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IN ACCENT

The Palm Beach Post

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Final Edition

1 2 3 4 50 cents

Disgusted with delays, air travelers fight for their rights on flights

By MARILYN GEEWAX
Palm Beach Post-Cox News Service
WASHINGTON — Airline passengers fed up with long waits on the airport tarmac held a "strand-in" Wednesday on the National Mall to push for legislation that would give them more rights when such

delays occur. Protesters, joined by tourists, piled inside a 28-foot-long canvas "fuselage" designed to recreate the sounds and smells of a long-delayed flight. As a tape played the wail of a cranky baby, the dozens of "passengers" scrunched up

their noses in response to outhouse odors produced by a novelty product. Organizer Kate Hanni said she was subjected to such smells during a nine-hour delay at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport in Texas in December on an American

Airlines flight. Once airlines put travelers on board, "they can hold you indefinitely," she said. "I'm hoping and praying Congress does something." Hanni and more than 18,000 supporters who have signed a petition she created

are demanding that lawmakers require airlines to return to the gate after delays exceeding three hours, provide frequent updates about delays and give stranded passengers food and water. The House is expected to approve a Federal Aviation Administration re-

authorization bill today that contains such protections. But the White House threatened Wednesday to veto that legislation because the Bush administration objects to the way the bill would raise

See PROTEST, 8A ▶

SIMPSON MEDIA CIRCUS SETS UP IN VEGAS

Football legend released on bond

Ownership questions and a shady cast could hinder the prosecution.

By RYAN NAKASHIMA and CHELSEA J. CARTER
The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — A man in a chicken suit. A Nicole Brown Simpson look-alike. A judge with a goatee and a long ponytail.

Those were just some of the characters of O.J. TV, a reality show on all the news channels Wednesday. It followed every twist, turn and lane change as a former football star appeared in court, posted bond and was driven away.

The circus surrounding O.J. Simpson, charged with committing armed robbery of sports memorabilia at a casino hotel, was reminiscent of the media frenzy when he was accused and later acquitted of murdering his ex-wife and her friend.

This time, though, his part sometimes becomes secondary in a colorful, confusing story that includes new characters and some familiar old ones.

Simpson is accused of holding up collectors of his own memorabilia — taking items he insists had been stolen — but there were signs that this felony prosecution might prove as challenging as his last one.

One of the alleged victims was arrested on a parole violation Wednesday and the other was recovering from a heart attack. The man who allegedly set up the meeting where the confrontation occurred has a criminal record.

See SIMPSON, 11A ▶



JAE C. HONG/The Associated Press

A handcuffed O.J. Simpson appears in a Clark County courtroom Wednesday for his arraignment in Las Vegas. The former NFL star is charged with committing armed robbery of sports memorabilia at a casino hotel.

Israel may cut services to Gaza

Angered by rocket attacks and Hamas' refusal to stop them, Israel labels the area an 'enemy entity.'

By CRAIG NELSON
Palm Beach Post-Cox News Service

JERUSALEM — Israel declared the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip an "enemy entity" Wednesday, setting the stage for cuts in electricity, water and fuel to the Palestinian enclave while complicating Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's peacemaking efforts in the region.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said the declaration would mean tougher sanctions imposed on Gaza in an attempt to stop rocket attacks by Palestinian militants on southern Israel.

Israel's decision came hours before Rice arrived for talks with Israeli and Palestinian officials aimed at hastening preparations for an international peace conference called by President Bush and tentatively scheduled for November.

The Bush effort will have little effect if Rice is unable to coax moderate Arab states to the table and persuade Israel to make conciliatory moves to set the stage for negotiations on the creation of a Palestinian state.

Rice appeared to support tougher sanc-

See GAZA, 5A ▶

Dunbar meeting fails to move past budget questions

West Palm balks at paying for extra security without more information.

By KATHLEEN CHAPMAN
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

WEST PALM BEACH — A long-awaited meeting about the future of Dunbar Village led to squabbles but few solutions Wednesday.

It is unlikely that the city will apply for federal money to replace the public housing development with a mixed-income neighborhood this year, Mayor Lois Frankel said after the meeting. And city commissioners will not pay for increased security for Dunbar and other public housing developments until they see a budget, which they said the West Palm Beach Housing Authority has failed to produce for months.

In the contentious meeting between city commissioners and housing authority board members, the commissioners said they wanted to know whether the housing authority, an independent agency financed by the federal government, made residents' safety a prior-

See DUNBAR, 8A ▶

Juvenile Justice set to reverse course, cut programs that deter teen crime

By KATHLEEN CHAPMAN
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

The former Tallahassee police chief chosen by Gov. Charlie Crist to head Florida's juvenile justice system this year announced soon after taking over that the state would fight crime in a new way.

Department of Juvenile Justice Secretary Walter McNeil said Florida would not keep dumping the bulk of its money into youth lockups. Instead, the state would take a balanced approach, investing in less expensive prevention programs that stop teens from skipping school, joining gangs and committing crimes.

Legislative leaders and youth ad-

vocates say they now are surprised that the agency and governor's office presented budget plans that would do just the opposite — chopping millions from programs proven to reform teens who have not yet committed crimes as adults.

As the state held its first round of hearings last month on plans to reduce a \$1.1 billion budget shortfall, Rep. Mitch Needelman, R-Melbourne, chairman of the House Committee on Juvenile Justice, wrote a memo saying that the agency's proposed cuts would sabotage Florida's attempts at juvenile justice reform.

See TEENS, 10A ▶



CARL KIILSGAARD/Staff Photographer

Angela Clarke (bottom center), director of West Palm's PACE Center for Girls, is ringed by girls from the day school and counseling program: Hannah (clockwise from left of Clarke), Jessica, Elizabeth, Tara, Alicia, Nena and Christy. Proposed cuts may close two centers in Florida.

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Weather:
Storms.
High 88,
low 76.
FORECAST ON
BACK PAGE
OF SPORTS

BUSINESS	1D	LOTTERY	2A
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MARLINS
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Dan Rather sues CBS over discredited story
He claims he was made a scapegoat; CBS says the suit lacks merit. **Story, 2A**

Aaronson says support for road not bought
A farmland roadway was for homeowners' benefit, the commissioner says. **Local, 1B**

Consumers speak out for extension service
The threatened program provides vital information, they say. **Business, 1D**

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