

**BLUES, BREWS AND BARBECUE**

Charlotte blues legend **Nappy Brown** throws down at home/1D

Volume 32 No. 52

Butler High still atop weekly Magnificent Seven football poll/1C



**Life is art**

Review of Sonia Handelman Myers photographic exhibit at Hodges Taylor Gallery/1D

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The Voice of the Black Community

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WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 13-19, 2007

## Who loves ya, voter?

*Do Democrats take blacks for granted? Party leaders bristle*

By Hazel Trice Edney  
 NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressional Democrats, now nine months into their ruling majority, boast proudly of their key legislation affecting African-Americans.

New acts of Congress include long-awaited fetes, such as the increase in the minimum wage, relief for Black farmers and last week's increase in the Pell Grant for college tuition.

Yet, some seasoned political observers all but yawn as they point out that mostly tepid issues are being addressed by Democratic presidential candidates. Their criticism raises the question, Do Democrats really love Black people?

"Of course not," scoffs a chuckling Kathie Stromile Golden, executive director of the National Conference of Black Political Scientists. "They love them to the extent that [blacks] can help them get elected. Historically they are better. Certainly we've been more hopeful. But that's not because they actually love Black folks. It's politics," says Golden, professor of political science and director of international programs at Mississippi Valley State University.

Ron Walters, former strategist in the presidential campaigns of the Rev. Jesse Jackson, echoes Golden.

"Basically, what they want to do is to get in the White House. They want to win," says Walters, a political scientist at the University of Maryland. "And that means if they have to overthrow the civil rights agenda, they'll do it. And that is essentially what they've been trying to do. So, no, they don't love black people. It's just that they love winning."

The danger is that the party shifts with political winds, Walters explains.

In 1984, after Jackson's first presidential run and second term Republican President Ronald Reagan defeated Democratic nominee former Vice President Walter Mondale, there were a series of meetings among the Democratic Party leadership, Walters recalls.

"One of those meetings was very hot because some of the younger leaders of the party were arguing that they had to reconfigure the role of the civil rights movement in the party's profile, in the party's image. In other words, the Democratic Party

Please see DEMOCRATIC/2A

## First responder helped spark change



PHOTO: PAUL WILLIAMS III

Linda Lockhart, who retires today after 25 years with the Charlotte Fire Department, was the first African American woman to join the service and second woman overall.

### City's first black woman firefighter retiring after 25 years

By Herbert L. White  
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When Linda Lockhart joined the Charlotte Fire Department in 1982, she was leaping into a decidedly macho - and overwhelmingly white - world.

On Thursday, she's retiring from a more diverse service.

Lockhart, Charlotte's first African American woman fire-

fighter, is leaving after 25 years that brought changes in the workplace and the role of women.

"I can't wait to get out. It's been an interesting 25 years," she said. "We've been through a lot, but I made it through."

From the start, Lockhart stood out. At 4-feet, 11 inches tall, she was much smaller

than her colleagues. Then there was Lockhart's gender, which didn't endear her to her new colleagues. There were no gender-specific accommodations at fire stations, where women had to use the same restrooms and dormitories as the men.

"Linda came in when it was rare for women to be in the service, much less black women," said Deputy Chief Howard Key. "Just her tenure is something to be praised."

Firehouse oversights paled in comparison to the hostility Lockhart and other women

Please see CITY S/2A

"I can't wait to get out. It's been an interesting 25 years. We've been through a lot, but I made it through."

Linda Lockhart Charlotte's first black woman firefighter who retires Thursday after 25 years of service.

## ABC scores better, with reservations

By Herbert L. White  
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Charlotte-Mecklenburg public school students are performing much better according to standardized test results.

More than two-thirds of the district's schools (67.3 percent) showed expected or high growth in student achievement during the 2006-07 school year compared to 54 percent a year earlier



Gorman

CMS Superintendent Peter Gorman said in a statement. "But

as measured by North Carolina's Accountability, Basics and Local Control rankings.

"This is very good news. Many of our schools are showing growth in student learning,"

we want to see even better news - we want student achievement to increase at all schools, not just most of them."

In North Carolina, 71.8 percent of public schools made expected or high growth, a 17.5 percentage points improvement over the previous year.

CMS high schools showed dramatic improvement overall, with

See CHALLENGE/6A

### APPRECIATION: DR. REGINALD HAWKINS



PHOTO: CALVIN FERGUSON

Dr. Reginald Hawkins, a mainstay of Charlotte's civil rights, faith and medical communities for four decades, died Monday.

## A vocal leader for civil rights

*Dentist/minister was at the forefront of movement*

By Herbert L. White

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Dr. Reginald Armistice Hawkins was never one to hold his tongue when it came to black self-determination.

A polarizing figure in Charlotte's civil rights community in the 1960s and '70s, Dr. Hawkins, who died Monday in Charlotte at age 83, was one of the most vocal advocates for equality. He led during a time of sit-ins and firebombings, yet never lost his verve.

"His legacy will be as a pit bull gnawing at every vestige of segregation," said Charles Jones, a leader of Charlotte's student sit-ins during the 1960s. "He would not be denied."

Dr. Hawkins, a dentist and minister, was born in Beaufort, N.C., on Nov. 11, 1923 - Armistice Day - to Lorena Smith and Charles C. Hawkins. He graduated Johnson C. Smith University in 1948 and earned a doctorate of dental surgery from Howard University in 1948 before returning to Charlotte to start his practice.

Please see REGINALD HAWKINS/3A

## Entrepreneur rallies support for Jena 6

By Cheri F. Hodges

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For Darren Vincent, the case of the Jena Six is almost like looking in the mirror.

Vincent has chartered a van to take a group of Charlotte residents down to Jena, La., next week when Mychal Bell, one of six black high school students charged with aggravated second degree battery, is scheduled to be sentenced.

The story of the Jena Six affected Vincent two-fold. He has a son close to Bell's age.

Vincent's son, like Bell, is an honors student, never been in trouble and is into sports.

And then there's Vincent's past. "I've been in a lot of fights," he said, his voice low and wistful.

Please see LOCAL/6A



Vincent

### GRAND OPENING



PHOTO: CALVIN FERGUSON

The Stratford Richardson YMCA on West Boulevard celebrated its opening last week with a rope-cutting ceremony. Community and civic leaders, YMCA officials and West Boulevard neighbors participated in the opening ceremonies.



Biography captures what it's like to grow up Muslim and convert to Christianity/5B

**INSIDE**

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