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IN SPORTS

NEW LOOK

Hawks transform uniforms (but what about their game?)



IN STYLE

CHIC & USEFUL

Walk into South of Market and you'll discover an array of eclectic items.



IN METRO

HOT DOG!

Kids and adults alike compete at Zoo Atlanta in annual contest.



The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

SUNDAY

A HIDDEN SHAME: DANGER AND DEATH IN GEORGIA'S MENTAL HOSPITALS

'Home' alone

Psychiatric patients are vulnerable when state shunts them to inns, shelters, even the streets

By ALAN JUDD / ajudd@ajc.com and ANDY MILLER / jamiller@ajc.com

Sixth in an occasional series

Drendell Willis was burning alive. Delirious with fever, he staggered through the streets of Albany, Ga., on a hot spring day. He found a doctor's office, but collapsed outside.

INSIDE

Profiles of four psychiatric patients and how they fared. A15

At a nearby emergency room, a nurse recorded Willis' body temperature: 108 degrees, as high as the digital thermometer would register.

Minutes later, a doctor pronounced Willis dead. It was April 20, 2006.

Forty-eight hours earlier, Willis, 38, had checked out of a state psychiatric hospital, smiling and thanking doctors for getting his psychosis under control.

In five stays at Southwestern State Hospital in Thomasville, Willis had been nothing but trouble. He tried to hang another patient with a sheet. He toppled a piano. He exposed himself to patients and hospital workers.

He was so violent and so disruptive that doctors tried to transfer him to another state hospital for electroconvulsive therapy. That hospital refused to take him.

At one point, Willis' doctor prescribed an injection of an anti-psychotic medication "every time patient opens mouth."

Each hospital admission followed a pattern: Willis would act violently, doctors would subdue him with medications, and then, while he was still placid, they would discharge him.

Willis' death, too, followed a pattern, an investigation by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution shows.

► Please see WILLIS, A14

ON AJC.COM/HIDDENSHAME

Missed the other parts of this series? Read it online, view photos and an interactive map.



GREGORY SMITH / Associated Press

Manager Bobby Cox argues before getting ejected by Chad Fairchild as Braves lose 2-1. More Braves coverage in Sports, E1.

Cox gets bounced into tie for record

By DAVID O'BRIEN / dobrien@ajc.com

Getting kicked out of a joint has rarely been greeted by such glowing approval.

Braves manager Bobby Cox received a standing ovation at Turner Field after getting ejected from Saturday's 2-1 loss to Detroit, the record-tying 131st time of his career. He equaled the 74-year-old record by Hall of Fame manager John McGraw.

Cox was thrown out in the ninth inning by home-plate umpire Chad Fairchild after coming to the defense of hitter Brian McCann, who was ejected for arguing about a called third strike against him.

As the Braves' skid reached four games, a sell-out crowd of 49,074 wanted something to cheer about. They got it when Cox, who has two artificial knees, made his familiar creaky jog from the dugout.

He jumped between McCann and Fairchild. A few choice words and gestures later, Cox got the heave-ho. He walked off the field to a chorus of "Bob-ee, Bob-ee."

Cox was in no mood after the game to discuss the record, a subject he's never been comfortable discussing.

RACE RELATIONS: PIECING TOGETHER THE PAST, SHAPING THE FUTURE

A rose blooms from dry soil

An unlikely, close-knit bond develops between ancestors of slaves and the ancestors of their slave masters.

By JENNIFER BRETT / jbrett@ajc.com

Memphis — The retired professor rolls paper into his typewriter, ready to transcribe the past.

Old family letters from antebellum days mention women named Penny and Grace, raising a question in Jameson Jones' mind.

Who were they?

As Jones reads, the phone rings. The caller introduces herself as Katie Bennett, a retired marketing executive who is tracing her family tree. Her search has led back in time to the western Tennessee plantation owned by Jones' great-great grandfather. Two of Bennett's ancestors were slaves there.

Their names, she says, were Penny and Grace.

"Hold on a second," Jones says, and the first of many conversations begins.

At that moment, in early 1995, two people — one black, one white — began stitching together a shared history that had unraveled like ends of a fraying scarf.

► Please see HISTORY, A5

ABOVE: Katie Bennett, who has felt the bite of injustice throughout her genealogical journey, says the wrongs of yesterday do not taint her view of tomorrow.

AT RIGHT: Dave Jones, one of Bennett's great uncles.



AT LEFT: Katie Bennett's ancestor Grace Jones was a house servant at this North Carolina home in the early 1800s.



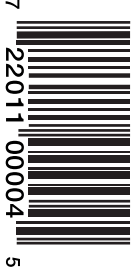
ABOVE: Bennett holds a photo of her mother, Cora Cheshier Brown. The photo dates to 1926.

Photos by ANDY SHARP (top left, bottom right); other photos courtesy of Katie Bennett

The heart of politics

It's emotion, not reason, that plays the key role in how people pick their leaders, a new book says. @issue, B1

EXPANDED INDEX, A2



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'A sad closure' after fall from grace

Ex-Atlanta official, broken by prison, dies homeless

By BILL TORPY / btorpy@ajc.com

The homeless man's head rested on his backpack, his yellow prescription glasses still on his face.

To the railroad detective, who spotted the rag-tag man loitering in the tree-shaded lot by the tracks the day before, it looked like he was taking a nap.

But the man wasn't sleeping. He was dead, covered in ants. Investigators found pennies

and denture adhesive in the pockets, insulin and syringes in his backpack and a MARTA card and a Six Flags Over Georgia contract employee ID in his wallet.

Fulton County Medical Examiner's case 07-0989 appeared to be open and shut: Life expectancy is not good for 63-year-old alcoholic diabetics on the street.

But the life and death of the former Atlanta city official, who worked for Mayor Andrew Young in the 1980s and was known by two other future mayors, was anything but simple.

► Please see HOMELESS, A10

