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STATE EDITION



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DANIEL WEBSTER

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Senate votes not to accept gay marriage

By **PAULA TRACY**
Union Leader Staff

CONCORD — New Hampshire would not acknowledge gay marriages under a bill that passed the state Senate yesterday, 16-7.

Senate Bill 427 declares that New Hampshire shall not give legal effect to laws or judicial

proceedings of other states that recognize as marriage or the legal equivalent of marriage relationships between members of the same sex.

The bill also states that in New Hampshire, marriage is between a man and a woman.

Sen. Clifton Below, D-Lebanon, described the bill as "codifying discrimination and prejudice in our state."

But Sen. Andre Martel, R-Manchester, said "neither the courts nor the legislatures of another state should dictate the definition of marriage in New Hampshire."

Opponents said the bill, which has Gov. Craig Benson's support, goes far beyond existing laws and is prejudicial, discriminatory, anti-family and anti-community.

Sen. Frank Sapareto, R-Derry, said gays can give partners legal rights through creation of powers-of-attorney, trusts and health-care proxies.

More than 400 attended a hearing on the bill last month.

Sen. Sylvia Larsen, D-Concord, said she has struggled with the bill, but felt it would be wrong to pass it.

"Love, honor and cherish are not exclusive to relationships among men and women. New Hampshire already has a law that says marriage is between a man and a woman, and that will still be there. . .," she said.

She said the bill is about voiding relationships.

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Laconia diver believed drowned

◆ **Training mission:** A Laconia firefighter was with a fellow member of the department when catastrophe struck.

By **TOM FAHEY**
Union Leader Staff

Divers plan to resume their search today for a Laconia firefighter who is missing and presumed to have drowned yesterday during a training dive in Lake Winnepesaukee.

Firefighter Mark Miller, an expert diver, was reported missing in the Weirs Beach section of the state's largest lake about 3:45 p.m.

He and another firefighter were on a training dive. Authorities did not release the name of Miller's companion.

Fish and Game Maj. Tim Acerno said the two communicated beneath the water and agreed to head up. But when Miller's companion came to the surface, he was alone, according to Acerno.

The diver who surfaced tried to find Miller beneath

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Al-Qaida tie probed in Spain



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Firefighters carry a body on a stretcher from a bomb-damaged passenger train following several explosions on trains in Madrid yesterday, just three days before Spain's general elections. The explosions killed almost 200 rush-hour commuters and wounded more than 1,200 in Spain's worst terrorist attack ever.

Train bombings make March 11 a day of 'infamy'

8Spain

By **MAR ROMAN**
The Associated Press

MADRID, Spain — A series of bombs hidden in backpacks exploded in quick succession yesterday, blowing apart four commuter trains and killing at least 192 people and wounding 1,200. Spain blamed Basque separatists but a shadowy group claimed responsibility in the name of al-Qaida for the worst terrorist attack in Spain's history.

Panicked commuters trampled on each other, abandoning their bags and shoes, after two of the bombs went off in one train in the Atocha station in the heart of Madrid. Train cars were turned into twisted wrecks and platforms were strewn with corpses. Cell phones rang unanswered on the bodies of the dead as frantic relatives tried to call them.

"March 11, 2004, now holds its place in the history of infamy," Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar said.

The bombing came three days ahead of Spain's general election on Sunday. A major campaign issue was how to deal with ETA, the Basque militant group.

Campaigning for the election was called off and three days of mourning were declared.

It was also 2½ years after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, and was Europe's worst since the bombing of a Pan Am jetliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 that killed 270 people.

The 10 backpack bombs exploded in a 15-minute span, starting about 7:39 a.m., on trains along nine miles of commuter line from Santa Eugenia

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Charlie Sherman quits WMUR post

By **JIM FENNELL**
Staff Sports Writer

One of the state's more recognizable media personalities has taken himself off the air.

Charlie Sherman, sports director at WMUR-TV since 1995, resigned after 13 years at the Manchester television station.

WMUR General Manager Jeff Bartlett said he waited most of yesterday before accepting the resignation.

"I held off announcing it because I hoped he would change his mind, but so far he hasn't," Bartlett said. Bartlett said he would not discuss Sherman's reasons for resigning, but said the door is still open for him to come back.

Attempts to reach Sherman were unsuccessful.

Bartlett said sports reporters Jamie Staton

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SHERMAN
sports anchor

St. Pat's Day starts early

◆ **Annual dinner:** Quips, food, good friends and the color green highlight the festivities.

By **RILEY YATES**
Union Leader Staff

MANCHESTER — One hundred loaves of rye bread and just as many pies. Fourteen hundred pounds of potatoes, cabbage, turnips and carrots. The corned beef weighed in at 1,300 pounds. And it was all gone in 45 minutes.

It was a typical New Hampshire Association of Fire Chiefs annual March Meeting last night, as the movers-and-shakers of the state rubbed elbows over cabbage and corned beef to kick off St. Patrick's Day celebrations.

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DAVID LANE/UNION LEADER

Firefighters serve corned beef and all the trimmings last night during the New Hampshire Association of Fire Chiefs annual March Meeting at St. George Orthodox Cathedral in Manchester.

Debit cards hit in Lakes Region

◆ Banks act quickly after being told of security threat.

By **DENIS PAISTE**
Union Leader Staff

After receiving a notification from Mastercard of a possible compromise of card number security, customers of Meredith Village Savings Bank and Laconia Savings Bank have had their debit cards canceled as a precaution and are being issued new cards.

"Unfortunately, in this era . . . this is becoming more and more common," said Lisa Garcia, Meredith Village Savings Bank's assistant vice president and marketing officer.

She said the bank calls customers individually to tell them their card has been canceled and they will be receiving a new one. The affected debit cards bear the MasterMoney logo. The banks declined to say how many customers were affected.

Laconia Savings Bank Executive Vice President

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Good Morning, New Hampshire!



A Small Prayer

Dear Lord, may we seek out
Your will for us today. Amen.

Chuckie

You know the honeymoon's
over when the only baby talk in
the house is done by the baby.



Cloudy, breezy; chance of snow

Renee Lefebvre,
Grade 5,
New Boston

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Today's Letters

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