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Recent border battles have once again redrawn the lines of the metro area.

On the Saturday before Election Day last November, Jason Lary, a former insurance executive, crouched on a rough patch of grass at the center of a busy intersection 20 miles outside of Atlanta in DeKalb County. Lary was holding a hammer, and he tapped carefully on the thin wire base of a campaign sign. “My hand is like Fred Flintstone’s right now because I banged my hand in the night,” he said, noting his latest sign-related injury. This hazard, though, was worthwhile: “If you don’t start [the sign] with your hand, it will bend. It takes longer—guys are 10 times faster than I am. But my sign’s still gonna be up.”

This was a non-trivial advantage for Lary, who for the past month had begun most mornings with a kind of ground-game whack-a-mole. He would put up signs under the cover of night, only to have his opponents dislodge them by hand or, when that failed, run over them with their cars. Nevertheless, Lary was feeling good. “My opposition? Worn down,” he told me. “They don’t even have any more signs. And I kept a stash, knowing this time was coming. This is not my first picnic with nonsense.”

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SAM ROSEN APR 26, 2017

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