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GWINNETT INSIDER: Honey, the Bible says 'Vote Thompson' . . . sort of

By Ben Smith

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David Shafer says there's been some discord in his marriage of late.

The spat's over the Republican presidential primary. For a state senator and his wife, that might not be a small dispute.

Shafer supports Fred Thompson for president. He's backed the government-lawyer-turned-actor-turned-politician-turned-actor-again-turned-politician-again from the start.

However, Shafer's wife, Lee, is a recent convert to Mike Huckabee.

"She was impressed, among other things, with how he is able to communicate his conservatism in an optimistic and nonjudgmental tone," the Duluth Republican wrote in his blog last week.

Shafer said he reminded his wife that Huckabee, a Southern Baptist minister, once signed a letter calling on "wives to graciously submit to their husband's sacrificial leadership."

The command comes from a much-debated passage in Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians. To Shafer, its meaning is clear. His wife must join him in supporting Thompson.

But she wouldn't submit to that, Shafer said.

Business beefs get their own courtroom

Gwinnett County has launched a temporary "business court" program.

Apparently it's a trend — businesses around the country are fed up getting stuck in lawsuits for years at a time and running up huge legal bills.

As a result, many locales are creating specialized business courts to help move these kind of civil cases through the system faster.

According to Gwinnett court administrator Phil Boudewyns, the county's six-month business court pilot project is the first of its kind in Georgia.

"If there is a need for the Business Court in Gwinnett, we hope the pilot project will let us know that," Boudewyns

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said.

During the project, any case that gets sent to the business court must be approved by the judge presiding over it.

State Court Judge Randy Rich will head up the project.

Gwinnett Place CID to Legislature: Give us TAD!

Don't blow your cereal across the table.

The Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District has asked the county's legislative delegation to put a "tax allocation district" referendum on the ballot in 2008.

Gwinnett Place CID supported the 2006 TAD referendum, which failed by a relatively close vote in the November general election.

This time, some supporters want lawmakers to call a special election in March to bring the issue to a countywide vote.

That seems like an awfully short time to educate voters on what's possibly one of the most poorly worded referendums of all time.

Here it is: "Shall the Act be approved which authorizes Gwinnett County to exercise powers under the Redevelopment Powers Law, as it may be amended from time to time?"

Got that?

A TAD is basically a revitalization tool. Any area designated as a TAD can use the property taxes property owners in the district pay solely to fund improvements to the area. That includes the installation of new sidewalks, streetscapes and signs.

There's more to it than that. But it's hard to explain in this short column. Maybe that's the point of holding the referendum in March.

Only those who understand the concept and are likely to support it will come out and vote.

One more thing

To all our readers, Merry Christmas and happy holidays. See you in 2008.

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