

The stakes are even greater than Grady

\* Should Georgia be run by the people, or by secrecy?

The leaders of Atlanta now claim they are "shocked, shocked" Grady is in crisis. But behind this crisis is another crisis: the addiction of Atlanta's leaders to secrecy. The leaders want to bury the causes of the Grady crisis in secrecy, and then propose "solutions" in double secrecy. Since secrecy is the cause of the Grady crisis, why not try something else: real, open, democratic grass roots government. Revolutionary? Atlanta belongs to the people of Atlanta. The people, not the old boys, need to make decisions about each Atlanta crisis in the open, including the Grady crisis.

Atlanta's shocked leaders claim the only option is immediate, knee jerk conversion of Grady into a quasi-private hospital, accountable to no one. They clam we need to leave this to "experts" and "business leaders." Really? Incredibly, Atlanta's leaders show they don't trust the people, and that they believe back-room politics are the only option. Why all the secrets? What are they hiding at Grady, and at PDK (Peachtree DeKalb Airport)?

A back room conversation never reveals itself or its reasons. The Heimlich Maneuver must be performed on Georgia's government I have a question. How did the fire get to the door before these "experts" realized the house was burning?

We support Grady, we want Grady bailed out. But we must put out the fire of mismanagement, favoritism and corruption, and stop the firebugs from spreading to MARTA and other Georgia public institutions. We want Grady and Georgia, run by the people, and not by a secret old boy's club or their inheritors. It took decades for the fire to reach Grady. It will take time to put the fire out and to find the firebugs. Everybody exterminates bugs, don't they? {quotes}A knee jerk unaccountable secret private system is against everything that Grady stands for. A host of politicians now claim to have a plan for Grady. Why did they wait until now?{/quotes} Why won't they explain their secret plans to the public? When does an admiral that has been at sea all his life try to make decisions for the army?

Since 1998, the Grady coalition urged attention to the governance of Grady. Grady has been operating secretly behind closed doors and the old boys were putting kindling on the fire, and now apparently Grady wants to retreat farther behind closed doors, and become a private hospital accountable to no one but the old boys.

The firebugs at Grady were clear since 1998 when Senior Grady Vice President Joyce Harris blew the whistle, and showed that politicians and other good old boy relationships were getting secret, no-bid contracts. Grady was being robbed.

The Grady coalition has put in more than 50 open records requests regarding Grady over these years. Not a single one has been answered. Fulton and DeKalb commissioners, DeKalb District Attorney, the Grady trustees, Emory all stonewalled. Not a single ethics complaint has been acted on. The old boys apparently know a better tune and pulled platinum strings everywhere.

What is at stake is even larger than Grady. Will Georgia abide by its own open records laws? Do we have a government "of, by and for the people?" Or will Georgia forever be run by back room oligarchy?

The one voice that stood up for Grady against the old boys was trustee William Loughrey. Loughrey even went to the suburbs to ask them to pay their fair share. In return, Fulton commissioners ousted Loughrey, at least in part in retribution for his campaign to clean up Fulton politics and end government by secrecy. Who's next?

Do we wait for someone to yell "fire" before we fix anything in Georgia? Already, the same old boys from Grady are appearing at MARTA, PDK and at DOT.

{quotes}Anything supported by taxpayers deserves open representation.{/quotes} Now Grady itself is sick, and I want to help, who else wants to help? Emory where are you?The only solution for Grady is open, democratic government. The people must be told what went wrong with this \$700+ million a year public institution, and who is responsible, first.

Grady, PDK, MARTA or other public institutions will not release documents that will show who are the firebugs, who spreads the fires, and who covers them up?Open records are the "sinews of democracy."Had Georgia's officials actually obeyed the open records law, had they been honest with the public, we would not be "shocked, shocked" that the fire of mismanagement, favoritism and corruption are burning Georgia's best institutions down.We have a bigger problem to fix than just Grady. Secrecy leads to corruption. The Metro Region must resist taxation without open representation. Government by the people of Georgia, open government, is the real solution.

Now, let's focus the spotlight instead of just changing the background.

Ron Marshall is chairman of the New Grady Coalition

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written by underradar, August 30, 2007

"Grady's problem: A former board member says it's Emory Tuesday, August 28, 2007, 07:00 AM  
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution"

[http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/shared-blogs/ajc/politicalinsider/entries/2007/08/28/gradys\\_problem\\_a\\_former\\_board.html](http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/shared-blogs/ajc/politicalinsider/entries/2007/08/28/gradys_problem_a_former_board.html)

We missed one heck of a lot while down--hmmmmmm... A lot of Big Boys are scrambling and Emory's got every resource known to man out and gunning--including hitting the blogs. They'll have "do-gooder" Representative Chapman under control pretty soon.

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written by Vox Populi, August 22, 2007

It seems Stephenson and Jones are on the same wavelength when it comes to Grady. They both

want the current incompetent Board to remain intact and in control. I didn't think Brown was for that. But interesting to note your point on the relationships, etc. Now where does Ed Wall figure into this? He's Jones' bond man. He was at Morgan Keegan until the airport escapade. In the end the lenders will be paid and the agents, brokers, etc. etc. will make money on the refinancing of Grady. And nothing will change for the taxpayers except more debt to be paid by them.

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written by Dundevil, August 22, 2007

What Grady needs is a manager like Mr Grinsrein who saved Delta. He cut employment, got rid of non-performing assets and reduced salaries. No one of the current Grady Board, or even a 501(c)3 would have the guts to do that.

Ms Stephenson's plan to have Fulton and DeKalb back a \$100 million line of credit is a joke. No responsible investor or business person would do that. But knowing Vernon and the DeKalb Commissioners, I would not bet that it will not happen. There are many, many DK friend, relatives and voters tied to Grady.

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written by underradar, August 22, 2007

Hey Vox:

This is low hanging fruit. EVERYONE should be against THIS proposal.

Doomed to failure. What are the terms? There is NO POSSIBLE Way the Finance Authority can make payments on this. Not one year, not ten.

Even if the vaunted corporatized robber baron 501-c-3 took over, these bonds would not be paid back by REVENUE alone. The hospital doesn't have ANY PAYING PATIENTS!!!!

PS:

Gawd you are correct about the bond merchants involved here. Impossible to believe Stephenson had the audacity--wonder if she's really serious or just indirectly putting Jones in a bad light. Stephenson is Brown's child, not Jones!--and Brown is always trying to find a way to shift responsibility to Jones--they don't trust each other.

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written by Vox Populi, August 22, 2007

Grady Board is Brain Dead. They run a deficit for past several years, can't pay bills, have to layoff people, and make no needed changes.

But they do want to BORROW MORE MONEY. Citigroup Inc., the parent of Citibank, and Morgan Keegan & Co. will offer Grady a \$100 million loan, but the lenders are asking Fulton or DeKalb to back that line of credit, said hospital board member Michael Hollis.

Now, do these names ring a bell: Morgan Keegan, Ed Wall, and Vernon Jones? All happy to put this \$100 Million on the taxpayers.

"Fulton County Commissioner Lynne Riley, who wants the board to restructure, said Fulton taxpayers should not be burdened with bailing Grady out of a financial mess that the authority is

largely responsible for. Fulton gives Grady about \$84 million annually."

"I am outraged and offended that an insolvent organization led by a financially incompetent board would ask taxpayers to underwrite further fiduciary irresponsibility," Riley said. "This board must be held accountable for \$100 million of losses over the past seven years. No mention was made at today's meeting of the ability to repay any line of credit. No mention was made of corrective actions that have been taken to reverse the hemorrhage of cash. I will defend the taxpayers of Fulton County against fiscal mismanagement at all times."

"The hospital has lost money every year since 2000, except 2003, when it basically broke even, according to the authority's audited financial statements. It's unlikely the hospital could help repay the \$100 million loan over the next year, said Grady Chief Financial Officer Michael Ayers."

"Fulton and DeKalb are still paying off the debt from a \$336 million bond from 1993 Grady used to renovate the hospital." {Excerpts from Atlanta Business Chronicle on line.}

Tell your DeKalb and Fulton Commisioners - NO WAY to the Stephenson "plan".

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written by Open&Transparent, August 21, 2007

Thanks for the heads up, under. Ron's a good guy and his work to bring transparency to Grady should be in no way connected to this McDonald clown. People, Ron Marshall was years ahead of the curve on Grady, and was trying to expose this mess for years, and no one, elected officials and the media, paid him any attention. And we might have saved some of our tax dollars if we listened.

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written by underradar, August 21, 2007

O&T

McDonald can't wash the New Grady Coalition's cloths.

The media knows this, knows Ron's group--and is purposely linking Bozo with Ron, without explicitly stating so. Saying Bozo is with the Grady Coalition is technically accurate (altho the group ceased to operate at least five years ago).

Note: No attempt was made by media to clarify, "not to be confused with the active NEW Grady...."

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written by Open&Transparent, August 21, 2007

Yes, 100% sure that Rev. McDonald is inaccurate...and a racist.

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written by blj1@comcast.net This e-mail address is being protected from spam bots, you need JavaScript enabled to view it , August 21, 2007

OT,

Are you 100% sure that that which the good minister McDonald has expressed is inaccurate? Furthermore, only God can determine the purity of the heart of a man.

Relax my friend and don't allow words to make you stoop so low.

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written by Seek the Truth, August 18, 2007

It's the same old story folks, Stephenson, head of the Grady Board wants a taxpayer bailout and plans to go even deeper into debt. When will the failed leadership be changed? Never if it's up to the current Board. They will stay until there's no deficit spending alternative left .....

"The head of the Grady hospital board on Saturday said she will propose a \$125 million plan to stabilize the financially teetering hospital, which would include obtaining \$100 million in loans to stave off closing the facility.

"Pam Stephenson said she will submit the plan to the 10-member Grady board at its meeting Tuesday, and that she expects the board will approve it.

"She stressed the proposal is a short-term "stabilization" plan to place the hospital back on its feet, after which more solutions will be pursued. Grady officials have said that without a major infusion of cash, the 115-year old hospital — which serves as a regional trauma center, major teaching center for Georgia doctors and source of care for the poor — could close.

"You won't be hearing about Grady closing within the next year," Stephenson said.

"The key part of the plan is obtaining a \$100 million line of credit. Stephenson said that within the last 10 days, two lending institutions have said they would lend the hospital the money — with a condition. Those institutions want either Fulton or DeKalb to stand behind those loans, she said."

**YOU CAN BORROW A LOT OF MONEY ON THE BACKS OF FULTON AND DEKALB TAXPAYERS, BUT BORROWING MORE MONEY IS NOT THE SOLUTION.**

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written by Open&Transparent, August 18, 2007

Ron, I'm a fan and like what you do, but please tell me there are two different coalitions, and that f-ing racist idiot Rev. Timothy McDonald isn't part of your coalition. The ignorance of certain African-American so-called "leaders" trying to keep Grady's management the way it is to protect a "power base" is disgraceful.

They never mention taxpayers and more importantly they never mention providing the highest quality of healthcare possible (and they conveniently forget to mention the unfinished floors from the 1993 bond).

Please tell us Ron that you have no affiliation with this moronic clown. How does a turd like this become a reverend? There must be two coalitions.

[http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/atlanta/stories/2007/08/17/grady\\_0818.html](http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/atlanta/stories/2007/08/17/grady_0818.html)

At least one black activist sees Shafer's bill as more evidence that the proposed management change is an attempt at a white takeover of the hospital that serves many minorities.

Rev. Timothy McDonald, an official with Concerned Black Clergy and a group called the Grady Coalition, said Friday, "I have no doubt it's going to be proposed at the General Assembly

because they want control. They're white, they're male, they're Republican."

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written by underradar, August 01, 2007

Something not looked at so far. It's very possible that Grady has been just as close to bankrupt as it is now--for years! Funny figures and no oversight by the now here we come-white knights could have been delaying the "emergency call" until it became convenient. you gotta look at the moves on the board and within staff (and legal team) that have taken place in the past year or so. Get the bad guys who are connected to the real bad guys out of harms way, so the shit can now be hurled. It all looks orchestrated.

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written by Seek the Truth, August 01, 2007

Nothing to worry about. Michael R. Hollis is on the Grady Board, and he has experience with going down the tubes:

"DC Air would be the first Black-owned airline since 1987 when Air Atlanta, owned by Michael R. Hollis, filed for bankruptcy and went out of business.

"Air Atlanta was started in 1984 and was the first major Black-owned airline. Air Atlanta was viewed as a major success for Black business. Hollis raised more start-up capital than any Black entrepreneur in history. Former Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson was instrumental in helping Hollis secure funding for Air Atlanta, which was in business for three years."

Wonder what pertinent experience the other Board members have?

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written by Vox Populi, August 01, 2007

The Grady problem has existed for many years. Under the current and past Boards nothing major was done to fix things. Patchwork here and there, but no systemic change, which was what was needed. Now we are finally at that point - major change will occur by sheer weight of the impending bankruptcy. Clearly, the prior Board should have made this same change to non-profit many, many years ago.

The current Board is as bad or worse than past Boards. The whole set up needs to go. And I'm sure it will. Looks like Fulton Commishes are voting for the new setup. Only obstacle is good ole Vernon who wants to call a special session. He is an idiot looking for a grandstand, and does nothing to move forward like Robb Pitts and Fulton has. Good thing MR. CEO is not our senator!!!

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written by underradar, August 01, 2007

No argument here on DeKalb's group--even back to Robert Brown--anything to say about him Vox?

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written by Vox Populi, August 01, 2007

Yes, that's the idea Underradar. I wanted you to go read the letter. But bottom line is that the

whole institution needs to be reconstruced, or however you want to phrase it.

To put Pam Stephenson in charge of this or any other project reflects the stupidity of our current so called "leaders." The only reason she's anything is politics and her sycophantic behavior with other politicians. What qualifies her to be head of Grady Board - NOTHING. I've met her, talked to her, listened to her, etc. She's not competent to handle Grady and has little expertise in the subject.

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written by Open&Transparent, July 31, 2007  
[http://www.ajc.com/metro/conte...1\\_web.html](http://www.ajc.com/metro/conte...1_web.html)

Another Grady Bd. secret meeting held by Grady Board chair and State Rep. Pam Stephenson, a true nincompoop. And she's BFF with Stan Watson. The only good thing to come out of this is Pam Stephenson will never, ever be a DeKalb Co. Commish or CEO. She may just might hold onto one more term as a state rep, but her political career is over. Stan Watson better watch out, because his tight affiliation with Pam is about to lose him votes for CEO.

Still waiting for Stan's position paper on Grady. Actually waiting for his position paper on anything.

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written by underradar, July 31, 2007

Oh yea:

It's also obvious that Emory wouldn't want Grady's indigent "business" either. Hell--Emory siphoned off all of the paying customers FROM Grady when they expanded Crawford Long.

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written by underradar, July 31, 2007

Vox--you are either a slippery devil or you just read the misleading headline

(AJC reserves the right to create the headlines on each letter--guarantee this writer was fuming about it.)

Of course the letter was down on Grady's structure--however, he did NOT say, "Design the Grady that we should have and put that in place." (your words emphasizing only working on Grady--also implied by the title).

What the writer wrote was "(The question) should be, 'How should Georgia's trauma and indigent care SYSTEM (emphasis added) be structured.'" He then goes on to explain that trauma care should be effectively distributed around the state.

He also said, "How to save Grady is not the correct question." (that we should start from imagining that Grady doesn't exist--and envision a SYSTEM, not a hospital--that meets the need.)

The writer clearly was separating trauma care from indigent care (which now consumes much of the care delivered). He said the indigent care should simply be spun off to Emory or Morehouse.

So in this guy's view, Grady's new board or old board would be managing about 10% of its current budget. Not a bad idea.

However, for obvious reasons, neither the know-nothings that currently "guide" the place, nor the robber-barons that are about to step in WANT less budget to manage (that's the nub). Why would HCA want to manage a Grady with 10% of its current operations.

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written by Vox Populi, July 31, 2007

There's a letter in today's AJC. It says forget about what Grady is now. Design the Grady that we should have and put that in place. That in essence is the answer. Being forced to continue under big County political influences of Fulton and DeKalb is a continuing recipe for disaster. So tell the current system good-bye.

Come up with a new structure, a non-political board, and implement the mechanisms other hospitals are using around the country as best practices. The current board will never do this. So they need to go. And, in the end, the counties are creatures of the state government. In the end, the State of Georgia will speak on this and end the corruption, secrecy, and incompetence of the current Grady situation.

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written by Tea Party, July 31, 2007

Interesting read from this thread. The only way to save Grady and MARTA is to toss the institutionalized systems and processes that lead to their troubles OUT. Put in 'blue-ribbon' bi-partisan, objective, management that has a clear mandate with measurable benchmarks. Make it all subject full public review.

Grady is a hospital and should not continue as a fountain of largesse.

I agree with this point from SEEK:

"I'm not arguing for what you say and against open records. I'm saying you won't get anything with the current system and Board. They continue to meet in private and continue to disregard calls for them to step aside. They all need to go."

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written by underradar, July 31, 2007

It's definitely going to have to be "enforced" (stress applied) GORA's, FOIA's and Sunshine. That's what DeKalb and many other govt entities are shirking these days, mostly since 9-11. Hell, a Republican legislature embarrassed themselves in front of limited government constituents by attempting to pass SECRECY provisions on any project that might be deemed "economic development". At least what they were doing was in open forum and they could be smashed by outrage. Problem is, the Power Dems (institutions like Chambers of Commerce and so-called philanthropists--see Olympics) have always known how to go secret WITHOUT legislation or public dialogue (just contro the AJC).

The PDK lawsuit win (and suit continuation) basically establishes precedents that will be ENFORCEABLE. PDK' "Open DeKalb" lawsuit is the anti-Olympics with regard to secrecy. Both hold lessons for the public in watching New Grady emerge.

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written by Seek the Truth, July 31, 2007

I'm not arguing for what you say and against open records. I'm saying you won't get anything with the current system and Board. They continue to meet in private and continue to disregard calls for them to step aside. They all need to go. But instead, they've now hired a lawfirm to "evaluate" board structure over the next two months. As soon as the whole entity is bankrupt, we will probably see the changes made. Then, its too late.

As far as the new entity to run Grady, make it totally open to all records as to operation, budget, etc. That's how it should have been to begin with. Make it subject to all info filing requirements, reporting to citizens, etc. etc. It is a public entity, funded by taxpayers in part. Make it as open as the DeKalb County operations.

On second thought maybe more than that. No one knows where all the money is being spent in DeKalb these days. Just ask the Commisisoners. Hell, they won't even tell you how many police officers we have or how many county employees. Now that's open government!!

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written by underradar, July 31, 2007

Sounds good--if the current board was going to continue to serve, that would be a good idea.

Now, it's obvious the structure is going to change--not only will the board structure change, but the organization goes from a public hospital to a "semi-private".

Now is the time to "nip things" in the bud, have enabling legislation and a business charter for everyone to see--and should include all open records and meetings requirements. These guys, like their irresponsible and crrupt predecessors may choose to deflect the requirements, but at least those requirements will be in place.

Being that the majority of funding will still be locally generated taxes, no matter what these guys say about being structured differently, ut will still be a "public" hospital in fact, if not in name.

It's hard to believe that Vox and Seek are arguing with open records provisions to be carried FORWARD (explicitly public records, FOIA, GORA and Sunshine) onto the next structure. Is there an agenda here?

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written by Tea Party, July 31, 2007

Where do conscientious citizens goto to make the point clear that "Sunshine" laws, GORA, FOIA, regulations MUST be incorporated into a Grady fix?

How can the public become more fully engaged? Certainly not thru the AJC, and the current Board will not be forthcoming, what next?

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written by Vox Populi, July 31, 2007

As you can see the current Grady Board IS NOT following any sunshine laws. They continue to meet in secret. And surprise, they think they can fix Grady. Hard to admit complete failure. They have to implement a model that works for hospitals, allowing them to provide services and make a profit, as does the 501(c)(3) paradigm.

So if you want to nip something in the bud, Nip the current secretive board. Of course, that won't be in the bud, they're more like a mature tree that's been doing the same and getting the same bad results for years.

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written by underradar, July 30, 2007

In fact, its damn likely that a 501-c-3 can't get the majority of its funding from local governments. Worth looking into.

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written by underradar, July 30, 2007

Lets nip the "its what hospitals have done all over the country" in the bud. Just because their are "non-profits", even 501-c-3's, doesn't mean those hospitals get the majority of their funding (like Grady will continue to do) from county (or city) governments. Also, not a single one of them has a budget that matches the fifth largest city in Georgia.

This hospital should continue to be mandated to follow "Sunshine" laws, GORA and FOIA. Period.

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written by Seek the Truth, July 30, 2007

It's a charitable corporation, quaifying under 501(c)(3), so it will have to file reports. Whatever we get will be more than we see now.

Anyway, it is what all the other hospital authorities have done around the state and country. See the editorial in today's AJC.

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They - whoever organizes it- could also set up audit requirements for funding, etc. IT will definitely be an improvement on what Fulton and DeKalb have not done.

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written by Dundevil, July 30, 2007

Grady has been run in secrecy for years by the inept County Governments. Are they promising anything different? I think not.

The charter of the 501(c)(3) could have an open records provision. I would tie this to loss of funds if the provision is not followed or eliminated.

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written by underradar, July 30, 2007

Thanks Aileen

Now getting to the nub.

See reference to PDK. "Sensitive Infrastructure". Hmmm...mukety mucks?...or something darker, deeper...Word Up!!!!...plane loads of "fugitives" run by U.S. Marshall's Service (one of the oversized planes that PDK Watch caught with photos...Mayor's son-in-law's trial surfaced drug flights accepted by UPS insider, continued a YEAR after he was indicted and placed under house

arrest...flights disappearing from a public data base after being available for years (all after that public database exposed the CIA detention flights, the source for the Congressional inquiry and extradition warrants for CIA operatives in foreign countries)...there's so much more...

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written by underradar, July 30, 2007

Good question Tea: You know the answer too--NO NO NO!!!!

The only records we will see are the one's that they willingly show the AJC. Even a GoDeKalb request will be denied.

Why would they show the AJC? Because what they show

(1) Would be PR

(2) Even if not PR, the info will be "controlled" by AJC--anything implicating the form of business, close connections, donors getting sweets, who meets with whom (no Sunshine rules), budgets, etc will be deleted from AJC stories. The AJC will have it, showing good faith by the 501-c-3, but no-one will have access to AJC files.

Note EVERYONE THIS HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE:

The model for this was the Olympics--files were closed until 5 years after it was done.

(no legal requirement, no files)

It's worse now--the Federal Government will classify any large asset with a penny of Federal \$ something called "Sensitive Infrastructure" (exposed to terror) and close down info. It's done under the guise of "national security" (do a web search). They don't call it "national security", because there are laws governing the use of the term.

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written by Vox Populi, July 30, 2007

"The firebugs at Grady were clear since 1998 when Senior Grady Vice President Joyce Harris blew the whistle, and showed that politicians and other good old boy relationships were getting secret, no-bid contracts. Grady was being robbed."

This has to end. The only way is to break up the power structure that exists and get Fulton and DeKalb Counties out of running Grady. Put the non-profit entity in charge. It will have to file tax returns, disclosure statements, etc. Plus it will have a board that is not controlled by two BIG COUNTY political machines. The article makes it very clear what Fulton and DeKalb have been doing over the years.