

GM program gives students first real taste of marketing/7C

Kim Vinson leads Winthrop University pitch.



MORE THAN FORMAL WEAR

Girl Talk prom project provides girls with gowns, etiquette/1B

THE EAGLE FLIES

East Meck's Kirt McReynolds aims to make mark as state's top sprinter/1C



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WEEK OF MARCH 23-29, 2008



Former Bush advisor **Claude Allen** was a rising star in national conservative circles.

Fallen GOP star lost his way

Former Bush aide Allen got his start in N.C.

By Nedra Pickler
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — During President Bush's State of the Union address, Claude Allen had a coveted box seat as a guest of the first lady. The former aide to North Carolina Sen. Jesse Helms sat there with an embarrassing secret.

For weeks as he worked side-by-side with Bush on policy that would be included in that Jan. 31 address, he carried the secret that was about to threaten the reputation he built during a swiftly rising career in Republican government.

What the Raleigh native knew and apparently didn't tell others at the White House is that he could be in legal trouble. Police say Allen was caught trying to get refunds on items he hadn't bought at a Target store in the Washington's Maryland suburbs, just 30 days before the State of the Union address he was helping to craft.

White House officials say they didn't know the truth about the allegations until last week, after Allen, 45, had resigned from his \$161,000-a-year job as Bush's domestic policy adviser. The felony charges have shocked those who knew Allen and considered him completely devoted to God, family and country.

"Nothing from my personal experiences with him would ever have led me to question his integrity, his morals, his honesty," said Alex Azar, the Health and Human Services Department deputy secretary who worked with Allen during all five years of the Bush presidency. "He was always regarded as someone with real integrity and somebody with a keen moral compass."

Allen is the great-grandson of slaves who was raised a Democrat in a poor Washington neighborhood. He's a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke Law School.

In college, he says he became a born-again Christian and a Republican. He rode those ideologies up through positions in state and federal government, all the way to the White House, where last year he became

See REPUBLICAN/3A



PAPPAS PROPERTIES

The \$200 million redevelopment of the former Midtown Square will include a Target and the Carolinas' first Home Depot Expo. Neighbors in the adjacent Cherry community are embracing the project as a stimulus to improving homeowners' property values.

Urban neighbors embrace change

Midtown redevelopment a plus for historic Cherry



By Herbert L. White
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By 2007, Cherry will be an A-list neighborhood.

Transforming the former Midtown Square mall means major changes for one of Charlotte's oldest black neighborhoods. New shops, restaurants and condominiums will bring thousands of people to the area. And the working-class neighborhood is looking to cash in.

Cherry sits directly across from the \$200 million redevelop-

ment of Midtown Square into a retail and residential hub. Developers Pappas Properties and Collett & Associates closed last week on the 10-acre site bounded by Kings Drive, South Independence Boulevard, Baxter Street and Kenilworth Avenue.

The transaction paves the way for a new urban community at the doorstep of uptown Charlotte, and a mixed-use project adjacent to Little Sugar Creek Greenway.

"I see it as a good thing," said Phyllis Lynch, president of the Cherry Neighborhood Association. "It's not going to impact what we're doing. I expect it to be a development plan like the one they have out at SouthPark."

Cherry, which borders the tony Myers Park neighborhood as well as the new shopping center, has long been a potential target for upscale development, but all attempts have been turned away. See DEVELOPMENT/2A

Black New Orleans residents returning home

By Christopher Tidmore
THE LOUISIANA WEEKLY

NEW ORLEANS — The fuel of the large influx of white candidates into the New Orleans mayor's race, and the other down ticket contests, was a perception that African-Americans had permanently fled the city in numbers proportion-

ately larger than whites. Eager Republicans and white Democrats reasoned that Caucasians would hold a permanent majority in the city, affecting the politics of New Orleans and Louisiana as a whole.

According to Professor Jeff Sadow of Louisiana State University at

Shreveport, this is wishful thinking. His research suggests that African-Americans have and will return faster than previously estimated, strengthening the campaigns of Democrats in the short term, and eventually returning the Crescent City to black majority sta-

tus by the end of the year. As Sadow explained, "Using a voting model based upon past elections shows, with so many Blacks registered as Democrats and historically voting for such candidates that Democratic candidates should have little

Please See MORE/6A

DANCE FEVER: Natasha Thomas-Schmitt (right) of the Alvin Alley Dance Theater leads instruction at Northwest School of the Arts last week as part of a residency program. Charlotte is one of 10 U.S. cities to host the program this year. The residency was sponsored by the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center Education Institute.

PHOTO: CURTIS WILSON



High speed digital divide

Study: Broadband less prevalent for blacks

By Herbert L. White
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Digital Divide Shifts to Broadband The expansion of new internet services could have positive social, economic, and health implications for African Americans, according to a study.

The study, conducted by the Washington-based Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, indicates that while internet usage by all racial and ethnic groups has steadily increased, a racial gap persists. As a result, African Americans still have less access to resources such as employment materials and health information.

"Access to broadband is contingent upon education, income, and occupation, but the racial differences in use within income and education categories suggest that these factors do not fully explain low use by African Americans," said Margaret Simms PhD, vice president of governance and economic analysis at the Joint Center. "Internet usage would

Please see GAP/3A

the box

NEWS, NOTES & TRENDS

Low grades pushes queen off throne

By Lisa R. Boone
BLACK COLLEGE WIRE

Miss Winston-Salem State University has been stripped of her title because her grade-point average dropped below 2.5.

Tiffany Richmond, 22, a senior mass communications major, is not alone. Thirteen students who held key titles or positions on campus were told to vacate their posts.

"After the official posting of semester grades, the Office of Student Activities verified all the grade-point averages of the Student Government Association and the organization presidents," said Melody Pierce, vice chancellor of student affairs.

"According to the SGA constitution, all members of the executive committee must maintain a 2.5 GPA. All students who did not meet the qualifications, we asked to step down and selected a replacement immediately.

Please see CAMPUS/3A



Richmond

Daniela Cotton is not your typical rocker. And that's just the start./1D



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