Inflation, jobless data positive



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Edward Zelles Jr., left, a trader with Barclay's, explains his work to NASA astronauts Michael Massimino, center, and Scott Altman during their visit Thursday.

Dow rings up gains for 8 straight days

Greece worries temper enthusiasm

By Stephen Bernard
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NEW YORK — Stocks ended mixed Thursday after reports signaled that the economy is slowly regaining strength.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose for an eighth straight day, its longest unbroken climb since August. The Dow gained 46 points while broader indexes were little changed.

Reports indicated that inflation remains in check, jobless claims are inching lower and manufacturing is growing.

The Labor Department said its Consumer Price Index was unchanged in February and that initial jobless claims fell last week. Meanwhile, the Philadelphia Federal Reserve said manufacturing in its region increased this month. The Conference Board, a private research group, said its index of leading indicators rose at a slow pace last month.

"The market has been grinding higher on what has been benignly positive news," said Alan Gayle, senior investment strategist for RidgeWorth Investments. "There is a growing sense the economy is plodding along in the right direction."

Renewed concern about economic troubles in Greece kept the gains in check. The country said it might turn to the International Monetary Fund for support if European leaders can't agree to a bailout plan next week.

According to preliminary calculations, the Dow rose 45.50, or 0.4 percent, to 10,779.17. That marks the highest close since Oct. 1, 2008. The Dow last rose for eight straight days in the period ended Aug. 27.

The broader Standard & Poor's 500 index slipped 0.38, or less than 0.1 percent, to 1,165.83, while the Nasdaq com-

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