

**THE MARKETS**

STOCKS, MUTUAL FUNDS, 5-6C

- ▼ DOW 30 INDUSTRIALS  
10,565.39 - DOWN 64.28
- ▼ S&P 500 STOCK INDEX  
1,183.78 - DOWN 5.87
- ▼ NASDAQ COMPOSITE  
2,007.51 - DOWN .28
- ▲ U.S. 10-YEAR NOTE  
4.52 - UP .01
- ▲ CRUDE OIL PER BARREL  
57.46 - UP .74

**BUSINESS BRIEFS**

● **MARKETS**

**Stocks move downward**

Wall Street's chronic inflation fears pushed stocks lower Monday as investors nervously awaited the Federal Reserve's latest take on pricing pressures and interest rates. High oil prices, which briefly topped \$57 per barrel before retreating, also weighed on the market.

With oil at near-record levels, investors are concerned that the economy is caught in a bind between surging energy prices, which could trickle down through the rest of the economy, and higher interest rates that could make capital harder to come by for businesses seeking to expand.

● **WINN-DIXIE**

**Sale of jet requested**

Winn-Dixie Stores is seeking bankruptcy court permission to sell its corporate jet for \$15.18 million, according to a court filing by the company.

If approved at a March 30 hearing, Winn-Dixie plans to sell the 2002 Gulfstream G-200 and two Pratt and Whitney engines to Molinaro Koger, a hotel real estate advisory company based in McLean, Va.

Winn-Dixie, which filed for reorganization under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code in February, said in a Friday court filing it had been attempting to sell the 11-passenger aircraft since October.

● **AUTOMAKERS**

**Healthcare costs reviewed**

General Motors Corp. and Ford Motor Co., the nation's two largest automakers, are reviewing their healthcare costs with the United Auto Workers and may follow smaller rival Chrysler in negotiating a new healthcare contract with the union, the UAW said on Monday.

The agreement, which goes into effect April 1, requires around 35,000 Chrysler hourly workers and retirees to pay annual deductibles of between \$100 and \$1,000 for healthcare that previously had been free. The company declined to provide the specific amount it will save.

● **WORLD COM**

**\$4.5M to be paid**

The last former WorldCom board member involved in an investor lawsuit agreed on Monday to pay \$4.5 million out of his own pocket to settle the claim.

The settlement reached by Bert Roberts, a former chairman of WorldCom, brings to \$24.75 million the total that 12 former board members are paying personally to settle the class action suit. Insurers for the 12 are kicking in an additional \$36 million.

● **PEPSICO**

**Pepsi One to use Splenda**

PepsiCo will make Pepsi One with Splenda rather than aspartame to compete with Coca-Cola's new Diet Coke using the sweetener.

The new version of 7-year-old Pepsi One will be sold starting this month, with full U.S. distribution by April, Purchase, N.Y.-based PepsiCo said. Coca-Cola previously said that Diet Coke with Splenda will be distributed in the second quarter.

● **BASS PRO SHOPS**

**Dolphin Mall to get store**

Bass Pro Shops announced plans Monday to bring its interactive outdoor sports store to Dolphin Mall, which would be the chain's first location in Miami-Dade County. Bass Pro already has a store in Dania Beach.

Bass Pro expects to open in late 2006. The 100,000-square-foot store will be Dolphin Mall's 16th anchor.

The new store will include an extensive saltwater fishing section and a 25,000-square-foot boat showroom, as well as equipment and clothing for camping, backpacking and other outdoor activities.

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

# Supra emerges from bankruptcy

■ **Supra Telecommunications emerged from bankruptcy reorganization with new owners, including one of the largest phone companies operating in Florida and Georgia.**

BY BEATRICE E. GARCIA  
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Supra Telecommunications emerged from a long stint in bankruptcy court with two new owners that give the Miramar company a chance to jump start its operations

and become an independent competitor to BellSouth.

Supra's new owners are Maitland-based FDN Communications, one of the largest independent providers of telecom services to businesses in Florida and Georgia, and H.I.G. Capital, a Miami venture capital firm. They each own 50 percent of the company.

The buyout of Supra had been approved by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Miami in January and

• **TURN TO SUPRA, 5C**



**AT A GLANCE**

**Supra Telecommunications**

- Based in Miramar
- 264,000 residential customers
- Annual revenues exceeding \$150 million

**FDN Communications**

- Based in Maitland
- Operations in 100 major markets throughout Florida and Georgia
- 70,000 business customers

**TRADE**



JULIE PLASENCIA/AP FILE

**WIDE LOAD:** One of the largest vessels allowed passage through the Panama Canal, referred to as 'Panamax,' makes its way to the Atlantic Ocean. The oversized ships are a reminder of the importance of an upcoming referendum on widening the canal.

# OPENING LOCKS

PANAMA WILL DECIDE WHETHER TO EXPAND CANAL TO ACCOMMODATE OVERSIZED SHIPS

BY STEVEN DUDLEY  
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PANAMA CITY — The ships called "Panamax" get their name from their size: They barely fit through the 90-year-old Panama Canal. When they pass by the two separate 110-foot wide locks that control entry into the fresh water canal on both sides, the 106-foot wide steel hulls have but a few feet to spare.

The "Panamax" is a reminder of the importance of an upcoming referendum on widening the canal, tentatively scheduled for later this year.

The project may cost close to \$5 billion and take at least a decade. It's also expected to draw challenges from environmental groups and communities near the proposed expansion.

But Panamanian officials believe they have no choice but to go forward with the project if their country is to reap the benefits of booming Asia-United States trade.

"Panama is in a very privileged position to assist all those coun-

tries that are going to be the big economic players in the next 50 years," said Ebrahim Asvat, a presidential advisor. "[And] the canal has hit its top in terms of how much it can receive."

The canal's revenue has doubled in the last six years because of increased tolls. Traffic from China to the east coast of the United States is booming, India trade is on the rise.

But there's an obstacle to future growth. The problem lies in

the locks where the fresh water and salt water meet on both ends of the canal. These locks raise the ships to the water level of the Gatun lake when they enter the canal and lower them to sea level when they exit. The process is an engineering marvel requiring millions of gallons of water to raise and lower ships as big as buildings.

The locks are only 110 feet wide. And with up to 15 "Panamax" already clogging the locks daily, and more than 100 "Post-Panamax" (which are 150-foot wide) on the assembly lines, Panama faces a choice: create wider locks or face economic stagnation in a sector that accounts for as much as a third of the country's GDP.

"We need expansion," Asvat said. "What we need to be is a world canal."

Expanding means building two new locks on each end of the canal. The new wider locks would most likely parallel the existing locks.

• **TURN TO PANAMA CANAL, 5C**

**CARNIVAL CRUISES**

# Smooth sailing in the first quarter

■ **Carnival Corp. reported strong first-quarter net income and said advance bookings and pricing are looking up. Nevertheless, the stock fell nearly 6 percent.**

BY INA PAIVA CORDLE  
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Miami-based Carnival Corp. on Monday reported a 70 percent surge in first-quarter earnings, propelled by more bookings, higher pricing and additional capacity, despite increased fuel costs.

Still, perhaps due to higher fuel costs, Carnival's stock fell \$3.24, or 5.91 percent, to close at \$51.59 on Monday.

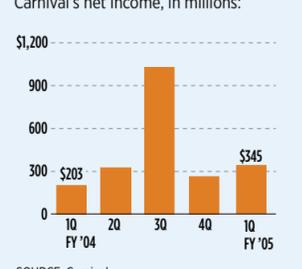
Tim Conder, leisure analyst with A.G. Edwards, said he was not alone in scratching his head over the stock drop. "You've got to deal with fuel, but excluding that, I thought it a very solid quarter."

First-quarter net income totaled \$345 million, or 42 cents per share, compared with \$203 million, or 25 cents per share, for the same period of 2004. The analysts' con-

• **TURN TO CRUISES, 5C**

**CRUISING**

Carnival's net income, in millions:



SOURCE: Carnival

P. CHEUNG/HERALD STAFF

**DEVELOPMENT**

# Office tower planned for Brickell Avenue

■ **A new 32-story office high-rise is planned for 1450 Brickell Ave., the first luxury tower to be built on Brickell Avenue in five years.**

BY BEATRICE E. GARCIA  
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Coming to South Florida's condominium-crowded building boom: a luxury office tower on Brickell Avenue in the heart of Miami's financial district.

This addition to the Miami skyline is the first office building planned since 2000, when the Mellon Financial Center, which includes the J.W. Marriott Hotel, was completed.

The \$150 million, 32-story building at 1450 Brickell Ave. will have 500,000 square feet of office space and will complement the upscale rental tower next door. Park Place will have 371 units and should be completed this summer.

Both the office and the rental towers are being developed by the Rilea Group, headed by Alan Ojeda. This developer already is familiar with the Brickell Avenue corridor. The Rilea Group and MDM Development Group cooperated on the Mellon Financial Center.

"We're a true office building, not mixed-use," said Ojeda, noting

• **TURN TO BRICKELL, 5C**

**LITIGATION, 3C**

**TIME WARNER MOVES ON**

Time Warner will pay a \$300 million penalty to close an SEC investigation.

**LABOR, 4C**

**FRANCE HALTS 35-HOUR WEEK**

The French government is moving to reinstate the 39-hour workweek.

**TECH TUESDAY, 8C**

**ASK JEEVES ANSWERS YES**

IAC expands into search engines by buying Ask Jeeves for \$1.85 billion.