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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2011
FINAL EDITION

HOLIDAY TRAVEL

Roads, skies will be crowded



PHOTOS BY PATRICK FARRELL/MIAMI HERALD STAFF

WESTBOUND: The Andreassen family, Erik (left), dad Bjorn, Katrina and "Molly" (the dog) traverse Miami International Airport on Monday as they travel from Fort Lauderdale to Phoenix for Thanksgiving with their grandmother.

Crowds are definite and storms are possible, experts warn. Thanksgiving travelers need to arrive early and be patient.

BY HANNAH SAMPSON
hsampson@miamiherald.com

Travelers this holiday week won't have much to be thankful for — at least not where their trip is concerned.

Because many airlines have been cutting back on routes, already cramped flights are likely to be even more packed and airfare is more expensive than last year. And at about \$3.36 for a gallon of regular unleaded, gas prices in Florida are expected to be 50 cents a gallon higher than last Thanksgiving.

Gas tank half-full view: "At least prices have flat lined," said Jessica Brady, spokeswoman for AAA Auto Club South. Leading up to Memorial Day, a gallon of gas was \$3.87 in Miami.

The AAA holiday forecast predicts a 4 percent increase in travel compared to 2010 over the long Thanksgiving weekend, which starts Wednesday.

Over the summer holidays, travel numbers were either relatively unchanged or showed a decrease compared to 2010 — which could explain why the number of travelers is expected to increase over Thanksgiving.

"A lot of it is probably pent-



SING ALONG: Uphiffani Cammon, front left, and Angelita Wilson, front right, sing with the Florida Memorial University Ambassador Chorale as they entertain travelers Monday at Miami International Airport.

up demand," Brady said. "Those who didn't have the means or weren't able to travel during the summer, chances are they're probably going to take [a trip] during the holidays to spend it with family and friends."

According to AAA, more than 42.5 million people are expected to travel 50 or more

miles away from home between Wednesday and Sunday. Of those, more than 38 million are expected to drive and almost 3.4 million leisure travelers will take to the skies.

Miami International Airport expects more than 839,000 passengers in the eight-day

• TURN TO TRAVEL, 2A

Travel tips

• **Pack light** and plan to do laundry at your destination to save on baggage fees and hassle.

• **Be an early bird.** The first flight of the day is less likely to face delays. At all times, arrive at least two hours in advance for domestic flights and three hours for international.

• **Don't worry** about children's shoes in the airport line — at least not for those 12 and younger. The TSA recently said children don't have to take shoes off to go through security.

• **Don't wait** until you get to the airport to take care of details. Check in, choose a seat and print boarding passes at home. Pay baggage fees in advance. Check flight status before you leave for the airport.

• **Plan parking and transportation** in advance (look for coupons). Reservations are available for some airport lots. Alternatively, order a shuttle or sedan service.

• **Security basics:** Keep ID out, take coats and shoes off, have laptops and zip-top plastic bags with liquids (3 ounces each or less) out for screening.

SOURCES: ORBITZ.COM, FLY.COM, TSA

THANKSGIVING

Go ahead, be thankful: It's good for you

■ **Academic research shows that expressing gratitude makes for better sleep, less anxiety, more satisfaction and kinder behavior.**

BY JOHN TIERNEY
New York Times Service

The most psychologically correct holiday of the year is upon us.

Thanksgiving may not be a

popular holiday for nutritionists, and it produces plenty of work for psychiatrists dealing with drunken family meltdowns. But it has recently become the favorite of psycholo-

gists studying the consequences of giving thanks.

Cultivating an "attitude of gratitude" has been linked to better health, sounder sleep, less anxiety and depression, higher long-term satisfaction with life, and kinder behavior toward others, including romantic partners. A new study

shows that feeling grateful makes people less likely to turn aggressive when provoked, which helps explain why so many brothers-in-law survive Thanksgiving without serious injury.

But what if you're not the

• TURN TO GRATITUDE, 2A

CONGRESS

Deficit panel concedes: No deal, no plan

■ **The supercommittee charged with cutting at least \$1.2 trillion from the federal deficit said it could not reach agreement.**

BY DAVID LIGHTMAN
AND WILLIAM DOUGLAS
McClatchy News Service

WASHINGTON — The failure of Congress' supercommittee — the bipartisan panel that was supposed to cut at least \$1.2 trillion from looming federal deficits — will trigger a fresh series of partisan clashes over taxes, spending, Social Security and a host of other fiscal matters, clashes likely to be begin immediately.

The collapse of the 12-member panel, announced Monday in a joint statement by co-chairs Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., and Rep. Jeb Hensarling, R-Texas, sent U.S. stock prices plunging and created at least another year's worth of fiscal uncertainty in Washington, smack in the middle of an already contentious 2012 election campaign.

"After months of hard work and intense deliberations, we have come to the conclusion today that it will not be possible to make any bipartisan agree-

• TURN TO DEFICIT, 13A

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EGYPT

Military government teetering

■ **Three days of street fighting in Cairo led the civilian Cabinet to resign. Parliamentary elections are scheduled next Monday.**

BY HANNAH ALLAM
AND MOHANNAD SABRY
McClatchy News Service

CAIRO — Egypt's civilian Cabinet resigned Monday to protest the military's harsh crackdown on demonstrators as an uprising against the ruling military council swelled into a third day of running battles in downtown Cairo.

Analysts openly debated whether the military council could survive the rising tide of protest, which bore striking resemblance to the 18 days of violence that led to the resignation of former President Hosni Mubarak in February. But they were also uncertain about what could come next in a country where the military has been the dominant political force for six decades.

The turmoil comes just days before crucial parliamentary elections, set for Monday, the first since Mubarak was toppled from office.

• TURN TO EGYPT, 13A

LOCAL, 1B

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS VICTIMIZED

COMMUNITY SERVICES WORKER ARRESTED, ACCUSED OF SELLING THEIR IDENTITIES FOR \$1,000

BUSINESS, 8B

HOME SALES STARTING TO SLOW

OCTOBER FIGURES ARE UP FROM A YEAR AGO BUT DOWN FROM THE PREVIOUS MONTH

SPORTS, 1D

PANTHERS WIN AFTER TRAILING 3-0

VERSTEEG SCORES TWICE TO START RALLY AS FLORIDA DUMPS DEVILS TO STAY IN 1ST PLACE



HOLIDAY TRAVEL

Get ready for full flights, busy highways

• TRAVEL, FROM 1A

stretch that started Monday, a 2.5 percent increase over last year. Due to airline capacity cuts, Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport expects about a 5.6 percent decrease in passengers over 2010.

Airport spokesman Greg Meyer said about 66,000 passengers a day are still expected through Monday, which he called "still a very, very busy time for us."

The Air Transport Association of America predicts 23.2 million travelers will fly between Nov. 18 and 29, a 2 percent drop compared to 2010, because airlines have been cutting back on flights.

Experts warn that the holidays bring more seasonal air travelers, who might not be as familiar with the security drill as frequent fliers.

New since last holiday season: Kids 12 and younger are less likely to be given a pat-down search and won't have to remove their shoes when they go through security checkpoints. A handful of airports, including Miami International, also have a pilot program in place to prescreen some travelers and get them through the airport process more quickly.

Other than that, even occasional travelers shouldn't find too many surprises this year — other than fewer planes in the sky and fuller flights.

"Last year was such a big frenzy with all the body scanners," said Anne Banas, executive editor of SmarterTravel.com. "That's sort of blown over and people have accepted and moved on."

The big variable, she warned, is weather.

"That can definitely throw a wrench into things," she said. "With a lot of these airlines getting fines for basically stranding people on the tarmac, I think you can expect to see airlines preemptively canceling flights when there are storms."

Airlines that keep passengers on grounded flights for more than three hours

'There were no crowds at the airport; everyone was at home cooking dinner.'

— Lourdes Brezo-Martinez of New York, on what it's like to fly on Thanksgiving morning.

could be fined thousands of dollars per person, a penalty that airlines could seek to avoid by trimming their flight schedule rather than risking delays.

According to the Weather Channel's holiday outlook, travel on Wednesday — typically one of the busiest travel days of the year — could suffer because of a system that could bring rain, snow and wind to the Northeast and thunderstorms all the way to Florida. Snow is most likely in northern New England and northern upstate New York.

"On this busy travel day, weather in the Northeast may be a travel headache," warns the outlook.

While travelers are waiting for their Thanksgiving flights, they might want to start thinking about Christmas and Hanukkah travel. Unlike Thanksgiving, the December holidays have more off-peak (read: less expensive) travel days.

"We didn't see that airfare was up as much for Christmas as it was to our top destinations for Thanksgiving," said Jeannette Tornatore, senior travel editor for Orbitz.com. "The closer to the holidays, it's probably going to go up."

Average round-trip domestic airfare is \$375 this Thanksgiving, a 6 percent increase from 2010, according to travel company Travelocity.

For latecomers, George Hobica of Airfarewatchdog.com said there could still be some reasonable tickets available for Thanksgiving — maybe. "You might be surprised," he said. "Take a



WELCOME TO FORT LAUDERDALE: Arriving passengers hop on a shuttle bus Monday at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport.

look three days before the holiday. You might find something."

He said traveling on Thanksgiving Day is a good way to get the best price.

That's exactly what public relations executive Lourdes Brezo-Martinez, a resident of New York City, is doing.

She is scheduled to leave New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport just after 6 a.m. Thursday — also her birthday — to be with her parents, adult children and other relatives. She said she saved about \$100 by flying Thursday.

Brezo-Martinez said she flew from New York to Miami two years ago on Thanksgiving and hopes to have a similar experience this year. "There were no crowds at the airport; everyone was at home cooking dinner," she said. "It was really, really wonderful."

She'll arrive just after 9 a.m. and expects just one drawback: "It's a little bit difficult to find a family member who will actually come and get you at that time on a holiday. But that's why they have SuperShuttle."



HEADED FOR MARCO ISLAND: Jeff McLean arrives at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport with his son and family from Connecticut.

PHOTOS BY WALTER MICHO/MIAMI HERALD STAFF

Busiest airports this week

1. Los Angeles International
2. Chicago O'Hare International
3. Orlando International
4. San Francisco International
5. Boston Logan International
6. New York LaGuardia
7. Denver International
8. John F. Kennedy International
9. Newark Liberty International
10. Seattle-Tacoma International

SOURCE: ORBITZ INSIDER INDEX FOR THANKSGIVING 2011

Top 10 destinations

1. New York
2. Chicago
3. Orlando
4. Denver
5. Los Angeles
6. Las Vegas
7. Washington, D.C.
8. Atlanta
9. San Francisco
10. Fort Lauderdale

SOURCE: ORBITZ 2011 HOLIDAY TRAVEL INSIDER INDEX

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THANKSGIVING

Being grateful can bring benefits

• GRATITUDE, FROM 1A

grateful sort? Let's ask for guidance from some psychologists who have made gratitude a hot research topic. Here's their advice for getting into the spirit of the holiday — or at least making it through dinner Thursday:

• **Start with "gratitude lite":** That's the term used by Robert A. Emmons, of the University of California, Davis, for the technique used in pioneering experiments he conducted along with Michael E. McCullough of the University of Miami. They instructed people to keep a journal listing five things for which they felt grateful, like a friend's generosity, something they'd learned, a sunset they enjoyed.

The gratitude journal was brief — one sentence for each of the five things — and done only once a week, but after two months there were significant effects. Compared with a control group, the people keeping the gratitude journal were more optimistic and felt happier. They reported fewer physical problems and spent more time working out.

Further benefits were observed in a study of polio survivors and other people with neuromuscular problems. The ones who kept a gratitude journal reported feeling happier and more optimistic than those in a control group, and these reports were corroborated by observations from spouses. "These grateful people also fall asleep more quickly at night, slept longer and woke up feeling more refreshed."

"If you want to sleep more soundly, count blessings, not sheep," Emmons advises in *Thanks!* his book on grat-

itude research.

• **Don't confuse gratitude with indebtedness:** Sure, you may feel obliged to return a favor, but that's not gratitude, at least not the way psychologists define it. Indebtedness is more of a negative feeling and doesn't yield the same benefits as gratitude, which inclines you to be nice to anyone, not just a benefactor.

In an experiment at Northeastern University in Boston, Monica Bartlett and David DeSteno sabotaged each student participant's computer and arranged for another student to fix it. Afterward, the students who had been helped were likelier to volunteer to help someone else — another complete stranger — with an unrelated task. Gratitude promoted good karma. And if it works with strangers ...

• **Try it on your family:** No matter how dysfunctional your family, gratitude can still work, says Sonja Lyubomirsky of the University of California, Riverside. "Do one small and unobtrusive thoughtful or generous thing for each member of your family on Thanksgiving," she advises. "Say thank you for every thoughtful or kind gesture. Express your admiration for someone's skills or talents — wielding that kitchen knife so masterfully, for example. And truly listen, even when your grandfather is boring you again with the same World War II story."

• **Don't cateractack:** If you're bracing for insults Thursday, consider a recent experiment at the University of Kentucky. After turning in a piece of writing, some students received praise for it while others got

a scathing evaluation: "This is one of the worst essays I've ever read!"

Then each student played a computer game against the person who'd done the evaluation. The winner of the game could administer a blast of white noise to the loser. Not surprisingly, the insulted essayists retaliated against their critics by subjecting them to especially loud blasts — much louder than the noise administered by the students who'd gotten positive evaluations.

But there was an exception to this trend among a subgroup of the students: the ones who had been instructed to write essays about things for which they were grateful. After that exercise in counting their blessings, they weren't bothered by nasty criticism — or at least they didn't feel compelled to amp up the noise against their critics.

"Gratitude is more than just feeling good," says Nathan DeWall, who led the study at Kentucky. "It helps people become less aggressive by enhancing their empathy. It's an equal-opportunity emotion. Anyone can experience it and benefit from it, even the most crotchety uncle at the Thanksgiving dinner table."

• **Share the feeling:** Why does gratitude do so much good? "More than other emotion, gratitude is the emotion of friendship," McCullough says. "It's part of a psychological system that causes people to raise their estimates of how much value they hold in the eyes of another person. Gratitude is what happens when someone does something that causes you to realize that

you matter more to that person than you thought you did."

• **Try a gratitude visit:** This exercise, recommended by Martin Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania, begins with writing a 300-word letter to someone who changed your life for the better. Be specific about what the person did and how it affected you. Deliver it in person, preferably without telling the person in advance when the visit is about. When you get there, read the whole thing slowly to your benefactor.

"You will be happier and less depressed one month from now," Seligman guarantees in his book *Flourish*. • **Contemplate a higher power:** Religious individuals don't necessarily act with more gratitude in a specific situation, but thinking about religion can cause people to feel and act more gratefully, as demonstrated in experiments by Jo-Ann Tsang and colleagues at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Other research shows that praying can increase gratitude.

• **Go for deep gratitude:** Once you've learned to count your blessings, Emmons says, you can think bigger.

"As a culture, we have lost a deep sense of gratefulness about the freedoms we enjoy, a lack of gratitude towards those who lost their lives in the fight for freedom, a lack of gratitude for all the material advantages we have," he says. "The focus of Thanksgiving should be a reflection of how our lives have been made so much more comfortable by the sacrifices of those who have come before us."