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Magistrate Court Clerk's office recognized for excellent customer service

by Kinsey Hansel,
Communications Intern

With more than 450 cases filed each day, the Magistrate Court clerk's office handles its share of paperwork and angry, irritated patrons. All day long, they deal with subpoenas, civil suits, garnished wages, bad checks, etc. It is fair to say that most people who come to the clerk's office would rather be somewhere else, anywhere else.

"People who come here want their legal matters resolved, and of course we can't give legal advice, but our staff does a wonderful job of guiding people through the process of what they need to do," said Vickie Fowler. Fowler has been with the Magistrate Court 15 years and now oversees the staff. "We have a wonderful staff that goes above and beyond the call of duty."

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution recognized the friendly staff of the Magistrate Court clerk's office in May for their "Service with a Smile." The article was written after the AJC asked Gwinnett readers to send in shining examples of customer service. The newspaper profiled four businesses, including the clerk's office, as shining examples of excellent customer service.



The Magistrate Court Clerk's office staff stands at the ready to assist citizens and provide high quality customer service. They are (first row) Joyce Chisholm, Sherrie Robertson, James Roose, Gary Smith, (second row) Lisa Hopkins, Vickie Fowler, Jennifer West, Amanda Street, Kathy Henderson, (third row) Vickie Koch, Martha Strickland, Donna Clark, (fourth row) Carol Smith, and Jael Hardy.

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One of Gwinnett County's oldest parks is getting a facelift courtesy of the 2001 special purpose local option sales tax, or SPLOST. The expansion and renovation of Shorty Howell Park in Duluth began last month.

Renovations to the park include a new lighted football field with bleachers, concession building, and press box. Reconstruction of the seven lighted baseball/softball fields will include a concession building and five lighted batting cages. Two new playgrounds and a pavilion will

be a big draw for families. A scenic 1.25-mile paved multi-purpose trail will trace the perimeter of the park, along with a one-mile mulch trail.

A new 8,200 square-foot activity building will house a large community room with a catering kitchen, and a classroom to be used for recreation classes, club meetings, and private rental functions. The activity building will also include offices for park police. The entrance to the park on Pleasant Hill Road will

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New transit director looks forward to future in Gwinnett County

by Kinsey Hansel, Communications Intern

A sociology and religious studies major, Gwinnett's new transit director **Tim Collins** said a newspaper ad was his ticket into the world of transportation. "I needed a job and there was an ad in the paper for a transit station supervisor, so I applied," said Collins. The rest, as they say, is history.



Collins now brings his more than 20 years of administrative and managerial experience to Gwinnett County's Department of Transportation. He has served as the transportation services manager at Duke University and vice president/contract manager for ATE Management and Service, Inc., in Cincinnati, where he received the ATE President's Award for management excellence.

Tim left his position as the transit director in Green Bay, Wisconsin, to serve Gwinnett County's transit system. His first priority is to learn about the area and how things are done. "Right now I am becoming familiar with the system, contractors, and employees," he said. As Gwinnett transit director, he will work towards the future to make visions of the County leadership a reality.

Tim moved to Gwinnett in May, and loves the metro Atlanta area because "it has a lot to offer – good restaurants, entertainment, and the people are really nice. I am delighted to be here and look forward to doing the best I can for Gwinnett County."

Shorty Howell renovations

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will be renovated to provide more parking. Visitors can access the park via Hill Street during construction.

"We are very excited and look forward to seeing the new improvements to Shorty Howell Park," said **Phil Hoskins**, director of the Department of Community Services. "This park has been here for a long time and the redevelopment is needed for this growing area."

The renovation will be completed in phases to accommodate local youth athletic programs, but the entire park will be closed during the winter months due to construction.

The park has been part of the county park system since 1977, and is named for Shorty Howell, a long-time community volunteer and former Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation employee.



Program offers first-time offenders a second chance

by Kinsey Hansel, Communications Intern

The Youth Diversion Program offers juvenile offenders a second chance in Gwinnett County. First-time offenders are brought before a panel of community volunteers who decide what action should be taken.

The program offers help to those who commit minor offenses: curfew violation, shoplifting, possession of alcohol, truancy, etc. Juveniles who admit guilt have the opportunity to voluntarily complete the program. Doing so keeps them out of the formal juvenile justice system, keeps the issue confidential, and keeps the issue at a community level.

"We all did things we shouldn't have when we were young. This gives them a chance to realize they have messed up and learn from their mistakes," said Program Officer **Margaret Hogsed**. She said approximately 300 youth participated in the program last year and that rarely do participants end up back in trouble. There has not been an official study, but Hogsed said she would guess about a 90 percent success rate.

Sitting on a panel allows volunteers to become more aware of the problems the youth in their area are facing, while the youth realize that members of their community are concerned with their behavior. Offenders are held accountable and their families are able to minimize legal expenses by avoiding juvenile court.

Local nonprofit honors Gwinnett Human Service Centers

by Kinsey Hansel, Communications Intern

Gwinnett County's two human services centers recently received recognition for their support of the Partnership for Community Action in Lilburn, a nonprofit organization that relies on the help and resources of other local groups. **Harriet Wharton** and **Vivian Gaiter**, directors of the Buford and Norcross Human Services Centers, respectively, were awarded plaques of appreciation at the PCA open house in June.

The PCA is state-funded, but Wharton said the Buford center supplies meeting rooms and facilitates the interviews between the PCA and applicants. "The human service center in Buford has been working with the PCA for several years. They use our copy machine and meeting rooms, things like that," she said.

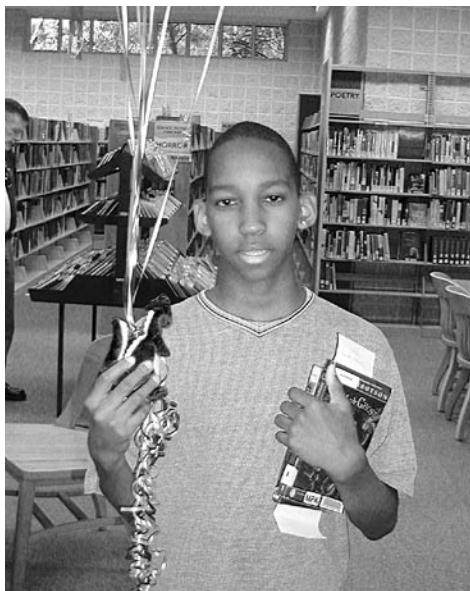
The PCA assists families with rent payments and supplies heating and cooling during the winter and summer months. About 1,400 Gwinnett County families receive help each year and can continue to receive assistance until they are able to support themselves. For more information on the Partnership for Community Action, call 770.564.1702.



Gwinnett County Public Library makes history with six-millionth customer

by Kinsey Hansel, Communications Intern

At 5:10pm on Wednesday, June 25, 2003, the Gwinnett County Public Library made history in Georgia. The GCPL checked out its six-millionth book for the 2002-03 fiscal year, making it the busiest library in the state. The library's fiscal year runs from July to June.



Lucky 11-year-old Trevor Slade wins prizes for checking out the six-millionth item for the Gwinnett County Library's fiscal year at the Lawrenceville Branch. The library named a winner at each branch across the county.

The library celebrated the milestone at the 11 branches around the county. GCPL averages 23,000 books per day, 31 per minute, and two per second. There was no way to determine an exact six-millionth check out, so one was selected at each branch.

Eleven-year-old **Trevor Slade** was the winner at the Lawrenceville branch. Library staff presented him with balloons, a miniature replica of Dewey the Dinosaur, a bookbag, and a T-shirt. "And you wanted to go to Books-

a-Million," said his older brother **Robert Slade**.

Trevor was at the library with his mother, brother, and two younger twin sisters. He was checking out books for his school's summer reading program, "Dial-a-ghost" and "The Yellow Feather Mystery."

The Gwinnett County Public Library has nearly doubled its number of checkouts since 1993. The staff hoped to finish out this year with 6.1 million.

Check it out!

Woof! Meow! Tweet! If these sounds are music to your ears, you'll love browsing the library's pet collection. Below are just a few titles for animal lovers.

A Practical Guide to Impractical Pets, by Barbara Burn

Choosing a Dog: An Owner's Guide to a Happy, Healthy Pet, by Kim Campbell Thornton

Adoptable Dog: Teaching Your Adopted Pet to Obey, Trust and Love You, by John Ross

Tails from the Bark Side, by Brian Kilcommons

Hiss and Tell: True Stories from the Files of a Cat Shrink, by Pam Johnson-Bennett

The Tribe of the Tiger: Cats and Their Culture, by Elizabeth Marshall Thomas

Complete Care for Your Aging Cat, by Amy Shojai

Bird Brains: The Intelligence of Crows, Ravens, Magpies and Jays, by Candace Sherk Savage

Birds, Birds, Birds: Why Birdwatchers Watch, videorecording

List provided by Gwinnett County Public Library. Call or visit our branches for additional selection assistance, or check our Web site at www.gwinnettpl.org.

Pet Corner

This cute pit bull pup found a new home in January 2003. He is deaf, but extremely friendly, says his adoptive family.

There are other wonderful pets who also need a loving home. If you would like to see photos of cats and dogs currently up for adoption, log onto www.co.gwinnett.ga.us. You can also visit the shelter at Hi-Hope Road and Ga. 316 in Lawrenceville or call 770.339.3200.



Pet Corner



WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND GWINNETT

Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation presents **Moonlight and Music** at the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse. Co-sponsored by the Associated Credit Union, this concert series continues at 8:00pm on Friday, August 22 with **On the Air** performing big band, jazz, and swing. Lawn seats are free. For more information, call 770.822.5450.

The Lanier Museum of Natural History hosts its annual **summer series on wildlife** with educational animal demonstrations at Rhodes Jordan Park on August 1 and 8, the Lanier Museum on August 5 and 6, and Pinckneyville Community Center on August 7. Children must be supervised by an adult. Fee is \$3 per person. Call 770.932.4460.

Team registration for **Adult Flag Football** and **Adult Fall Soccer** is on August 6 at 7:00pm at Rhodes Jordan Park Community Center. **Football details:** \$385 fee per team; Men's Open and Coed divisions; season begins September 7; games will be played at Rhodes Jordan Park. Call 770.822.5149. **Soccer details:**

\$550 fee per team; Coed, Men's Open, and Women's Open divisions; season begins September 6; games will be played at Rabbit Hill Park. Call 770.822.5485.

The USTA-sanctioned **Hudlow Junior Summer Championships** will be held August 7 – 10 at Best Friend Park's Hudlow Tennis Center. Ages 10-18, boys and girls, singles. Call 770.417.2210.

Enjoy a **Brown Bag Concert** performance by Wendy Bennett (wide range of voice and music styles) on August 8 at noon. Bring your blanket and lunch to the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse lawn. Call 770.822.5450.

Your family may be the first to complete a puzzle (and win a prize) at the **Pickneyville Community Center Pizza and Puzzles Event** on August 8. Pizza and puzzles will be provided. Must pre-register, call 770.417.2200.

Ride the waves on a **whitewater-rafting** trip to the Nantahala Outdoor Center in Bryson

City, North Carolina on August 9. Cost is \$60 per person per trip. Group departs at 7:00am from the Lanier Museum of Natural History. Space is limited. Call 770.932.4460.

Enjoy a **night of family fun** with swimming, bingo, puzzles, and a hot dog dinner at Bogan Park Community Center on August 15. Cost is \$15 for a family of four, \$3 for each additional person, and \$5 for individuals. Children must be accompanied by an adult over 18. Must pre-register, call 770.614.2060.

Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation is offering hundreds of **recreation classes for adults and children** this fall. A registration form and class listings can be found in the fall issue of Gwinnett L.I.F.E. (Leisure is for Everyone). The guide is mailed to every Gwinnett household and also available at all Gwinnett County parks, libraries, and high schools. Call 770.822.8840 or visit the web at www.co.gwinnett.ga.us.

Help the Pinckneyville Community Center celebrate its one-year anniversary at the **Pinckneyville EXPO** on September 6 from 10:00am to 3:00pm. There will be acting, pottery, karate, Latin dance, fencing, and chess demonstrations, and more. Kids will enjoy an art contest (ages four to 18, prize winners announced at 2:00pm), make and take activities, outdoor games, and more. Free admission. Call 770.417.2200.

Stay cool and have fun this summer at Gwinnett pools

Attention swimmers of all ages: Gwinnett County's aquatic centers are open for relaxation, fun, and exercise throughout the summer. In addition to five outdoor pools, there are two indoor aquatic facilities in case you need a break from the sun. The centers will remain open seven days a week until Labor Day. Hours of operations for all aquatic centers through Labor Day are:

Best Friend Park Pool

Norcross, 770.417.2202

M, W–Su	1:00pm – 6:00pm	
Tu	1:00pm – 5:00pm	
	7:10pm – 8:30pm	FN

Bogan Park Aquatic Center

Buford, 770.614.2063

Indoor Lap Pool

M, W	7:00am – 8:50am	
	1:00pm – 6:00pm	
Tu, Th	1:00pm – 5:00pm	
	7:10pm – 8:30pm	FN

Indoor Leisure Pool

M, W, Sa, Su	1:00pm – 6:00pm	
Tu, Th	1:00pm – 5:00pm	
	7:10pm – 8:30pm	FN

Collins Hill Aquatic Center

Lawrenceville, 770.237.5647

Indoor Lap Pool

M, W	11:00am–12:30pm	LSO
	1:00pm – 6:00pm	OS
Tu, Th	6:00am – 8:30am	LSO
	11:00am – 12:30pm	LSO
	7:10pm – 8:30pm	LSO
	1:00pm – 5:00pm	OS
F–Su	1:00pm – 6:00pm	

(Lap swimming is available during all open hours)

Collins Hill Aquatic Center, (cont'd) Outdoor Leisure Pool

M, W, F–Su	1:00pm – 6:00pm	
Tu, Th	1:00pm – 5:00pm	
	7:10pm – 8:30pm	FN

Dacula Park Pool

Dacula, 770.822.5410

M, W–Sa	1:00pm – 6:00pm	
Tu	1:00pm – 5:00pm	
	7:10pm – 8:30pm	FN

Mountain Park Pool

Lilburn, 770.564.4650

M, W, Th	1:00pm – 6:00pm	
	(lap swimming 4:00pm – 6:00pm)	
Tu	1:00pm – 5:00pm	
	7:10pm – 8:30pm	FN

Rhodes Jordan Park Aquatic Center

Lawrenceville, 770.822.5143

M, W	11:00am – 5:00pm	
	7:10pm – 8:30pm	FN
Tu, Th – Sa	11:00am – 6:00pm	
Su	1:00pm – 6:00pm	

FN designates Family Night
LSO designates Lap Swim Only
OS designates Open Swim

countyline

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