



FROM CURSED TO FIRST

Red Sox sweep World Series

IN SPORTS, D1



The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

THURSDAY, OCT. 28, 2004

ajc.com

★★★★ Copyright © 2004, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

50 CENTS

Inconclusive
74°/62°, F10

INSIDE TODAY

Frodo lived! (sort of)

Anthropologists find evidence of an ancient species of hobbit-size humans who roamed an island east of the Java Sea about 18,000 years ago. **B2**

Divine Miss M is back with brass

A conversation with Bette Midler on the eve of her appearance at the Gwinnett Arena seems like old times, renewed. **Peach Buzz, E2**

We're a tad taller, but way wider

The average American (you know, that guy) has gained an inch in height since the 1960s, but has put on a good 25 pounds to boot. **A13**

No duh: Exhausted interns screw up

Another study confirming common sense suggests doctors-in-training tend to drop the ball — or worse — when working 30-hour hospital shifts. **B3**

Lines, lines, everywhere lines

... blocking off the scenery, breaking our minds ... it's not just our ducks that we seem compelled to get and keep in a row. **Living, E1**

When you care enough to scare the wary best

Who ya gonna call when you're desperate to build, not bust, some major ghosts and ghoulies? **Business, F1**

A deal on prayer out of school

Muslim students in Gwinnett County will be excused early from classes to participate in Friday prayers in a tentative compromise worked out with Georgia's largest school system. **Metro, C1**

FEATURES

ABBY	E2
CLASSIFIEDS	B4
COMICS	E4
EDITORIALS	A17
LEGAL NOTICES	F5
MOVIES	E6
OBITUARIES	C6
TELEVISION	E3
WEATHER	F10

SECTIONS

MAIN NEWS	A,B
METRO	C
SPORTS	D
LIVING	E
BUSINESS	F

VOL 56, NO. 302
128 PAGES, 8 SECTIONS



For home delivery, call 404-522-4141, 1-800-933-9771



Delta, pilots cut a deal

Tentative agreement could go a long way in steering the ailing Atlanta airline away from bankruptcy.

By **RUSSELL GRANTHAM**
rgrantham@ajc.com

Negotiators for Delta Air Lines and its pilots union reached a tentative pact cut agreement Wednesday night that could divert the ailing Atlanta carrier from its course toward bankruptcy.

The union said its leadership council still had to review and sign off on the

deal, which would then be voted on by rank-and-file pilots.

The tentative agreement came after more than a year of on-again, off-again talks as Delta's three-year financial slide steadily worsened. Talks culminated this week with around-the-clock sessions at the Air Line Pilots Association's headquarters outside Washington.

Delta's board of directors, meeting in

Atlanta this week, was thought to be on the verge of a decision to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection as soon as today, had a pilot deal not come together.

If approved, the pact would help Delta hold together several other important deals with creditors in a bid to achieve an out-of-court financial restructuring. Most, if not all, of those agreements were conditioned on Delta's getting substantial concessions from its pilots, who are the highest paid in the industry.

IN BUSINESS

► Airline pilots steadily losing ground on pay, benefits. **F1**

A Delta spokesman said the airline had no immediate comment on the tentative agreement.

The union said no details of the pact would be disclosed until union leaders finished their review, which was continuing late Wednesday night.

► Please see **DELTA, A16**

British troops on the move in Iraq



GILES PENFOUND / Getty Images

British army Sgt. **Scott Whisker** (left) and Pvt. **Kevin Morgan** of the 1st Battalion, Black Watch Royal Highland Regiment Battle Group, await departure from southern Iraq to the Baghdad area Wednesday. U.S. officials have asked the British to take over security operations south of Baghdad to free American forces to root out insurgents. Meanwhile, a kidnapped British aid worker, in a video plea for her life, begged that the troops stay where they were. **Story, 5A**



MUHAMMED MUHEISEN / Associated Press
The ailing **Yasser Arafat**, 75, collapsed Wednesday. His wife and a team of Jordanian doctors are expected today.

Arafat illness sets off alarms

By **MOHAMMED DARAGHMEH**
Associated Press

Ramallah, West Bank — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat collapsed Wednesday night, was unconscious for about 10 minutes, and remained in a "very difficult situation," Palestinian officials said. A team of Jordanian doctors was urgently summoned to treat the ailing Arafat.

INSIDE, A15

► If leader dies, Palestinian power struggle is apt to be fierce, bloody.

An official in Arafat's office said a special committee of three senior officials, including Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia, had been created to run matters while Arafat was incapacitated.

However, other Palestinian officials, including his spokesman, Nabil Abu Rdeneh, denied that such a committee had been formed.

Arafat was eating soup while meeting with Qureia; his predecessor, Mahmoud

► Please see **ARAFAT, A15**

Boing! Watch for rubber checks

Starting today, banks may debit your account quicker than you can say 'float'

By **HANK EZELL**
hezell@ajc.com

The float just sank.

As of today, any check you write may be posted — and the money deducted from your account — within a few hours.

Savvy consumers no longer can count on a delay of a day or two or

three — the float — as a paper check moves through the banking system.

The speedup is a result of the new Check 21 law, which goes into effect today. It allows banks to make an electronic image of a check and send the electrons, not the paper, through the system.

At the same time, the new federal law does not require banks to process

your deposits by the new, speedy method.

Not all banks will make the switch overnight. Wachovia, for example, plans to start with a pilot program involving "a very limited set of customers," bank officials said Wednesday.

Electronic processing is much cheaper than shipping tons of paper, so you can expect all major banks in Georgia to change over in coming weeks or months.

When you get your statement in the

► Please see **CHECKS, A14**

ELECTION 2004

INSIDE TODAY

► We've got the information you need about your local candidates, congressional and statewide races, plus the statewide amendments.

In your community news section

ON AJC.COM

► You can also find local candidate information on the Web with our online Voters Guide.

COMING SUNDAY

► What makes this election different from any in U.S. history?
► Where do President Bush and Sen. John Kerry stand on the issues? Our grid will get you up to date.

Despite advance voting, bet on long lines Tuesday

By **CARLOS CAMPOS**
ccampos@ajc.com

The crush of early voters casting ballots this week in Georgia must surely mean Election Day lines will be shorter, right? Wishful thinking, officials say.

More than 100,000 Georgians have cast ballots in the first three days of advance voting, which ends Friday. Waits as long as three to four hours have been reported in several counties, including Clayton, Cobb, Fulton and Gwinnett. DeKalb County is leading the state, recording more than 16,000 early votes.

Including absentee, overseas and other forms of early voting, more than 238,107 Georgians have already cast a ballot.

INSIDE

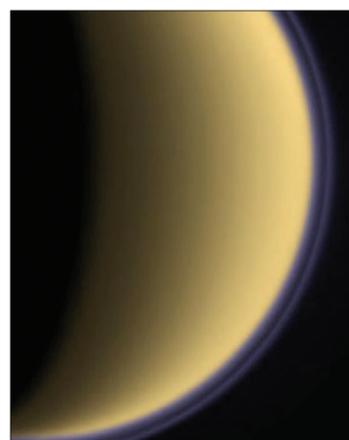
► Missing ballots stir sense of déjà vu for voters in Broward County, Fla. **A6**
► Latino voters challenged as scheme to get noncitizens on rolls is alleged. **A8**

While that's at least 238,107 fewer people who will line up at the polls on Tuesday, it's a small percentage of the 3 million people forecast to vote in Georgia. Perhaps 90 percent of voters will be casting their ballots on Election Day.

"I think this is going to be a very high turnout election," said Chris Rigall, a spokesman for Georgia Secretary of State Cathy Cox. "And even

► Please see **VOTE, A12**

Tantalizing Titan



European Space Agency
A NASA spacecraft got close to Saturn's biggest moon, Titan, and took pictures that baffle scientists. **Story, B1**

On accessAtlanta.com: Spooky ideas, scary events, haunted houses — and, of course, Halloween Pets

