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THE CHRONICLE

Volume 43, Number 37 — WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — THURSDAY, May 18, 2017

Voting rights victory for N.C.

Pastor Mendez celebrates High Court voter ID decision

BY CASH MICHEALS
FOR THE CHRONICLE

RALEIGH — “Oh, I’m excited,” were the words exclaimed by the Rev. Dr. John Mendez, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Winston Salem, while visiting Davie Street Presbyterian Church in Raleigh Monday morning to see the N.C. NAACP president, the Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, announce his stepping down.

Mendez was reacting to news that the U.S. Supreme Court declined to overrule the 2016 decision by the U.S. Fourth Circuit of Appeals to strike down North Carolina’s 2013 voter ID law. The N.C.

NAACP sued then Gov. Pat McCrory, who signed the voter ID law, and the N.C. Republican-led Legislature, which passed HB 589, accusing them of suppressing the black vote with unconstitutional voting restrictions.

“We were plaintiffs in the lawsuit,” Rev. Mendez explained, recalling the weeklong hearings in federal court in Winston-Salem in 2015. Mendez was among those quoted in court papers filed in the lawsuit. “So it’s a very big day for us. We’re excited.”

In its July 2016 decision, the U.S. Fourth Circuit agreed that voter suppression was exactly

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Robert Willett/The News & Observer via AP

North Carolina NAACP president, the Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, reacts to an announcement Monday, May 15, by attorney Caitlin Swain that the U.S. Supreme Court declined to consider reinstating North Carolina’s 2013 elections law that included voter ID and other restrictions on voting during a gathering at Davie Street Presbyterian Church in Raleigh, N.C., where Barber announced he is stepping down as NAACP president.

N.C. NAACP prepares for next leader after Rev. Barber

BY CASH MICHEALS
FOR THE CHRONICLE

RALEIGH — According to sources at the N.C. NAACP, the successor to President Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, who has announced that he is stepping down next month after 12 years, will come from the four vice presidents currently under his wing — First Vice President Carolyn Q. Coleman, Second Vice President Carolyn McDougal, Third Vice President Rev. Dr. T. Anthony Spearman and Fourth Vice President Courtney Patterson.

Coleman is a veteran civil rights activist, member of the national NAACP Board, and the Guilford

County Commissioner Board. McDougal is a human resource officer with People’s Choice Home Care Inc. in Dunn. Spearman is senior pastor of St. Phillip A.M.E. Zion Church in Greensboro, and president of the N.C. Council of Churches. Patterson is retired and lives in Kinston.

The N.C. NAACP is “strong in our legal victories; strong in our organizational structure; strong financially and strong in the clarity of agenda,” Barber told reporters during a teleconference last Thursday.

A meeting to determine who will succeed Barber is

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Photo by Tevin Stinson

N.C. Rep. Edward Hanes Jr. shares his thoughts on proposed cuts to teacher assistant positions across the state and in the local school district.

N.C., local elected officials ponder education solutions

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

Last Friday afternoon the library at Parkland High School was anything but quiet as local and state elected officials, and members of the local school board sat down to discuss the future of education in North Carolina.

The panel discussion hosted by the Forsyth County Association of Educators (FCAE) featured N.C. Rep. Edward Hanes Jr., N.C. Rep. Evelyn Terry, County

Commissioner Fleming El-Amin and members of the Winston-Salem Forsyth County Board of Education: David Singletary and Elisabeth Motsinger.

Throughout the two-hour moderated discussion, the panel of diverse leaders gave their viewpoints on a number of topics, including House Bill 13, the controversial law that reduces the number of children per classroom.

“We thought it was important to have different levels of government here today because each of these levels

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Proposed county budget: more school spending

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

The proposed \$420 million Forsyth County budget for next fiscal year would slightly lower tax rates, thanks to higher local property values and tax revenues.

County Manager Dudley Watts presented a balanced budget to County Commissioners last week that maintains the county’s current level of service while recommending a revenue neutral tax rate that’s almost a penny less than the current rate. The overall higher property values found during this year’s countywide real estate reappraisal means the county can lower the rate and still pull in the tax revenues it needs.

“It’s important to acknowledge we’re in a really strong economy,” said Watts.

Staff will present a detailed budget presentation to the commissioners today, May 18. Commissioners will have a public comment hearing on the budget on Monday, May 22, and may adopt it on Thursday, May 25. The budget will go into effect on July 1.

The recommended tax rate of 72.35 cents per \$100,000 in property value is slightly less than the current 73.1 cents rate. Of that 72.35 cents, 64.37 cents go to county operations, 2.90 cents go to debt service on the 2016 bonds and 5.08 cents go to debt for previous bonds.

The county’s school funding formula means that near-

See Budget on A6



Watts

GRADUATION 2017

Meacham: Reject ‘alternative facts’ and blind partisanship

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Presidential Historian Jon Meacham told graduates to embrace reflection and logic instead of partisanship and “alternative facts” during Wake Forest University’s commencement on Monday, May 15.

Meacham is a former editor-in-chief of Newsweek and has written several books on presidents, including “American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House,” which won a Pulitzer Prize.

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Meacham

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