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❖ today's focus

What if your lifetime was spent chained to a tree?

By Leigh Ann Dickey
Executive director and founder
Chihuahua Rescue of Georgia
Special to GwinnettForum

BUFORD, Ga., July 11, 2008 -- I used to own a nail salon in the downtown section of Buford. After moving in, I noticed a house next door with a black mixed breed dog tethered to a tree in the back yard. The dog's filthy existence was visible from my pedicure room window. Before long, I found myself wondering more about the poor dog and how long she'd been there.

One day, I decided to ask the neighbors across the street about the dog. They told me she'd been chained to the same tree for over seven years, where she had several litters of puppies. The puppies often wandered into the street and were killed. Finally, the neighbor paid to have the dog spayed.

Still, the dog was kept tethered to the tree. And there were many days I stood in the window of my pedicure room imagining life tethered to a tree: a life filled with despair and loneliness.

I was in awe of the dog's loyalty to the people who imprisoned her to the tree. As the owners threw her leftover scraps each night, she would bark, jump, and try to break free from her prison, but they ignored her desperate attempts.

During my three years at the salon, I called Gwinnett County animal control when the dog became tangled or matted. Each time, they asked if there was a dog house, with food and water. I always told them no which prompted an officer to show up. But each time the dog remained tethered to the tree.

Soon, I moved from the salon, but I never forgot about the old girl. One day last year, I called animal control and explained the situation in hopes that the new anti-chaining law could answer my prayers. A few months after my call, I visited the salon and noticed something different about the house next door. I was in disbelief when I saw a chain link fence around



Dickey and her rescued pet dog

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EXTRAVAGANZA. "Sparks in the Park," the City of Sugar Hill's annual

the backyard. My eyes welled up with tears immediately as I realized my phone call was perhaps the reason for the fence.

I was both happy and sad for the dog as I blotted my tears. Sad, because the dog that had lived her whole life tethered to a tree, was now scared to lose her best friend. She couldn't bring herself to leave her tree. I justified this by acknowledging she was now disabled with arthritis and simply could not move away from the tree as I saw her stand, wobble, and lay back down in the same spot.

So, for this old girl, life essentially remains the same. I am sure I will drive by again soon to see if she is still in the same spot by the tree or, perhaps better, she has moved on from this world finally to rest in peace.

❖ **elliott brack**

Reflections on TAD proposal on ballot, and MARTA question

By *Elliott Brack*
Editor and Publisher

JULY 11, 2008 -- How is it that voting in the Georgia primary always seems to sneak up on us? Yep, next Tuesday, July 15, is the Georgia General Primary.



Brack

It's time for you to make up your mind on which of the candidates for local offices you will support, and also, which primary of the two parties you will participate in. Somehow, time the November General Election rolls around, we are virtually tired of politics, and want to get it over with. But for the primary, it always seems to come quite sooner than we expected.

In this primary ballot, Gwinnett County will get a chance to make a move to keep it abreast of other counties (and cities) of Georgia. Gwinnett must decide if it will allow the extension of Tax Allocation Districts (TADS) to the county.

Already, 49 states allow this type of financial instrument. Not only that, but many cities, including Suwanee, Norcross, Lilburn, Duluth, Buford, Sugar Hill, Braselton, Dacula and Loganville, have approved Tax Allocation Districts within their borders. TADS are also allowed in such cities as Macon, Augusta, Gainesville, Savannah and Atlanta.

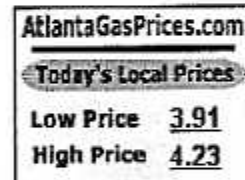
Nearby counties allow TAD Districts, including Fulton, Bibb, DeKalb and Clayton. Clayton? That county that has almost seemed backward in recent months? Yes, Clayton allows TAD Districts.

Here's why: Tax Allocation Districts make sense. They allow private investments to clean up either run-down and blighted, or under-developed, real estate. But note that it is not funds generated by tax

fireworks extravaganza, saw over 7,000 people cram into E. E. Robinson Park for the performance. The fireworks display wowed the crowd with a half hour of color and shapes; leaving everyone breathless. Entertainment came before the fireworks. In an effort to make next city sponsored event even more successful, Sugar Hill is currently expanding E. E. Robinson Park with additional parking, a tournament size baseball field and access from Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. Work should be complete by spring of 2009.



FOR CHARITY. You can give "A Gift of Laughter," a new book of cartoons by Bill McLemore, to help raise money for Rainbow Village. At just \$20, it's a fun way to help. **To order**, call 770 840 1003, or 770 446 3800, or email to info@gwinnettforum.com.



Click above image to find lowest gas prices in Atlanta

❖ **thought for the day**

"To see what is in front of one's nose needs a constant struggle."

— English Novelist George Orwell (1903-1950), via Roy McCreary, Dacula

❖ **elliott brack's commentary**

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dollars. The money for these improvements comes from private investors, who realize the potential of a property, and put in their monies.

When a local government approves such a TAD district, it means that revenue bonds can finance the property at a lower-than-normal rate, making improvements in the community, and also generating higher property values as the rundown property is enhanced.

But the good part: Once a TAD area is improved, the increased valuation it provides can enhance the community and its tax rolls for years. The overall market is enhanced, and more tax monies come off the improved project than the county would get if the area remained blighted.

That's why we urge you to vote for county approval of tax allocation districts in the Tuesday balloting. But, as one letter notes to GwinnettForum today, the wording is so convoluted that you may not realize that you are voting on this subject. We urge you to approve the measure that reads:

"Shall the Act be approved which authorizes Gwinnett County to exercise redevelopment powers under the 'Redevelopment Powers Law,' as it may be amended from time to time, for the purpose of improving economic and social conditions in depressed areas within the county?"

You will be voting for a better future for Gwinnett with this measure's approval.

* * * * *

No matter which primary you vote in Tuesday, there will be a poorly-worded MARTA straw poll on the ballot. With the high cost of fuel, it makes sense to vote to OK this measure.

We will admit distaste for one aspect: both MARTA proposals on both primary ballots are poorly worded, and are virtually meaningless. After all, these are not binding questions about MARTA.

However, they can test the sentiment of the people. By now enough of us may be fed up by either (1) congested traffic, or (2) high fuel costs, to make it more reasonable to be in favor of the MARTA question in Gwinnett. We hope so. But even if such questions were overwhelmingly approved on both party ballots, seeing MARTA in Gwinnett might not be a reality until the time our grandchildren are grown.



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The public spiritedness of our sponsors allows us to bring GwinnettForum.com to you at no cost to readers.



Today we welcome a new underwriter, making the GwinnettForum possible. The **Gwinnett Place**

Community Improvement District (CID) is a self-taxing district organized in March 2005 comprised of 238 commercial properties. The CID's mission is to "enhance the economic vitality of Gwinnett's central business district by strengthening the area's role as the center of commercial activity." In addition to comprehensive planning efforts to address traffic congestion, an area-wide marketing initiative, daily community patrols keeping the area free from graffiti and litter, landscaping enhancements, infrastructure improvements and promoting redevelopment opportunities, the CID Board of Directors remains committed to increasing the long-term economic sustainability of greater Gwinnett Place. The Gwinnett Place CID...Keeping Gwinnett Place the Place to be. To learn more about the Gwinnett Place CID, please visit www.GwinnettPlaceCID.com.

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<http://www.gwinnettforum.com/about/sponsors.htm>



❖ feedback

Disset with wording on proposals on primary voting ballots

Editor, the Forum:

Say what? Would some knowledgeable reader of the Forum be able to translate and put into usable context the meaning behind the special election ballot question found on the county website? It'll appear on your ballot, saying:

"Shall the Act be approved which authorizes Gwinnett County to exercise redevelopment powers under the 'Redevelopment Powers Law,' as it may be amended from time to time, for the purpose of improving economic and social conditions in depressed areas within the county?"

Based on the Gwinnett County election site offered by Roger Hagen in the July 7 Forum, I found this "Special Election Ballot" with a single question on it. The above text is from the Gwinnett Election site.

Politicians make some interesting "rules" as they play their games. Here is what appears to be: an option for the citizens of Gwinnett to allow the county government the option to do anything so long as they think it will help a depressed area within the county.

So who will be held accountable in the future to decide what is defined as depressed? Where is the "meat" of this question? What will we be getting