

total rush!"

Homer headed out of Macy's and toward J.C. Penney. On the way, she propped a soldier on a marble tabletop and another on the counter at a smoothie cart.

The day before, 55 members of the Florida National Guard had returned home. Friday was the funeral for one soldier who didn't. And Homer, without being maudlin, was in a pensive mood: "I just want this war to end."

SIMPLE MESSAGE

So do a lot of people. Will the toy soldiers succeed where thousands of war protesters have failed? Staff at the Florida senators' office said they did not field an increase in calls. But the campaign has enormous appeal. It's an example of a tough issue sharpened by simplicity. It also suggests the power of new ways of thinking.

No, college students aren't protesting the way they did in the 1960s, but why can't this quiet way be just as noble? Computers, e-mail and inexpensive printing offer their own modern response to an increasingly mechanized war.

The stealth soldiers also bring something else to this depressing debate: serious whimsy. Years back, a beloved co-conspirator and I blanketed the streets with homemade stickers printed with poetry.

As Homer strolled Dadeland Mall, I got to thinking: What if someone were to buy a pack of toy soldiers? And what if someone were to attach to them, not rational appeals, but lines of verse? Say, perhaps, something from Li Po: *So, men are scattered and smeared over the desert grass, / And the generals have accomplished nothing.*

It probably wouldn't end the war. Maybe no one would notice. But it'd be one quiet protest, one sliver of beauty against the enormity of sorrow and destruction.

It's absurd. Someone should do it.



REYKA



HERNANDEZ

senseless.'

- SUSAN TOMMERS, longtime Pompano Beach resident

Anyone with information is urged to call Broward CrimeStoppers at 954-493-8477. Tipsters can remain anonymous.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Terrorism trial heads into final stages

■ Closing arguments begin Monday in the case of the alleged 'dirty bomber' after three months of trial - and lots of attempts to link defendant Jose Padilla to al Qaeda.

BY JAY WEAVER

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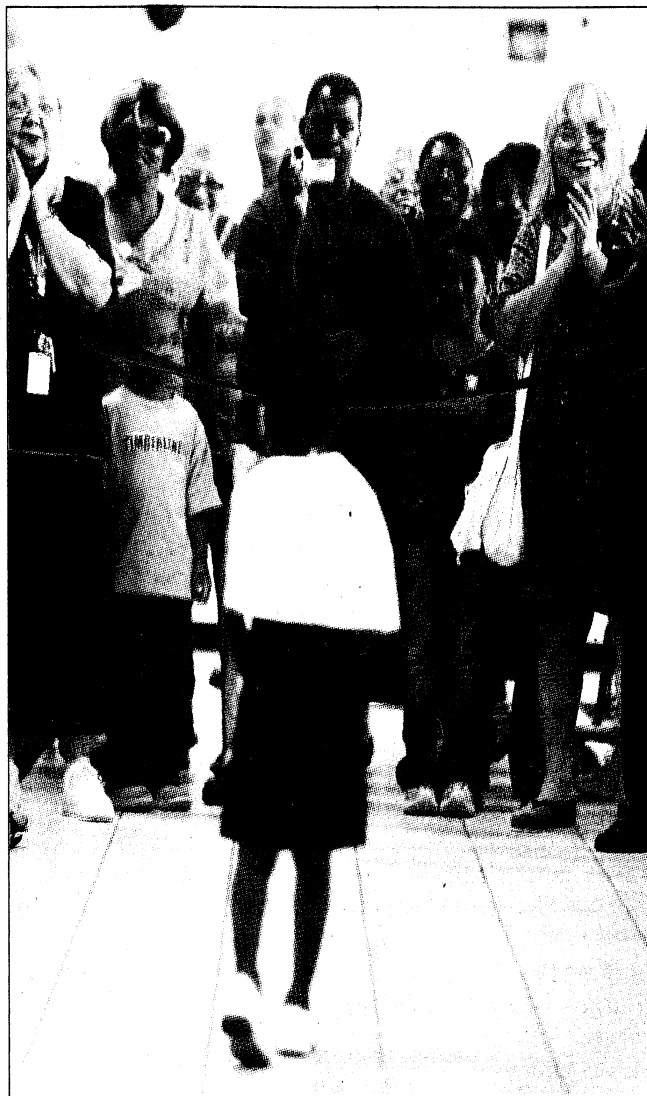
Count on prosecutors mentioning al Qaeda countless times during closing arguments Monday at the Jose Padilla terrorism trial in Miami federal court.

Prosecutors will argue that Padilla, a former Broward resident better known as the "dirty bomber," was an al Qaeda recruit sent to train with the terrorist group by the accused ringleader of a South Florida-based cell.

Three teams of defense lawyers — for Padilla, his mentor, Adham Amin Hassoun, and Hassoun's colleague, Kifah-Wael Jayyousi — will challenge the government's charges of conspiring to provide material support such as money, equipment and recruits for terror-

•TURN TO PADILLA, 2B

CUTE FASHIONS



JARED LAZARUS/MIAMI HERALD STAFF

Abigail Williams, 4, pauses to acknowledge applause during the Back-to-School Bash and Fashion Show Saturday at the Salvation Army Family Super Store in Pembroke Pines. Elementary- and middle-school kids served as runway models, strutting their stuff in 'gently used' clothes, promoted as a fashionable and economic alternative to retail-store offerings.

MIAMI-DADE

Students rally for children of immigrants

■ Activists are calling on Congress to pass the DREAM Act, which would allow undocumented immigrants' children - who have lived here for at least five years - to pursue college in this country.

BY TANIA deLUZURIAGA

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Gaby Pacheco doesn't know when her immigration status will cause the pursuit of her dreams to come to a screeching halt, but she fears the day is inevitable.

"I went to high school with the sorrow of knowing that when I graduated, maybe it was the end," said Pacheco, an undocumented immigrant who moved here from Ecuador with her family more than 15 years ago.

Pacheco addressed a crowd of more than 100 people who gathered at Miami Dade College's Kendall Campus Saturday to learn more about the DREAM Act, a bill that would offer students who grew up in the United States a chance at legal residency.

•TURN TO GOMEZ, 2B

MIAMIHERALD.COM: CLICK ON TODAY'S EXTRAS FOR PAST COVERAGE OF JUAN GOMEZ'S IMMIGRATION PLIGHT.