

# The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

MONDAY, DEC. 11, 2006

Copyright © 2006, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

ONLINE AT AJC.COM | 50¢

Fall back to warm weather  
60°/44°,  
B10

## INSIDE TODAY



### Dictator Pinochet dies at 91

Gen. Augusto Pinochet, the former dictator of Chile who was accused of human rights abuses during his 17 years in power, died Sunday after a heart attack last week. **A3**

### DeKalb youth dies after fall at game

Joshua Thomas, 14, banged his head on the floor in a basketball game and died after being taken to a medical facility. **Metro, B1**

### A liberal dose of funny for 'Prickly'

Comic strip "Prickly City" has poked fun at liberals. But while its creator recovers from surgery, guest cartoonists will add some twists starting today. Will leaning to the left be the right thing for laughs? **Living, C2**

### Sweet! The bombs and the bees

Like a bee to honey — or maybe it should be like a bee to explosives. Research shows the bug may be just as good at bomb-sniffing as dogs are. **A9**

### It's OK, Mel: We still like your films

Despite headlines over Mel Gibson's anti-Semitic remarks during a drunken-driving arrest, moviegoers still turned out to put his "Apocalypto" at No. 1. **Living, C7**

### Church has beef with hog in name

Hog Mountain Baptist Church is no more. Members voted Sunday to call it Hamilton Mill, reflecting the name that the area has taken. **Metro, B1**

## FEATURES

ABBY C2  
CLASSIFIEDS E1

## 'No Spanish on my dime'



Intown Atlanta bed and breakfast owner **Adele Northrup** hugs her housekeeper, a Mexican immigrant, after giving her a Spanish-English dictionary for Christmas. Northrup said everyone working for her should speak English.

Photos by ALLEN SULLIVAN / Special

## English-only sentiment spreads

**Assimilation obligation?** Some insist immigrants learn to speak the language quickly; experts say history shows they often take their time.

By **BRIAN FEAGANS**  
bfeagans@ajc.com

Adele Northrup doesn't let her Mexican-born cleaning lady speak Spanish on the job. The same goes for her landscaper, who is from Guatemala.

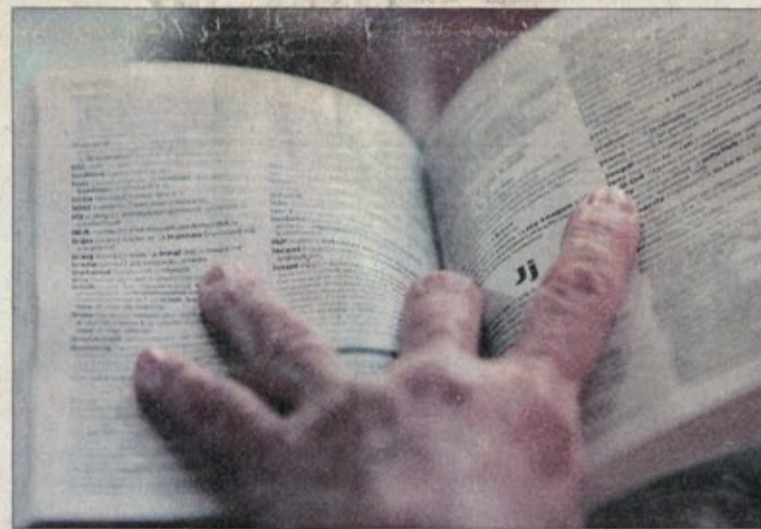
And Northrup's Christmas present to both of them this year is the same: a Spanish-English dictionary.

"I really resent feeling like a stranger in my own land," says Northrup, the owner of the Virginia Highland Bed & Breakfast in Atlanta. "No Spanish on my dime."

Northrup, 64, isn't the only Georgian feeling the need to protect English these days. The Cherokee County Commission passed an ordinance Tuesday declaring English the official language of the growing area 30 miles north of Atlanta. Two days later, state Rep. Timothy Bearden (R-Villa Rica) filed legislation that would prohibit any Georgia city or county from issuing any official forms or documents in a language other than English.

The English-only measures, part of a nationwide trend, go much deeper than language. They strike a nerve with both the people most upset about illegal immigration and those most fearful of the mounting backlash.

Critics say the rules are designed to scare off immigrants, particularly in communities unaccustomed to seeing so many newcomers from Latin America. But the English protections resonate with residents who believe Americans are increasingly forced to adjust to immigrants



Bed and breakfast owner Adele Northrup looks up the word "iron" in a Spanish-English dictionary she gave her housekeeper as a gift.

— not the other way around. English needs a boost, they say, in an era when using the language requires an extra step at ATM machines also offering Spanish.

Northrup, the granddaughter of Jewish immigrants from Russia, says the pressure her grandparents felt to join the melting pot has vaporized. "These days, they're not melting," she said. "Part of democracy is people mingling. If people are speaking Spanish, they're not mixing."

Charles Jaret, a Georgia State sociology professor, said fears that immigrants aren't assimilating date back to the country's founding fathers. Benjamin Franklin sounded the alarm over Germans in 1751. "Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a colony of aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as

► Please see **ENGLISH, A5**

### WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Tell us what you think about requiring immigrants to learn English at [ajc.com](http://ajc.com).



## Sewage spills plague DeKalb

Errors, old pipes cited as problems

By **STACY SHELTON**  
sshelton@ajc.com

DeKalb County has received one of the largest fines ever imposed by the state for spilling raw sewage more than 200 times into rivers and streams from clogged and broken pipes and equipment failures.

The worst was a 10 million-gallon spill directly into the South River last January.

The 18-page consent order that accompanied the \$265,875 fine found problems beyond an aging sewer system prone to overflows. Agreed to last month and signed by DeKalb CEO Vernon Jones, the order details human errors and repeated violations of state regulations. Among the violations: failure to properly report spills, clean up spill sites or fully report the severity of the spills.

The order describes a sewer system in which the people running it are as much a part of the problem as leaking pipes.

Bill Noell, a manager with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division's compliance unit, said investigators found enough rule violations to raise a red flag.

"There were just things we saw that makes you wonder how big a problem is that?" Noell said. "We're finding incidents. It doesn't mean it's rampant, but it caused concern."

Noell said the number of spills reported by DeKalb ballooned last year, making DeKalb second only to Atlanta in leaky sewer systems. He's not sure why.

The consent order, which is EPD's primary enforcement tool, covers the 13 months between February 2005 and March 2006. Since then, DeKalb's public sewer system continued to spill raw sewage — more than 180 additional times in amounts ranging from 10 gallons to 12,000 gallons.

Some of those overflows sprang

► Please see **SEWAGE, A6**

## Web surfers make waves in TV land

By **RODNEY HO**  
rho@ajc.com