparedness program for children was operating in this state.

Parmon worked with Edwards during his Senate campaign six years ago, and she says it was then that she learned of his

See Parmon on A5

Red flags raised over paperless voting

Group says more needs to be done to ensure votes are counted

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

Electronic voting machines are quickly becoming the wave of the polling future around the country as punch-card ballot machines are being pushed to the side. But a grassroots organization wants state election officials to stop using the machines, which the group calls faulty.

Paperless voting machines, says the N.C. Coalition for Verified Voting, are not secure or reliable since federal standards for this type of voting device have not been instituted.

"The government doesn't oversee the voting machines. The people who set these machines check the source codes, and they are paid by the people who make the machines," said Joyce McCloy, coordinator of the coalition, which bills itself as



Photo by Courtney Gaillard

Members of the Black Leadership Roundtable hold protest signs in front of the Board of Elections.

Big names expected for A&T forum



Rep. Mel Watt represents the 12th District in Congress.

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Professor Dr. Myra Shird is often surprised that the students who come through her class are so uninformed about the political issues that shape our nation. This Saturday, Shird is trying to do her part to better acquaint not just students but the community as a whole with how politics and the issues that drive politics affect us all.

Shird is the organizer of a forum that is being called one of the first in the area to bring top political names together to discuss general concerns facing the community, specifically how the election will impact health care, housing, education and unemployment within our community.

"I just feel that people are really not aware of the issues, and they need to be," said Shird, who is an assistant professor of speech communication at N.C. A&T State University.

The forum will be held Saturday on the campus of A&T beginning at 10 a.m. Several stellar policy-makers have already signed on to take part, including U.S. Rep. Mel Watt, Erskine Bowles, former White House chief of staff in the Clinton administration and a current candidate for U.S. Senate, is also scheduled to appear. Shird said at least two other members of the Congressional Black Caucus have also agreed to take part, but she could not name them because their attendance had yet to be confirmed on Tuesday. Shird said that a representative of the Kerry/Edwards ticket may also be on hand.

Residents will be able to ask questions of the participants at the forum, which is free and open to the public.

In a statement, Watt called the forum "a wonderful idea."

"This is a novel program because it will involve and draw on all

See Forum on A9

Got Skilz?



Photo by Jason Pitt

Gregory Keith Horne, or Skilz, has used his open mic savvy to win several poetry awards. Read more about him on page A5.

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822 Carl Russell Ave. (at Martin Luther King Dr.)
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