THE DAILY CLIPS

October 3, 2008

News, commentary, and opinion
compiled by the East Carolina University News Bureau from:

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VP nominee visiting Minges

BY GINGER LIVINGSTON
AND MIKE GRIZZARD
The Daily Reflector

Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin is making Greenville her first North Carolina campaign stop Tuesday.

The Alaska governor will appear in Minges Coliseum on the campus of East Carolina University Tuesday night. The exact time of her appearance hasn't been set, but the doors are to open to the public at 4 p.m., said Ferrell Blount, former state GOP chairman and a senior advisor to John McCain's presidential campaign.

Tickets are free and will be available Friday the local campaign headquarters on Commerce Street, Blount said.

"For Republican candidates, eastern North Carolina has been a decisive area where campaigns are won," Blount said.

North Carolina has traditionally voted Republican in presidential elections, favoring the GOP nominee in nine of the last 10 elections and every one since 1976. The state shapes up to be a

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battleground state this year.

For the second straight week, Rasmussen Reports has Democrat Barack Obama with a slight advantage over McCain — 50 percent to 47 percent — in its latest telephone survey. American Research has McCain ahead 49 percent to 46 percent.

"This is a competitive state; you can look at the polls and see that," said Brent Woodcox, a spokesman for the North Carolina Republican Party. "We always anticipated to was going to be that way. This is just a kind of cycle that turns things on its head."

Blount said Alaska and North Carolina have many similarities and, because of that, Palin's values are very similar to those of eastern North Carolina families. Blount said Palin supports the military, is concerned about the environment and knows what it is like to balance a family budget.

Blount said he's met Palin and found her delightful. "Not in a big, grand dramatic way, but on a personal level," he said.

Eastern North Carolinians will see her as a common-sense person, he said.

"I think the people here will enjoy hearing a real person," he said. "This is an opportunity where we can have a big day in North Carolina."

Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama has had a strong presence in Greenville since before the Democratic primary. Obama spoke in Greenville in April. In recent weeks, his local volunteers have conducted neighborhood canvasses, held potluck dinners and hosted proxies, from politicians to TV personalities.

McCain's previous visit to North Carolina was in Charlotte, and his local campaign has been low-key.

Blount said Obama has spent a lot of time, energy and money in the state, generating a lot of recognition and conversation. Still, he said, he believes voters will opt for McCain, because of his legislative and military experience.

"I think, when all is said and done, McCain-Palin will carry North Carolina handily," Blount said.

Minges Coliseum holds about 8,000 people, Blount said. When President George W. Bush appeared there in 2001, the venue was filled, and large crowds were left outside. "We are going to have some access outside for overflow crowds," Blount said.

Blount said U.S. Secret Service is managing the event's security, so those in attendance should be prepared for a wait: crowds will be asked to pass through metal detectors and undergo searches of bags.

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ECU stages musical spoof of presidential politics

BY KELLEY KIRK-SWINDELL
The Daily Reflector

There’s another candidate on the ballot for the Presidential election and his name is John P. Wintergreen. But he’ll only be around through Tuesday.

Wintergreen is the main character in “Of Thee I Sing,” a musical spoof of presidential politics that is being staged by East Carolina University’s School of Theater and Dance.

“It’s a fun look at the silliness of politics and is particularly relevant this year,” said John Shearin, director of the George Gershwin musical.

Set in the 1930s, John P. Wintergreen has been nominated for president and Alexander Throttlebottom has been nominated for vice president. The problem is that he’s a relatively unknown candidate and without a platform.

He decides, with the help of a chambermaid, to run on the platform of love. Yes, love. The unattached presidential candidate then plans to hold a beauty pageant and marry the winner.

Wintergreen’s love campaign goes awry when he falls in love instead with the pageant’s organizer, Mary Turner.

Spurned beauty-pageant winner Diana DeVERaUX sues Wintergreen for not fulfilling his promise of marriage. To complicate things, Diana is related to Napoleon, inflaming relations with France. The French ambassador arrives on the heels Wintergreen’s grievous offense to Diana’s lineage.

“The French ambassador is one of the funniest characters,” Shearin said. The part is being played by ECU senior Wesley Curtis.

“Of Thee I Sing” has a large cast with 43 actors taking the stage throughout the production.

“Almost everybody is on stage close to 90 percent of the time, which is probably more than any other musical,” Shearin said.

One of the reasons “Of Thee I Sing” is so seldom staged is because of the large cast.

“This is not a show you can

IF YOU GO!

What: “Of Thee I Sing”

When: 8 p.m. today-Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday and 8 p.m. Monday-Tuesday

Where: East Carolina University’s McGinnis Theater

Cost: $12-$17.50

Call: 328-6829

Visit: www.ecu.edu
compromise and do with 20 people. To do the music justice you need the big ensemble," Shearin said. "It's almost like an operetta."

The challenge for Shearin as the director comes in being very organized with his rehearsals.

"I come to rehearsals really prepared and with goals. I don't want people wasting their time just standing around," he said.

Shearin added that because it is a big musical he believes it will have greater appeal.

One of Gershwin's earlier works, the Broadway production opened in 1931 and ran for 441 shows.

"It was extremely successful, especially since the country was in the depths of the Depression," Shearin said.

Following its Broadway success, "Of Thee I Sing" won the 1932 Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

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Obama's on the way, and Palin's right behind

FROM STAFF REPORTS

On Sunday, Barack Obama will hold a "Change We Need Rally" in Asheville at Asheville High School. It will be the third time in two weeks that Obama has been to North Carolina. He and vice presidential nominee Sen. Joe Biden were in Greensboro last Saturday, and Obama was in Charlotte on Sept. 21.

Sunday's event at Asheville High's Memorial Stadium is free and open to the public, and tickets are not required.

Obama will be in Asheville for a couple of days to practice for his next debate with Republican opponent John McCain. The debate is set for Tuesday in Nashville, Tenn.

PALIN'S COMING, TOO: Just before McCain and Obama square off for their Nashville debate Tuesday, Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin will make her first North Carolina campaign appearance at East Carolina University in Greenville.

Palin is to speak at Minges Coliseum. It will be the first visit to North Carolina by a member of the GOP ticket since last month's convention. And, other than a recent stop in Florida, it will be the Alaska governor's first campaign stop in the Southeast.

Doors at the coliseum open at 5 p.m.
UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor Holden Thorp started his new blog Monday with posts of insights and images from a visit on his current tour of North Carolina.

STAFF PHOTO BY HARRY LYNCH

UNC-CH chancellor starts a blog

FROM STAFF REPORTS

CHAPEL HILL — UNC-Chancellor Holden Thorp has launched a blog, holden.unc.edu and is using it to share insights and images from his tour of North Carolina.

Thorp began posting his impressions Monday from a visit to Tom Herndon’s authentic research class at Chapel Hill High School. A second post covers stops Tuesday at UNC-Asheville and Jenny Thomas’ Advanced Placement chemistry class at Asheville High School.

The blog invites reader comments via e-mail. Video posts are planned later.

“As I begin my tenure as Carolina’s chancellor, this blog will help me share thoughts, ideas and news about how the university is fulfilling its commitment to our students and to our state,” Thorp wrote on the blog.