

"WHO ELSE KEEPS A PAINTING OF HIMSELF BEHIND HIS DESK AND REFERS TO HIMSELF IN THE THIRD PERSON? ALTHOUGH HE'S BEEN IN OFFICE SIX YEARS, VERNON JONES' LEGACY WILL BE FORGOTTEN IN 10 OR 15."

Mr. Big

Thank you for your enlightening story on DeKalb County CEO Vernon Jones ("Mr. Big," by Chandra Thomas, July). I've always suspected he was an ego-maniac, which the story confirmed. After all, who else keeps a painting of himself behind his desk and refers to himself in the third person? Although he's been in office six years, his legacy will be forgotten in 10 or 15. Soon, somewhere in DeKalb, an idiot will suggest renaming a street after him.

To sum it up, and play off the writer's analogy of Jones as a yin-yang symbol, if Vernon Jones were a stock symbol (VJ) and you bought VJ for what it was worth, and sold it for what its CEO thinks it's worth, you'd be a billionaire.

JERRY ERICKSON
Marietta

Fatlanta

I disagree with the July story about Atlanta's obesity problem ("Fatlanta," by Debra Hunter)—not with the fact that people here are fat, but the reasons

or excuses given by the writer and experts as to why. Regardless of the percentage listed as racial or economic disparities, there are many things anyone—including the poor—can do to improve health. You do not have to be rich to be thin. You do not need a gym to do exercise. Walking is free. You do not have to eat fried foods. You do not need to sit on your butt all day in front of the TV. *You choose to do this!* There are plenty of public service announcements on TV to help you with a diet. You also don't need broad-spectrum grocery stores to be thin.

I have lived in the South all my life and love Southern food. Now, as a senior citizen, I don't eat anything fried, and I walk every day. Eating out is no excuse either. Get a salad or eat half. We have a beautiful city and a wonderful climate in Georgia. Go out and walk and see it. Your mind and body will benefit.

Everyone needs to quit dreaming up reasons or excuses for why people are overweight. As long as we do, they will continue to be overweight.

CAROLE RUSHING
Conyers

Hotlanta

Just a brief note to mention how thoroughly I enjoyed Rebecca Burns' July editor's note about living without air-conditioning. I was reading on a Saturday morning, sitting in the hot, humid kitchen of our central New Jersey home, questioning whether to turn on the air conditioning, and I thought of my childhood in Montreal. At the time, most homes did not have air conditioning because of the longer winters and

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shorter summers we had. In the heat and humidity of the summer, you did what you could to keep cool.

However, as I read, we were planning our July move to our new home in South Forsyth. I am looking forward to hearing the hum of the two central air units (three if we finish our basement) on the side of our home. How times have changed.

RANDY K. JUE
Cumming

Service Men and Women

I wanted to thank you for your story about the Atlanta Airport USO (“Waiting,” by Bill Warhop, June). As an Atlanta-based nonprofit, we take great pride in our exemplary customer service to men and women in uniform and their families. Our ability to serve them is heavily dependent on donations from individuals. We take great pride in offering them a “home away from home,” if only for brief periods of time. Thank you for calling attention to us in our 65th continuous year of serving America’s sons and daughters.

MICHAEL A. WATSON
Chairman, USO Council of Georgia

No Blushing Here

Many thanks to Candice Dyer for her piece on me and my new book, *Secrets of the Zona Rose: How Writing (and Sisterhood) Can Change Women’s Lives*.

In her piece (“Sexy Secrets,” June), Dyer mentioned more than once that apparently nothing could make me blush. But, while I admit to being tough-skinned in these matters—a deliberate choice, after being brought up among Southern women who never told the truth about anything—there’s one thing that can still shock me: that a journalist these days might think there’s anything taboo, or even unusual, about a woman writing about sex!

Indeed, I invite Ms. Dyer to visit our Atlanta Zona Rosa workshop, which meets in Buckhead one Thursday

evening each month, where she will hear a dynamic group of strong women reading from their truths, whatever they might be.

ROSEMARY DANIELL
Savannah

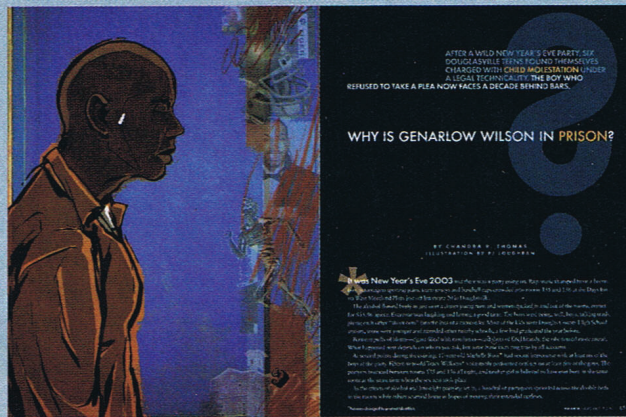
Animal Welfare

I just finished Bill Warhop’s June article on “The Rescuer,” Donna Levine. I’m shaking. It was a hard-to-stomach but very well-written article spotlighting Fulton County’s only animal cruelty officer. What an amazing woman. We

are so lucky to have Ms. Levine standing up for animals. I just can’t believe Fulton County has only *one* person to police the whole county. Only one? Of course, the county treats the animal cruelty problem much like the way *Atlanta Magazine* treated Warhop’s article—buried somewhere between cosmetic surgery ads with nary a mention up front.

Thank you, Mr. Warhop, for trying to bring this woman’s gallant efforts to everyone’s attention.

MARYANN FABIAN
Duluth ✪



Follow Up

Since Chandra Thomas’ story about my son (“Why Is Genarlow Wilson in Prison?” January) appeared in your magazine and was picked up by Atlanta media and, subsequently, MSNBC and ABC’s *PrimeTime* and *Good Morning America*, I have heard from hundreds of people supporting my son. The good news is that the Georgia Legislature has changed the law so that other teens will not face this nightmare. However, my son Genarlow still sits in prison.

On July 1, when the new law goes into effect, the exact thing that Genarlow did—have consensual oral sex when he was 17 with a girl who was 15—will only be a misdemeanor and will no longer require registering as a sex offender. Even crazier, by July 1, Genarlow will have served over 14 months for a crime that could now carry no more than 12 months—and he has an entire 10-year sentence to serve to avoid the sex-offender registry requirement under the old law. The courts have turned down our appeals because of legal issues the first lawyer did not raise. Please let your readers know that your original question—“Why is Genarlow Wilson in Prison?”—still has no good answer for my son, despite the changes for other teens in the future. I ask for the continued help from your readers to end this mess.

JUANESSA BENNETT
MOTHER OF GENARLOW WILSON
Douglasville