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McEachern
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The last vote
 Election year ends as very last
 electoral votes are cast
Around Town 4A

IRAQ FAMILY HAILS
BUSH SHOE THROWER
AS HERO / PAGE 3A

Marietta Daily Journal

COBB'S LOCAL NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1866

MDJONLINE.com

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2008

50¢

LIGHTING UP THE NIGHT ...



CHRISTMAS STYLE

Staff/Thinh D. Nguyen

The Hague family of Marietta is serious about celebrating Christmas. About a week before Thanksgiving, Chuck and Ardeen Hague and their children pull out more than 250 boxes of lights and décor and begin decorating the inside and outside of their house, at 3057 Brownmoore Drive. Their five children, ages 3 to 12, help decorate, as do some neighborhood children. **Above:** Chuck Hague of Marietta stands with lighted holiday decorations that fill his yard.



Left: A lighted snowman smiles to passersby at the home of Chuck and Ardeen Hague of Marietta. **Right:** The Hague home shines with lights and decorations.



MARTA to cut \$11M for deficit

Fare hikes, service reductions possible

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Managers of Atlanta's public transit authority said Monday they could raise fares, add parking fees, reduce services and lay off workers if they are unable to avoid a "transportation meltdown" stemming from a \$60 million budget shortfall that is expected to swell in coming months.

The Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, known by its acronym MARTA, is grappling with falling revenues that were being predicted even before the U.S. economic downturn that is walloping transit authorities nationwide.

At its board meeting on Monday, the agency voted to approve budget cuts including nixing annual raises for managers, supervisors and general administrative employees and cutting back on discretionary spending — moves intended to save the agency \$11

million over the next fiscal year.

The agency estimates it will be down another \$30 million by the end of its fiscal year in July. Local sales taxes account for more than half of MARTA's operating budget.

Last month, leaders from 11 transit agencies, including MARTA, warned Congress that despite soaring ridership for rail and bus systems, they could face at least \$2 billion in payments in coming months if hundreds of long-term financing deals the agencies have with investors collapse amid the global credit crisis.

MARTA's ridership was up 5 percent in October from the same time last year, officials said.

MARTA's general manager, Beverly Scott, asked the board of directors on Monday to make cuts. In the upcoming legislative session, MARTA officials plan to ask state lawmakers to get rid of restrictions on how it can use its sales tax and investment earnings, and to allow eating and drinking at rail stations as a potential moneymaking opportunity.



The Associated Press

University of Texas graduate Kimberly Bratton poses at her Wrigleyville apartment in Chicago.

Graduate learns making it in big city not so easy

By Martha Irvine
 Associated Press Writer

CHICAGO — The girl from Texas didn't bring a warm coat with her. But to hear Kimberly Bratton tell it, winter in Chicago isn't as bad as people say.

Never mind that it's only December. She is an optimist, an adventurer — one who picked up and moved to a city where she knew no one, with no job, in the middle of a

recession.

"I always wanted to be that girl who moved away and saw what was out there ... the girl working in the big city," says Bratton, who graduated from the University of Texas this summer.

So far, it's meant taking office temp jobs and lining up babysitting gigs while she networks, sends applications and schedules the occasional

See **Jobs**, Page 3A

Obama refutes Blago contact

President-elect chooses education secretary and Interior Dept. secretary

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — President-elect Barack Obama said Monday a review by his own lawyer shows he had no direct contact with Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich about the appointment of a Senate replacement, and transition aides did nothing inappropriate.

Obama pledged to make the review public, but said he decided to hold off because prosecutors asked for a delay and "I don't want to interfere with an ongoing investigation." U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald released a statement confirming the request.

Controversy has swirled around the president-elect and his incoming White House chief of staff, Rep. Rahm Emanuel, following Blagojevich's



Barack Obama



Rahm Emanuel

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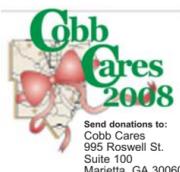
Charity reaches out to widow

Editor's note: The following is the story of someone who has been helped through Cobb Cares. Names have been changed to protect privacy.

Libby Martin was referred to Cobb Cares by the Cobb County Department of Family and Children Services for assistance with her past-due electric bill. Two months before Martin was referred, her husband, and father of her two children, died in a car accident. This not only put a huge emotional strain on her, but also a major financial strain.

Because she lost her husband's income and had to pay for all of the funeral expenses, Martin was unable to pay her electric bill, and the electricity was turned off. Her entire home is powered by electricity, so Martin had to send her children over to her mother's home so they could eat, take showers, and stay cool.

Cobb Cares assisted Martin with her past-due electric bill so she could have the electricity turned back on. With the assistance from Cobb Cares, she was able to bring her children home and is now able to focus on moving on with her life with her children.



Send donations to:
 Cobb Cares
 995 Roswell St.
 Suite 100
 Marietta, GA 30060

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OUTSIDE

Shows
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ROOM TO GROW

Home design basics give children something in every size **Lifestyle 1D**



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