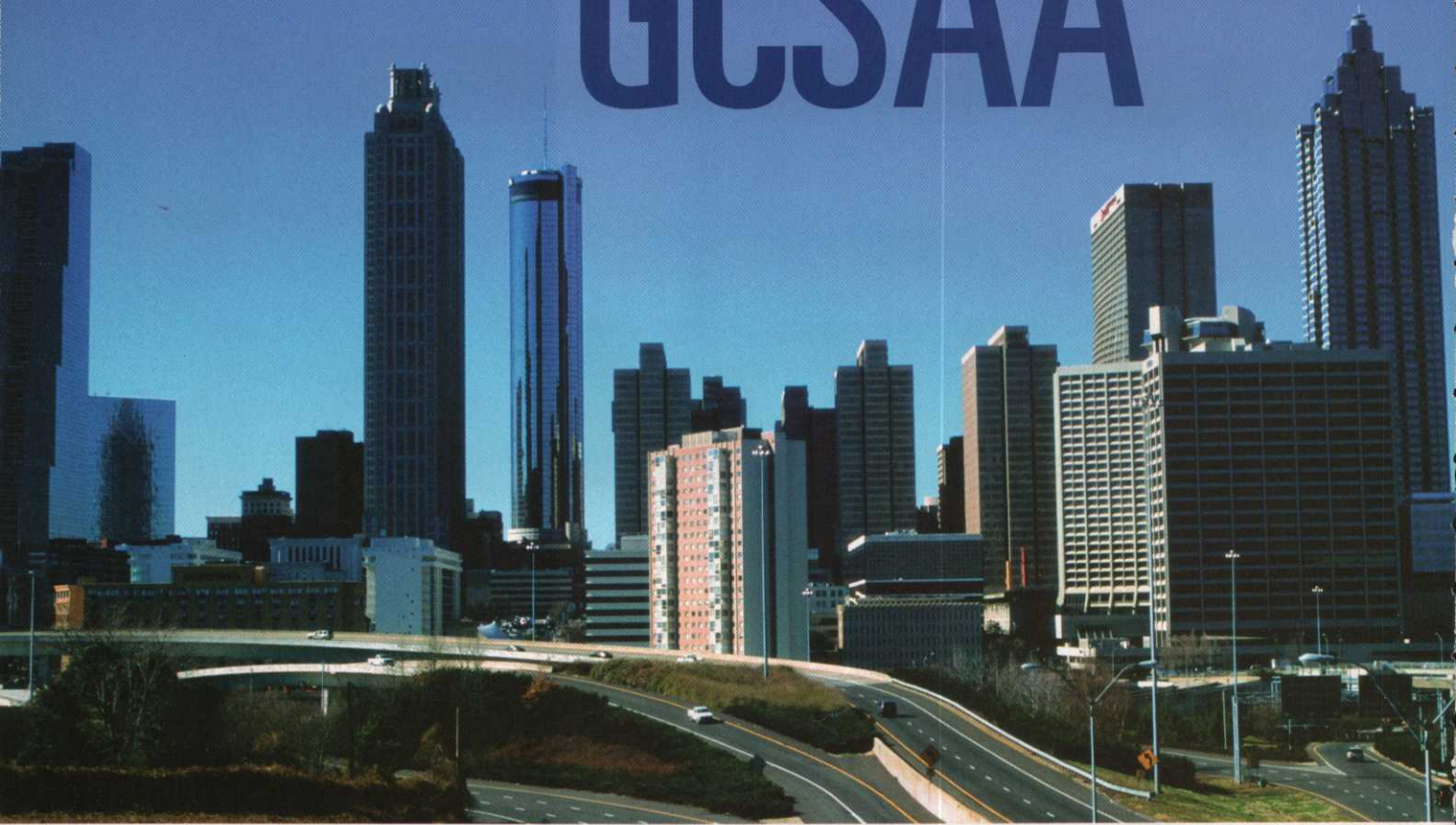


Into the Deep South With the GCSAA



As long as you don't mention the Civil War or drink Pepsi products, you should be able to have a good time at this year's show

BY MARK LUCE



Before we begin our look at the town called "Hot-lanta," here are a couple of no-no's for visiting the city during the GCSAA show.

First, don't you dare be caught in public with a Pepsi product, as Atlanta is the world headquarters of Coca-Cola, so the city has long been a Coke town. Second, it's probably best not to

mention anything about the Civil War (or as some down there may say, the War of Northern Aggression). Those a bit rusty on their history may do well to recall that in 1864, Union General William T. Sherman torched the railroads, all businesses and two-thirds of Atlanta's homes on his infamous "March to the Sea." Atlanta remains the only major American city ever destroyed in a war.

Those Yankees among you might not know this either, but in the last two decades Atlanta has risen from those

Continued on page 52

PHOTODISC

Into the Deep South

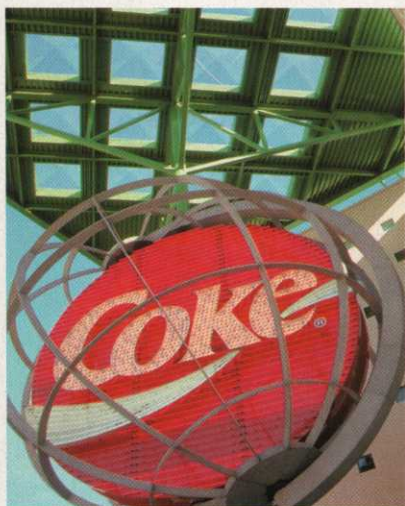
Continued from page 50

ashes to become a cosmopolitan city with an international reputation. In fact, foreign business people rank Atlanta *the* best American city in which to do business. No place in America created more jobs than the 6,126 square miles that is home to the Atlanta metro area in the 1990s. The place houses more than 4 million people, its airport is the busiest in the world, and the good folks there love golf, the Braves, real estate and food — and they manage to bundle it all together with trademark Southern charm.

Although the boom in Atlanta has brought about some of the worst traffic in the country, it has also carried with it an influx of good cuisine, an embarrassment of cultural riches and more than a cartful of shopping opportunities for folks of all stripes.

Arrival and transportation

Atlanta's William B. Hartsfield International Airport is gargantuan and busy. In 2001, more than 75.9 million folks passed through the place, and the airport features one of the most advanced security screening systems in the world. It's about a 30-minute to 45-minute — depending on the traffic — cab ride downtown. If you ride solo, it's a flat



You'd better not drink Pepsi products in the city that boasts the Coke Museum, which traces the history of the soft drink from its beginning until today.



Make sure you check out the High Museum, which is currently hosting an exhibit featuring the Parisian impressionists from Cézanne to Monet.

rate of \$25, but if you double (\$26) or triple up (\$30), you'll save bucks.

Once settled in near the Georgia World Congress Center, cab rides within the downtown district are a flat \$6 (\$1 extra for each passenger). Or you may opt for the clean, easy-to-use subway called the MARTA, which runs \$1.75. And no, your eyes do not deceive you — there are 100 streets in Atlanta containing the name Peachtree.

Crash course on the neighborhoods

Buckhead: It can get rowdy at night with the partying crowd downtown (intersection of Peachtree and Paces Ferry Roads), but it's a clean, safe, ritzy area with outstanding eats — including Chops (70 West Paces, 404-262-2675) for steak and the Atlanta Fish Market (265 Pharr Road, 404-262-3165) for seafood.

Little Five Points: This area is Atlanta's answer to Greenwich Village. Young and edgy, it's filled with taverns, second-hand shops and music venues. It's also home to the Jimmy Carter Presidential Center and Library (441 Freedom Pkwy., 404-331-3942) To blend in, refer to the neighborhood as "L5P."

Virginia Highland: It's quieter than

Buckhead or L5P, but still hip. It contains lots of art galleries, quirky shops and Blind Willies Tavern (828 N. Highland Ave. NE, 404-873-2583), *the* place to hear deep-fried Southern Blues. Also home to Fernbank Natural History Museum (767 Clifton Road, NE), which has an amazing collection of dinosaur bones.

Midtown: This is the spot for late-night clubbing, and home to the enormous and beautiful Piedmont Park, and the equally grand Woodruff Arts Center (1280 Peachtree St. NE, 404-733-4200), which features the High Museum of Art.

Groovy things happening on GCSAA weekend

Atlanta has been buzzing about Paris in the Age of Impressionism, a blockbuster show at the High Museum of Art (1280 Peachtree St., NE) that features an impressive array of artwork from Cézanne to Monet. Get tickets in advance at 404-733-5000.

While the Atlanta Hawks aren't exactly swishing their way to the playoffs, they are playing the youthful, exciting Golden State Warriors on Feb. 11 at

Continued on page 54

Into the Deep South

Continued from page 52
the Philips Center (1 CNN Center). Score tickets at 404-827-3865. The Philips Center hockey tenants, the Atlanta Thrashers, take on Jaromir Jagr and the Washington Capitals on Feb. 12 and have a marquee match-up with the Detroit Red Wings on Feb. 15. Tickets are available at 404-584-PUCK.

If your spouse is along, you would do well to nab the tickets remaining for Grammy-winning singer Diane Reeves' celebration of Sarah Vaughn, Feb. 14-15 at The Atlanta Symphony

Traveling Music

Here's a small, but significant sampling of albums by Georgian musicians. As you can see, it isn't all country. But it is distinctive enough to make a great convention soundtrack.

James Brown, *Live at the Apollo* – The Godfather of Soul and hardest-working man in show business grew up in his aunt's brothel in nearby Augusta.

Atlanta Rhythm Section, *Very Best of Atlanta Rhythm Section* – It doesn't take an "Imaginary Lover" to figure out that this "Champagne Jam" band has got oodles of "Georgia Rhythm."

R.E.M., *Lifes Rich Pageant* – This is jangly college pop from the masters of jangly college pop.

Outkast, *Stankonia* – The original purveyors of the "Dirty South" sound, this Atlanta duo turned hip-hop on its head with intelligent if sometimes raw lyrics and a thumping beat.

Buckner and Garcia, *Pac-Man Fever* – Yes, this one-hit wonder band still lives and works in Atlanta.

Charlie Daniels Band, *The Devil Went Down to Georgia* – We just couldn't overlook this classic single.

Vicki Lawrence, *The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia* – Some '70s swank to soothe the soul.

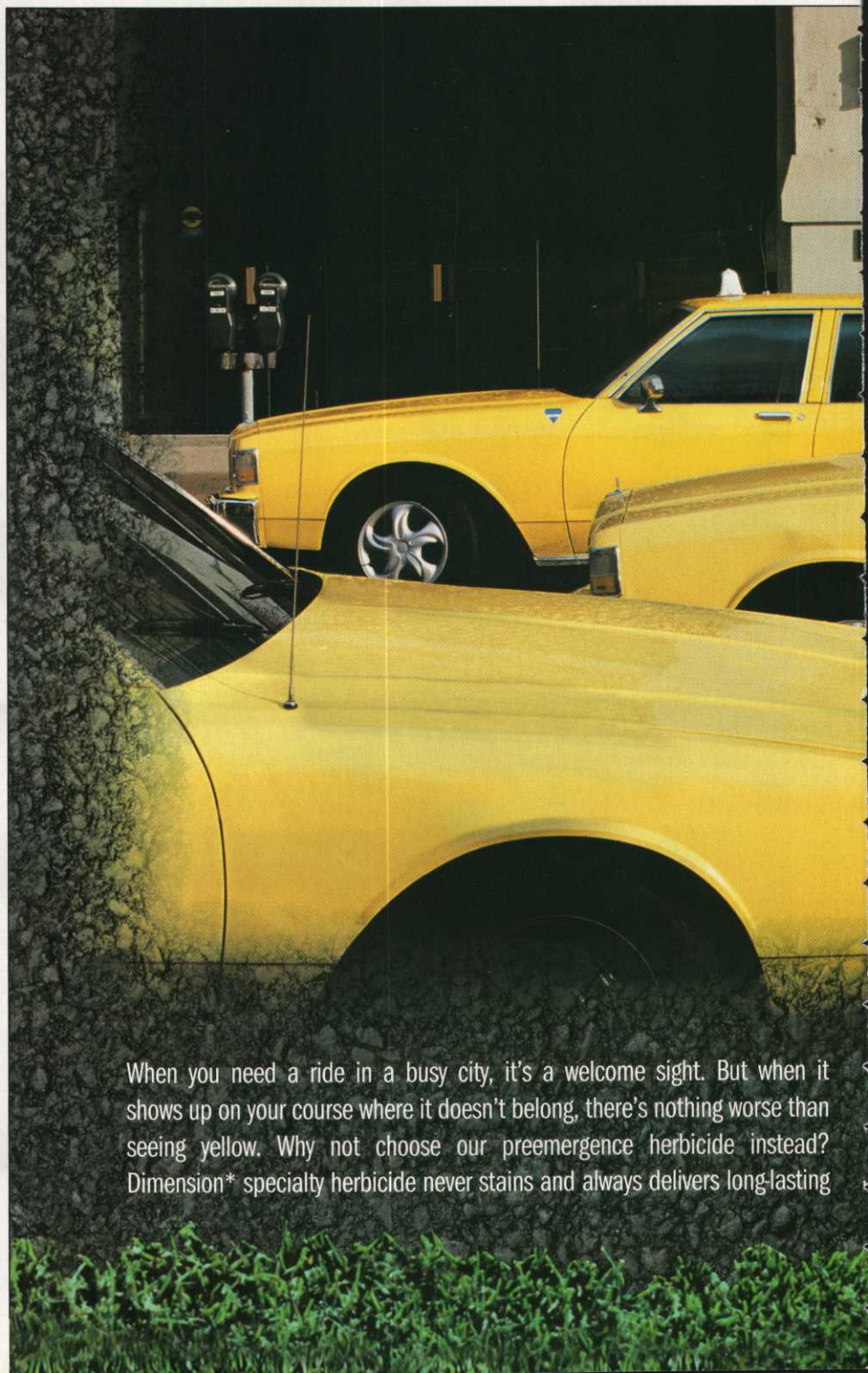
Orchestra (1280 Peachtree Street, NE). Get tickets at 404-733-5000.

Fabulous food

Ken Mangum, director of golf courses & grounds at the Atlanta Athletic Club, likes to dine in the bustle of Buckhead. For kicking back and scoping a sporting event, Mangum recom-

mends Three Dollar Café (3002 Peachtree Road NW, 404-266-8667), a casual, lively place that offers some of the best wings in the city.

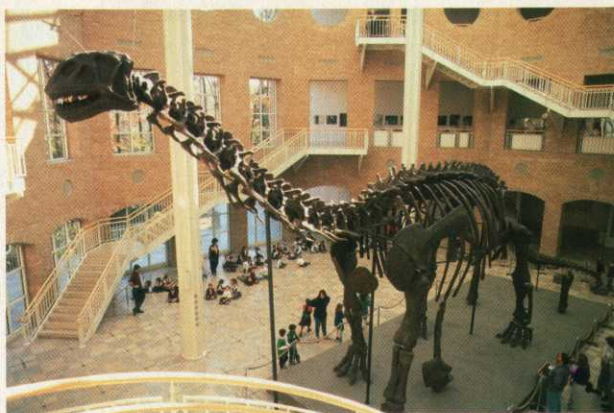
While the food may be exotic (including veal meatloaf with wild mushrooms and celery mashed potatoes and homemade potato chips with warm Maytag blue cheese), The Buckhead



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Diner (3073 Piedmont Road, 404-262-3336) has all the charms of a casual joint and doesn't have a dress code.

For a bit more tony dining, Mangum recommends the Southwestern cuisine and Prickly Pear Margaritas of Nava (3060 Peachtree Road, 404-240-1984); the bustle and seafood of The Atlanta Fish Market



The Fernbank Natural History Museum (left) boasts an impressive collection of dinosaur bones.

The state capital (below) of Georgia has risen from the ashes left by Union General William T. Sherman.



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are supposed
to be yellow.**

**Your course isn't one
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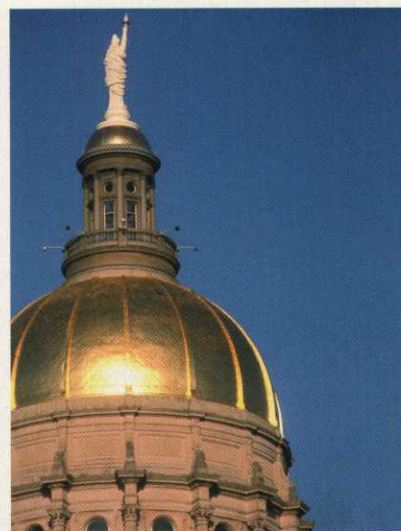
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(265 Pharr Road, 404-262-3165); the steaks at the luxurious splendor of Bones (3130 Piedmont Road, 404-237-2663); the nice views of the Chattahoochee River and the nicer New American cuisine of Canoe (4199 West Paces Ferry Road SE, 770-432-2663); the gargantuan portions of Italian bliss at Maggiano's (3368 Peachtree Road NE, 404-816-9650); and the Brazilian, upscale carnivore haven of Fogo de Chao (3101 Piedmont Road, 404-995-9982).

Locals such as the *Atlanta-Journal Constitution's* book editor Teresa Weaver swear by Chef Eddie Hernandez's flavorful Southwestern cuisine at The Sundown Café (2165 Cheshire Bridge Road, 404-321-1118). It's tucked in a boring strip mall, but with items such as The Memphis (barbecued pork & jalapeno slaw on a taco), a variety of chowders and a seafood burrito jammed with shrimp and crawfish, who cares about the décor. It's fast, cheap and casual dress is encouraged. Weaver also

Continued on page 56

Into the Deep South

Continued from page 55

recommends Baraonda (710 Peachtree St. at Third Street, 404-879-9962), a casual-hip Euro bistro that she says serves the best Neapolitan pizza in town. Weaver also loves the wine list and upscale American cuisine of the new One Midtown Kitchen (559 Dutch Valley Road NE, 404-892-4111).

Please keep in mind, Atlanta is a food-mad town, and restaurant-hopping remains a social sport. Making your reservations before you even leave for the convention is a good idea.

What to avoid

There is not much in the mega-shopping complex known as Underground Atlanta that you wouldn't find at any mall in the country. It's routinely stuffed with tourists. Remember, you are a professional.

As in all large urban areas, crime is a threat in Atlanta. The key if you don't

Literary Atlanta

We perused our libraries in search of a few titles of local interest, as Atlanta was home to Margaret Mitchell and Martin Luther King Jr. Nobel-Prize-winning former-president Jimmy Carter still lives and works in Atlanta.

Margaret Mitchell.
Gone with the Wind

Jimmy Carter.
Keeping Faith: Memories of a President

Brinkley, Douglas.
The Unfinished Presidency: Jimmy Carter's Journey Beyond the White House

Martin Luther King Jr.
Letter from a Birmingham Jail

Taylor Branch.
Parting the Waters, America in the King Years, 1954-63
(won the Pulitzer Prize)

Tom Wolfe.
A Man in Full

know the city is to stay on the main thoroughfares of the districts you are visiting. If you stray, you could find serious trouble — quickly. Downtown after dark is not a place to make new friends and stand around gawking at the architecture. Buckhead does attract some unsavory characters, so watch yourself late at night, especially if you are leaving a bar. Midtown, too, can be

very dicey in the wee hours.

Be smart — don't flash a wad of cash, know where you are going and take cabs. Instead of shoving your wallet in your back pocket, just put your ID, money and plastic in a clip and use your front pocket. And remember, don't wear your show badges out on the town because they scream "Mug me!" by identifying you as an out-of-towner. ■

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