

OUR★TOWN

EDITED BY JENNIFER SENATOR

Atlanta Barometer

What's Rising,
What's Falling

CHICKEN POT PIE

The ultimate comfort food for chilly days. Our favorite is at **What a Crock** in Decatur.



BED

The NYC/Miami hotspot (and *Sex and the City* hangout) opens this month at The Glenn Hotel downtown.

KWANZA HALL

Who knows if the new city council member will be any good; it's just so much fun to say his name!



THE SUGAR BOWL

We're sorry it's not in New Orleans as planned, but we're happy to play host.

ATLANTA'S NEW SLOGAN:

"Every day is an opening day." Um, huh? No wait... What izzit?

ICE STORMS

We can't decide what's worse: the traffic nightmares or rabid media frenzy.



STORM WATCH: JAMES BURNS

CITY OBSERVED

THE ART OF WAR

At the annual **BATTLE OF THE BANDS** marching bands engage in musical warfare.

By Chandra R. Thomas

DURING FOOTBALL SEASON at historically black colleges and universities, the game is only part of the fun. The halftime show is as much—some would even say more—of a draw as the gridiron contest. And don't think that competitive spirit is restricted to beefy ball players.

Each year, marching bands from across the country—and from local high schools including Westlake, North Atlanta, Mays, Douglass, Pebble Brook and North Clayton—converge on the Georgia Dome, ready to engage in the musical combat ritual known as the Honda Battle of the Bands. This year's conflict takes place January 28.

Heavyweights in this melee include Alabama State University's Marching Hornets, Bethune-Cookman College's

Marching Wildcats, Albany (Georgia) State University's Marching Rams and Atlanta's own Clark Atlanta University Mighty Marching Panthers, who, under the direction of former leader Cedric Young, snagged national titles, appearances in two McDonald's commercials, a fashion spread in *The New York Times Magazine* and a supporting role in the movie *Drumline*.

But photos and film don't capture the raw excitement of the live competition as performers strut onto the field, a vibrant sea of red, black and

white. All eyes are focused on the musicians, dancers and, of course, the drum majors, considered the "field generals" of the band. As drum beats echo through the Dome, excitement and nervousness hang in the air.

The stakes are high. The band that really gets the crowd moving and out of their seats earns bragging rights until next year's competition. The intense rivalries are clearly not limited to the field; at last year's event, a crowd gathered backstage as band members erupted into an impromptu "cymbal off." ★



SOUND BITE

"I WANTED TO ATTRACT THE YOUTH, NOT 60-YEAR-OLDS LIKE ME."

MAYOR SHIRLEY FRANKLIN, ON HER DECISION TO ASK DALLAS AUSTIN TO PRODUCE ATLANTA'S HOTLY DEBATED THEME SONG, "THE ATL."

