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Fresh Political Pickins From The Peach State

An introduction: George Chidi is on the bench

April 4, 2013 9:05 am

by [George Chidi](#) · [64 comments](#)

Another joins the fray.

Normally, I wouldn't roll out of bed for less than a buck a word, but I care deeply about the state of political dialogue and I've found Peach Pundit to be a place for reasoned discourse, even among people with whom I often disagree. That's a rare commodity these days. So, I hope to contribute political intelligence which would otherwise go undiscovered and unpublished, as well as a fresh perspective offering a reasonable counterpoint to prevailing views – as opposed to the cartoon-character straw men many on the right imagine those on the left to be.

Also, Charlie said he'd go clubbing with me.

I've been writing for pay since I was 18, after dropping out of the microbiology program at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I enlisted in the Army as a military journalist 20 years ago, for which the only qualifications were two years of high school English, 20 words per minute on a typewriter and not being colorblind. I served five years on active duty, mostly with the 25th Infantry Division, without once being intentionally shot at. I have no business regretting that.

After returning to UMass to finish a journalism degree, I worked as a wire service reporter for the [IDG publications](#) covering the dot-com bust and as a politics reporter for the [Mount Telegram">Rocky Mount Telegram](#) in rural North Carolina before landing as a staff writer for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. I covered growth and development, business, crime and municipal government in Gwinnett County for about three years before sobering up.

After covering one too many ax murders and gang shootings, I left the paper when Georgia Tech offered a full ride through its MBA program. I said to myself that a career in finance or real estate might be just as interesting and certainly more stable than news reporting.

I started school in the fall of 2008. Who knew.

I've also been a security guard, a long-term substitute teacher, a technology flack, various flavors of corporate peon, an associate investment banking equity analyst, an [Occupy Atlanta activist](#), an [ex-Occupy Atlanta activist](#) and an elected official for the city of Pine Lake, which is manifestly not a speed trap. Any more. For real.

By day, I am the managing director of [Competition, Illuminated.">Neon Flag](#), a competitive intelligence consultancy, which is more or less [exactly what you think it is](#). By night, I'm trying to figure out how to keep apparent corruption among Democrats from snatching defeat away from the hands of demographic victory in Georgia. I contribute from time to time to Creative Loafing and write irregularly about personal finance for Dimespring.com. I'll be writing here about governance in Democratic communities and the leadership challenges of progressive politics in Georgia, along with a note now and then about economic competition, innovation and the state of the local club scene.

Next time, with Charlie.