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What's an apology worth?

Democrats admit role in 1898 Wilmington massacre, but little else

By Herbert L. White
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Meek

The N.C. Democratic Party apologized Sunday for its role in the 1898 Wilmington massacre in which scores of African Americans were killed. But it doesn't do much else.

A resolution passed unanimously by the

party's executive committee acknowledges Democrats' participation in the only armed coup d'etat of a municipality in U.S. history.

"Sometimes, moving forward requires a sober look at the past," said state chairman Jerry Meek. "The Democratic Party of 2007 - and of the last half century - isn't the same party that it was in 1898. This resolution is

important because it renounces past actions of the Democratic Party and celebrates the party of today."

A political mea culpa won't change the current relationship between black voters and Democrats, says Ted Arrington Ph.D., chairman of UNC Charlotte's political science department.

Please see APOLOGY/2A



PHOTO/NEW HANOVER COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

A mob of whites destroyed the printing press of the Wilmington Record on Nov. 10, 1898, the first act of terror in the only recorded coup d'etat on U.S. soil. Dozens of African Americans and their white allies were killed or run out of town. The N.C. Democratic Party issued an apology Sunday for its role in the violence.

Caucus backs new House speaker

Black lawmakers support Hackney for top position

By Sommer Brokaw
THE TRIANGLE TRIBUNE

DURHAM - Joe Hackney wasn't the first choice of black lawmakers as N.C. House speaker, but he has their blessing.

Hackney, who took over for Matthews Democrat Jim Black Wednesday, is a centrist with a track record of working on behalf of issues important to African Americans.

Hackney was elected along party lines, with all 68 Democrats voting for him, while Rep. Paul Stam of Apex

was the choice of 52 House Republicans. Stam will serve as minority leader.

"While Rep. Hackney would not have been my first choice for Speaker, he

has a history of supporting issues important to poor people, black people and working North Carolinians," said Cornell Robinson, president of the N.C. Congressional Black Caucus. "Because of the makeup of the three branches of government, our first choice would have been the election of a black House speaker."

Such as former speaker Rep. Dan Blue, a Raleigh Democrat who replaced Bernard Allen after Allen's death last year.

"In the event of a floor fight between Hackney and Dan Blue, I believe the black community would embrace Dan Blue's run," Robinson said.

But that fight didn't materialize.

See CAUCUS/3A



PHOTO/WADE NASH

Students at Crossroads Charter School make their way to classes Monday. Two years ago, loitering in the halls was among the school's discipline challenges.

Campus moves past crossroads

Charter school once threatened by unrest and closure makes comeback with firm administrative leadership

By Cheris F. Hodges

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Two years ago, Crossroads Charter High School was in crisis.

Today it's a school students want to attend.

Staff and students alike credit Principal Kenneth Simmons for the change.

Simmons, a former principal in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system

was hired after Charles Newton was fired amid protests from parents and students in 2005.

"When I came, it was three weeks before school started in August (2005)," said Simmons. "All I knew was what had been told to me."

Simmons inherited a school in chaos. Students didn't have hot lunches and Newton closed the school when stu-

dents protested campus conditions. The state, which oversees charter schools, threatened to close Crossroads forever.

"I was hired to see if I could come in and make a difference," he said.

Grace Cole, who chose to send her son and daughter to Crossroads, said the school is a lot different and better than

Please see CAMPUS/2A

Special prosecutor in Duke lacrosse case no stranger to spotlight's glare

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH - The special prosecutor taking over the Duke lacrosse sexual offense case isn't a stranger to the legal spotlight, or to some of the defense attorneys in the high-profile case.

Special Deputy Attorney General Jim Coman, who was appointed to the case earlier this month, has prosecuted members of the Ku Klux Klan and var-

ious public officials in North Carolina. Outspoken while director of the State Bureau of Investigation, Coman has earned a no-nonsense reputation during his long career in law enforcement.

"I've heard others say he is a bulldog and mean and tough, but my experiences have always been very pleasant," said defense attorney Joseph

Cheshire, who is representing one of the lacrosse players charged in the Duke case. "He's always been reasonable."

Coman, the son of a New Jersey police chief, has worked in law enforcement his entire life. His first high-profile case was the prosecution of Ku Klux Klan members accused in the shooting deaths of five

Please see DUKE/3A

Obama explores campaign options

U.S. senator inches toward announcement for presidential run

By James Wright
AFRO NEWSPAPERS

BALTIMORE - U.S. Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.) has set up his exploratory committee for a possible run for the Democratic nomination for president in 2008. Obama said that he will decide whether he will officially run for the White House on Feb. 10.

Exploratory committees are designed to let a candidate know whether a bid for office is viable. The committees gauge public opinion, fundraising capabilities and media strategy for a candidate.

Obama said that he has thought long and hard about running for president, according to his Web site.

"Running for president is a profound decision-a decision no should make on the basis of media hype or personal ambition alone-and so before I committed myself and my family to this race, I wanted to be sure that this was right for us, and, more importantly,



Obama

Please see OBAMA/3A

thebox

NEWS, NOTES & TRENDS

Barber-Scotia homecoming stomps yard

It's homecoming season at Barber-Scotia College.

The historically-black college in Concord is hosting a series of events Feb. 2-4, including tailgating parties, step show, an alumni social and dance and golf tournament.

The Feb. 2 step show is the week-end's highlight, with groups from high school, middle school and colleges invited to compete. Admission is \$4 and the show starts at 6 p.m. at Lionel Newsome Gym.

For information and a list of events; call Dana Reid or Wilma Means at (704) 789-2900.



CIAA adds extra bye for next month's basketball tournament/1C

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