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Rebecca Burns
From the Editor

July 2005

Written by: Rebecca Burns

When 60-something grandmother of six **Mickey Goodman** proposed a story on Atlanta's shameful secret—a reputation as a capital of child sexual exploitation—I paused for a moment. We usually assign such gritty work to young staffers or grizzled former newspapermen. Was this sweet former schoolteacher, whose first assignment for the magazine was a feature on her suburban supper club, the right person to send out on this story?

Never judge a book by its cover or a writer by her outward persona. In her article, "**You Ain't Been Down My Street**," (page 106), Mickey blends the compassionate perspective of a parent and grandparent and the unflinching determination of a seasoned reporter. One sentence in her introductory section removed any doubt that she was the person to tackle this subject. Describing the process of reporting the story, she writes: "I plodded ahead. And for the first time in my life, I felt murder in my heart." As journalists, we go to great lengths to produce reportage that is balanced and unbiased. But in such a horrible world as the one Mickey explored, there is a place for outrage. And she was the perfect person to express it.

You will feel outraged when you finish her story. Child sexual exploitation is alarmingly prevalent in Atlanta; during the first 10 weeks of a case-review study at the Fulton County Child Advocacy Center last year, 172 boys and girls aged 8 to 17 were identified as victims. Two-thirds of those kids were under the age of 12. Just one local judge—Sanford Jones—heard more than 400 cases of exploitation or abuse in 2004.

Also in this issue: Back by reader demand, our **Top Doctors** list directs you to Atlanta-area specialists; exploring the treasures of the **National Archives**; Chief Justice **Lead Ward Sears** on law and politics; and **Roy Blount Jr.**'s split personality.

Rebecca Burns
Editor in Chief

Next month in Atlanta Magazine:

The **best new restaurants**; DeKalb top cop Louis Graham on opening the **Wayne Williams** files; **Bob Barr**'s second act; Lee Walburn on the magic of the **Bean Creek** baseball field; and **Roy Blount Jr.** on fishing and literature.

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