



## Last call for sopranos

IN LIVING

## BellSouth Classic warms up to May

IN SPORTS

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50 CENTS

### 1906 ATLANTA RACE RIOT REMEMBERED

## City's bloody stain seen with new eyes

By JIM AUCHMUTEY  
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On a humid Saturday night in 1906, an Atlanta newsboy named Mendel Romm went downtown to pick up papers for delivery. He talked about what he saw for the rest of his life. "When he got to Five Points, they were having a race riot," says his son, 77-year-old Mendel Romm Jr. of Buckhead. "They were pulling people off the streets and lynching them right there. My father was so scared he ran all the way home."

The 1906 Atlanta Race Riot is the closest thing to a race war that has ever happened in this city.

For four days that September, white mobs attacked black people in a fit of hysteria over exaggerated and erroneous reports of sex crimes against white women. Then blacks started fighting back. When the dust settled, at least two dozen people were dead, and Atlanta's reputation as a paragon of New South moderation had taken a beating in the eyes of the world.

Now a group of Atlantans wants to commemorate the riot — and try to learn from it — on the occasion of its centennial. The Coalition to Remember the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot first

► Please see RIOT, A13



Kanan Research Center of the Atlanta History Center

**SUNDAY, SEPT. 23, 1906:** On the morning after a white mob went on a rampage against blacks, Peachtree Street was under the control of the state militia. But the unrest simply spread elsewhere in the city, and it went on at some level for days.

► READ THE HAUNTING DETAILS ABOUT THE RIOT IN LIVING, CL PLUS, SEE A PHOTO GALLERY ON AJC.COM



Winter  
blowback  
43°/31°  
F10

#### SCORES

Knicks	105
Hawks	94
Thrashers	2
Blues	0

#### INSIDE TODAY

**Kwan may win Olympic spot by sitting still**

Injured figure skater Michelle Kwan will miss the U.S. championships, but wants to go on to the Olympics anyway. Would that be fair? Would it be smart? Different questions. **SPORTS, D1**

#### KING HOLIDAY

**Barry accused of disrespect**  
Postponement of D.C. King parade leads to anger at councilman. **A10**

**Celebrations and reflections**  
An old photograph, new protests and lots of things to do. **Metro, E1, E6**

**King's last years full of struggle**  
He was tempted to quit, author says. **Faith & Values, B1**



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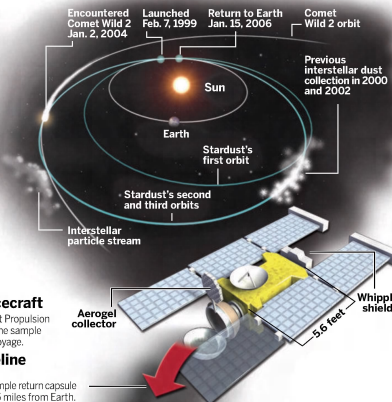
# COMET TALE

After circling the sun three times since 1999 and collecting dust from a comet, the Stardust mission is expected to end early Sunday. A small capsule with samples that might yield clues to the origin of the universe will be retrieved for study.

**Stardust spacecraft**  
Managed by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, it carried the sample return capsule on its voyage.

#### Re-entry timeline

- 12:57 a.m.:** Sample return capsule released 68,805 miles from Earth.
- 4:57 a.m.:** Capsule enters atmosphere at 28,600 mph and 551 miles from target. One minute later, the surface temperature of the capsule will reach 5,000 degrees Fahrenheit because of atmospheric friction.
- 4:59 a.m.:** At 20 miles, a drogue chute deploys nearly over target. One minute later, the main chute deploys and a locator beacon starts transmitting.
- 5:12 a.m. — touchdown**  
When it reaches the ground, the capsule will be traveling at about 10 mph. It will then be taken to Michael Army Air Field in Dugway, Utah. Later it will be sent to NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston.



## NASA awaits speck of dust from deep space

By MIKE TONER  
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NASA's Stardust spacecraft, heading home after seven years in space, will make its final, fiery plunge through the Earth's atmosphere Sunday morning, carrying a milligram or so of cosmic buckshot.

To waiting scientists, Stardust's scanty cargo is more precious than gold. It's real stellar dust and the tenuous traces of a comet's tail.

Capping a 2.9-billion-mile journey through space, the cone-shaped re-entry capsule will streak like a meteor through the predawn sky over the Western United States. It is expected to parachute to a soft landing in the Utah desert just after 5 a.m. EST.

NASA teams will be standing by with helicopters and all-terrain vehicles to collect the still-warm capsule and rush it to a "clean room" to make sure that the extraterrestrial matter it carries — collected in deep space at a cost of \$168 million — is unscathed by earthly contamination.

"Laboratories all over the world are going to be studying this material for many years to come," says Stardust's lead scientist, Don Brownlee of the University of Washington. "Stardust

► Please see STARDUST, A10

Sources: NASA, Associated Press  
CHARLES W. JONES / Staff

# Ga. 400 speed to brake down

## Construction means lower limits

By MARCIA LANGHENRY  
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Could it be any slower?

The state will lower the speed limit Monday on Ga. 400 as far north as Exit 12 in Forsyth County as a safety measure for almost two years while new lanes are being constructed.

But so what, commuters ask. Those few times of day when traffic isn't snarled well below the legal limit, many drivers blow well beyond it.

"During rush hour, you're lucky if you're going 30. On the other hand, if it's not rush hour, I don't know anybody who obeys the speed limits," said Mark Guzzi, 40, an attorney with the Department of Corrections who describes his Alpharetta-to-Atlanta commute as if it were a six-year prison sentence.

Still, Georgia DOT hopes the drop from 65 to 55 mph will persuade some drivers to slow down when they have a choice.

► Please see GA. 400, A14

## Progress a mystery in DeKalb chief's revival of Atlanta child murder cases

By JEFFRY SCOTT  
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The string of 29 deaths of children and young men terrorized the city a quarter of a century ago and became known around the world as the Atlanta child murders.

Last May, DeKalb County Police Chief Louis Graham revived the memory of one of the darkest periods in the city's history by announcing he was reopening the investigation of five deaths that occurred in his county.

Graham, one of the original investigators in the case, said he never believed Wayne Williams — the man convicted of two of the killings and blamed for 22 others — was guilty of any of them.

Seven months later, there's no indication investigators have found any new witnesses, uncovered any new leads or even asked for old files in the 25-year-old murders.

There is mostly — silence. On May 11, when Graham announced he was reopening five of the 29 cases, he did so with great fanfare, calling a news conference with family members of some of the murder victims.

Since then, Graham has said little about the investigation. Sgt. Dave Fonseca, whom Graham appointed to head the cold case squad overseeing the investigation, won't comment. Neither will Sgt. Charles Dedrick, DeKalb County's police spokesman.

The silence is disquieting to at least one family member. Catherine Leach, the mother of 13-year-old Curtis Walker, who was found dead in the South River on March 6, 1981,

► Please see MURDERED, A12

#### COMING SUNDAY



**Baby boomers hitting 60 mark**  
An idealistic generation reaches a milestone with no sign of slowing down.



**Bill Campbell trial to begin**  
Few lack an opinion on the former Atlanta mayor's guilt or innocence.



**'At Canaan's Edge' excerpts**  
Taylor Branch's book chronicles the final years of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.





**NATION IN BRIEF**

**A Colonial welcome for Va. governor**

As many as 40,000 people are expected in **Colonial Williamsburg** today to see Democrat Timothy Kaine, 47, sworn in as **Virginia's** 70th governor. For 227 years, Virginia's governors have taken the oath of office in **Richmond**, where the state Capitol was moved by Thomas Jefferson in 1780. During the Revolutionary War, but the Capitol building is being renovated, so state leaders decided to hold this year's festivities in Williamsburg, where re-enactors preserve the world of Colonial Virginia. Kaine will be the third governor to take the oath in Williamsburg, after Patrick Henry and Jefferson. To honor the moment, the ceremony will include such Colonial touches as 18th century cannon, horse-drawn carriages and a fire-and-drum corps.

**Storms, fires rage in three states**

Severe storms and apparent tornadoes killed a woman in **Conecuh County, Ala.**, when her chimney collapsed, then damaged at least 18 homes and the fire department in **Belleville, in Florida**, winds tore a section of roof off a school in **Baker**, injuring 13 children. A nearby post office and several mobile homes were damaged in the Panhandle town, the National Weather Service reported. In **Oklahoma**, grass fires driven by high winds destroyed at least 24 homes and forced hundreds of evacuations. The worst fire raged in southern Oklahoma near **Rathfron City**, where it burned through at least 20 homes overnight. At least four other homes burned to the west in **Stephens County**, the Oklahoma Forestry Department said.

**Porn assignment receives low marks**

A high school research assignment on Internet pornography was canceled after parents in **Brooklyn, Ohio**, complained. Superintendent Jeff Lampert said although the teacher's apparent intent was to discuss the harmful effects of pornography — was well-intentioned, he agreed with parents that the assignment was inappropriate for 14- and 15-year-old freshmen at Brooklyn High. The assignment asked students to research pornography on the Internet and list eight facts about pornography. Students also were asked to write their personal views of pornography and any experience they had with it.

**SWAT officers shoot boy with fake gun**

An eighth-grader was shot and wounded by a SWAT team officer in a **Longwood, Fla.**, school bathroom after he pulled out a pellet gun that resembled a real weapon and raised it at deputies. **Seminole County** Sheriff Don Eslinger said, The 15-year-old boy, who took the gun to **Milwee Middle School** in his backpack, was taken to hospital, where he was on "advanced life support." "He was suicidal," Eslinger said. Classes were canceled, and frantic parents arrived to pick up their children.

**Man, 75, set to die on Calif. death row**

**California's** oldest death-row inmate — a 75-year-old who is legally blind and nearly deaf — is asking the U.S. Supreme Court to do something it has never done before: block an execution because of the condemned man's advanced age and infirmity. Clarence Ray Allen's attorneys contend that executing a feeble old man amounts to cruel and unusual punishment banned by the U.S. Constitution. Allen, who will turn 76 on the eve of his execution, is set for injection Tuesday for ordering three slayings while behind bars for another murder. On Friday, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger denied Allen clemency. On death row more than 23 years, he would be the second-oldest person executed in the United States since the Supreme Court allowed capital punishment to resume in 1976. In **Mississippi** last month, John Nixon, 77, became the oldest inmate executed.

—From news services

**GOP fight stresses principles**

By JONATHAN WEISMAN  
Washington Post

**Washington** — Rep. John Shadegg (R-Ariz.) jumped into the House majority leader race Friday, hoping to force the two better-known candidates to embrace a stronger message of change and a legislative agenda that returns the GOP to its small-government roots. The House Republican picture was further scrambled Friday as Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) pressured Rep. Robert Ney (R-Ohio) to relinquish the chairmanship of the Administration Committee after the guilty plea by lobbyist Jack Abramoff that tied Ney to a far-reaching conspiracy to bribe public officials. "In the past decade, particularly recently, we seem to have lost sight of our ideals," the conservative Shadegg wrote his colleagues. "I believe

that in order to reconnect with the American people, and retain and grow our Republican Majority in the House, we need to reallocate to our principles." Those principles include a smaller federal government, a ceding of power to the states and lower taxes, Shadegg said. In an interview this week, Shadegg said he could not compete with the vote-winning operation of the front-runner, acting Majority Leader Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), or the other candidate, Rep. John Boehner (R-Ohio). But Shadegg said he believed a bloc of House Republicans is not convinced that Blunt or Boehner, who have ties to Abramoff, represents a bloc of House Republicans who have ties to Abramoff, represents a bloc of House Republicans who have ties to Abramoff, represents a bloc of House Republicans who have ties to Abramoff.

candidates will make presentations at a Baltimore retreat of conservative lawmakers before the Feb. 2 leadership election. Even if Shadegg loses, he may gain enough support to deny Blunt or Boehner outright victory in the first round of voting. In that case, Shadegg could extract policy promises for his endorsement, advisers to Blunt and Boehner said. The watchdog group Public Citizen took a swipe at Blunt on Friday, declaring him "unfit for leadership." In a 48-page report, it cited nearly \$429,000 in contributions Blunt received from lobbyists since 1999; \$485,485 that Blunt's campaign committees paid between 1990 and 2002 to the Alexander Strategy Group, which was linked to Abramoff and has gone out of business; and at least 140 subsidized flights on corporate jets that Blunt and Blunt-supported candidates

have taken since 2001. Blunt spokeswoman Burson Taylor dismissed the allegations as a reshuffle of old charges, saying House Republicans are not likely to take notice of a report written by an organization led by a partisan Democrat from the Carter administration, which will hear reform proposals, saying, "It's a big problem in him leading it." Though Hastert cannot remove Ney, he can recommend to the House Republican Conference that Ney be stripped of his chairmanship when Republicans meet for the leadership election. Ney's aides did not return phone calls or respond to e-mail Friday night. Hastert spokesman Ronald Bonjean said that "there have been ongoing discussions between Speaker Hastert and Representative Ney about his role as chairman of the House Administration Committee."



Rep. John Shadegg is challenging two powerful rivals tied to a lobbying scandal to be majority leader.

**Riot: Days of bloodshed shook city**

Continued from A1

met a year and a half ago in the fellowship hall of old Ebenezer Baptist, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s church. This weekend, as the nation celebrates the King holiday, the coalition is beginning a series of public events leading up to an exhibition at the King National Historic Site in May and a symposium at Georgia State University's Rialto Center for the Performing Arts in September.

**Window on race relations**

Organizers say they aren't trying to shame Atlanta; they just want to deal with a significant but largely forgotten chapter of its past. "Race relations are such an important part of this city," says Amy Ambrose, deputy director of the Atlanta History Center and co-curator of the exhibition. "It's important to explore all of that, positive and negative. Atlanta is more than what the slogans say."

From its initial meetings, the coalition has grown to include 150 participants from an array of local universities, cultural institutions, faith groups and governments. Some of the participants had never heard of the riot before they were invited to get involved. "That didn't surprise one of the group's leaders, Saudia Muwakkil, spokeswoman for the King site. "They never taught us about this in school," the Atlanta native says.

That should change next year, when Georgia's revised public school curriculum will require that the riot be taught in eighth-grade social studies.

**Memories handed down**

Not everyone has forgotten about the ugliness of 1906. In some old Atlanta families — especially African-American ones — riot stories have been handed down like hushed warnings.

At 77, June Dobbs Butts of Decatur is the youngest daughter of John Wesley Dobbs, one of Atlanta's most prominent black leaders before the civil rights era and the grandfather of its first black mayor, Maynard Jackson. Dobbs was a newlywed living on Auburn Avenue when the riot broke out. To protect his home from the mobs that were rampaging through the city, he set up for several nights, stationed behind his front door with a revolver in hand.

"My father always told us about the riot," says Butts, who will be part of the panel discussion at 1 p.m. today at Javaleology, a coffeehouse on Edgewood Avenue. "He called it 'the horror.' He was terribly angry about it. He never got over it."

**Rumors of crimes**

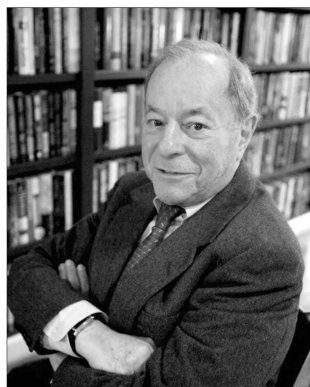
The riot erupted on the night of Sept. 22, 1906, after several weeks of sensational press reports about black-on-white crime. A crowd formed around Five Points and started attacking black people at random — barbers, streetcar riders, a Western Union messenger. The victims were shot, stabbed, bludgeoned. One was thrown to his death from the Forsyth Street bridge. Police and fire hoses were unable to stop the brutality.

It was a pitched battle that lasted four hours," says GSU historian Cliff Kuhn, who



June Dobbs Butts of Decatur, youngest daughter of the late John Wesley Dobbs, was told by her father how he armed himself and kept vigil at nights to protect his home from the 1906 rioters. Dobbs went on to become one of the leading black citizens of Atlanta.

**Mendel Romm Jr. of Buckhead recalls hearing his father, Mendel Sr., who was a newsboy in 1906, tell of the rampage he saw against blacks in downtown Atlanta that fateful Sept. 22. The boy ran home in terror.**

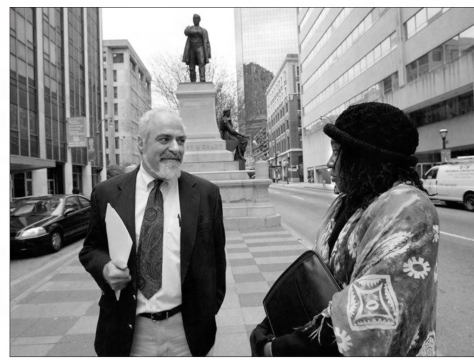


interviewed some of the last eyewitnesses and is leading a walking tour of riot sites at 1 p.m. Sunday in Woodruff Park.

Over the next three days, the disturbances spread to other parts of Atlanta, where black residents, who had smuggled guns into the city, started firing back.

**A panicked exodus**

In the aftermath, historians estimate, as many as 1,000 black Atlantans fled the city and never returned. White leaders convened a summit with black clergy and businessmen. But for the most part, the riot was swept under the rug. It was scarcely re-



History professors Cliff Kuhn of Georgia State University and Clarissa Myrick-Harris of Clark Atlanta University tour some of the sites of the 1906 riot. Many Atlantans have never heard of it.

membered half a century later when Atlanta billed itself as "the city too busy to hate." "The black community wanted to forget about the riot, too," says Clarissa Myrick-Harris, a historian at Clark Atlanta University and vice president of One World Archives. "They wanted to move forward."

**Memorial considered**

In a state teeming with Civil War markers, there's no state historical marker about the riot. Coalition members would like to see one commemorating the victims, but confirming their names — or even their number — has proved difficult. The coroner reported 12 deaths at the time, a figure historians regard as far too low. Three books about the riot published since 2001 place the toll between 25 and 50.

The coalition is not calling for a truth commission or a government inquiry like the one that recently presented its report on bloody 1898 race riot in Wilmington, N.C.

The group is patterning its observance on other communities that have used incidents of racial violence to kindle a dialogue on race — groups such as the Moore's Ford Memorial Committee in Walton County, which organized to commemorate a notorious quadruple lynching in 1946.

**No verdicts but history's**

Andrew Sheldon, an Atlanta jury consultant who helped win convictions in the 1963 Birmingham church bombing and the murder of civil rights leader Medgar Evers, knows his involvement in the coalition will not lead to similar prosecutions. He's interested in a broader sort of remedial justice this time.

"Every city that has had racial violence like this is still affected by it," Sheldon says. "You see it in the patterns of segregation, in the attitudes, in the fears people feel on both sides. Something like this riot slips out of memory, and people assume things have always been the way they are. But there are reasons."

