

Amendment to ban gay marriages advances

Some supporters of same-sex marriage who voted for the measure in the Massachusetts legislature did so for tactical reasons and will attempt to scuttle it later.

BY PAM BELLUCK
THE NEW YORK TIMES

BOSTON — Massachusetts legislators moved a step closer yesterday to amending the state Constitution to ban same-sex marriages and establish civil unions for gay and lesbian couples, by passing three preliminary votes on the amendment.

But it was not clear last night whether the measure, which is considered a compromise amendment, would ultimately clear all the hurdles it faces.

Some lawmakers who support same-sex marriages and oppose the amendment voted for it anyway in the first round, to prevent amendments with more conservative language from advancing to the next stage. That group of about two dozen lawmakers was apparently intending to defeat the amendment when it moves to a later stage in the process. Lawmakers were still debating the issue last night.

SEE MARRIAGE, A8

Masonic Temple hotel proposal pleases panel

The Capital Center Commission approves the plan of the upscale hotel's developer, which must now secure over half of the \$77-million project's financing.

BY BRUCE LANDIS
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — The plan to convert the long-empty and decaying Masonic Temple into an upscale hotel took a step forward yesterday, getting the enthusiastic approval of the Capital Center Commission.

The developer, Sage Hospitality Resources, said it hopes to start preliminary construction work next month.

In a critical area, company officials said they are close to completing the project's financial foundation. More than half the cost still needs financing, but the company says it has a verbal agreement that it hopes to formalize shortly.

SEE HOTEL, A9

Ex-congressional aide charged with working for Iraq

BY CAMERON W. BARR and DAN EGGEN
THE WASHINGTON POST

A former congressional press aide from Takoma Park, Md., was arrested yesterday for allegedly maintaining an "intelligence relationship" for several years with U.S.-based spies for Saddam Hussein before the Iraqi leader was ousted.

Among other activities, the authorities said, Susan Lindauer, 40, cooperated with Iraqi intelligence agents in January 2003 by delivering a letter to the home of a relative, White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card, urging the Bush administration to hold off its invasion of Iraq so weapons inspectors could continue their work.

Lindauer, described by people who know her as an ardent foe of the U.S.-led war against Saddam's regime, was arrested at her home by FBI agents after a federal indictment in New York charged her

SEE IRAQ, A5

Terror strikes in Spain

Railway bombs kill nearly 200

The Spanish government blames Basque separatists, but some evidence points to an al-Qaida connection.

BY TRACY WILKINSON
LOS ANGELES TIMES

MADRID, Spain — In the most devastating terrorist attack in Spanish history, 10 bombs that detonated minutes apart ripped through crowded commuter trains at three Madrid stations early yesterday, killing more than 190 people, wounding more than 1,400 and sending this capital into convulsions of shock and horror three days before a national election.

Authorities immediately blamed the Basque separatist group ETA for the deadliest terrorism seen in Europe in almost two decades. But the scale of carnage went far beyond anything the separatists had ever carried out and led to speculation that other groups might be responsible.

Interior Minister Angel Acebes initially said it was "absolutely clear" that ETA was responsible. Late yesterday, however, he went before reporters to say the police had recovered a stolen van with seven bomb detonators and a tape recording of Koranic verses read in Arabic. The van was found in a suburb where the targeted trains originated, he said.

"I have instructed security forces not to discard any line of investigation," Acebes said.

A short time later, an Arabic-language newspaper in London said it had received a letter purporting to claim responsibility for the bombings in the name of al-Qaida, having "infiltrated the heart of Europe."

The rush-hour blasts paralyzed Madrid. Political parties canceled

SEE SPAIN, A10



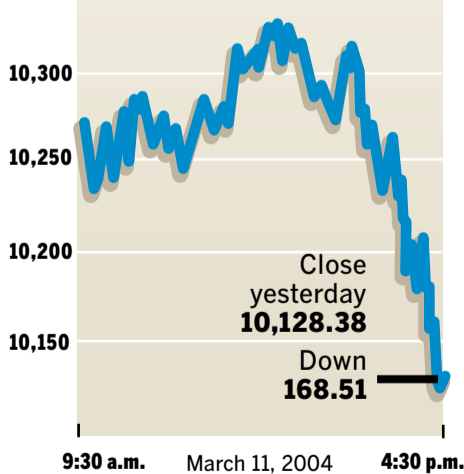
AP PHOTO / PAUL WHITE

Firefighters carry a stretcher holding a body from a shattered commuter train in Madrid yesterday. Bombs detonated on three trains and in one rail station in what one Spanish newspaper called "Our 9/11."

Investors recoil

Yesterday's attacks reverberated in the stock market, contributing to the biggest four-day point drop in the Dow Jones Industrial Average since October 2002. The Dow dropped nearly 170 points yesterday alone — more than half of its decline so far this year — and travel and insurance companies felt the brunt of investors' fears. **Story, E1**

The Dow's reaction



SOURCE: Bloomberg News JOURNAL GRAPHIC



Thousands demonstrate in Vitoria, the capital of Spain's autonomous Basque region, to protest yesterday's train bombings.

AP PHOTO / JON DIMIS

'Our country has never seen this'

Spain is used to the tremors of terrorism, but yesterday's indiscriminate mass killing changes the equation.

BY ELAINE SCIOLINO
THE NEW YORK TIMES

MADRID, Spain — Dr. Eduardo Asensio, a rescue worker, has waded in death for two decades, but none of it prepared him for the torment he saw at the height of rush hour early yesterday.

"I've been through so many

other catastrophes, but not this," Asensio said, still in his bloodstained white medical uniform outside the Atocha railway station. "So many bodies, all along the railway lines. Dead. Our country has never seen this."

Chaos spread like a contagion, accompanied by the screams of

ambulance sirens and the roar of police helicopters. People fleeing the trains trampled one another.

"This catastrophe goes beyond the imaginable," firefighter Juan Redondo said.

Cell phones rang near dead bodies as people struggled to call relatives. Hospitals took in patients as ambulances streamed one after the other. Weeping family members

SEE SCENE, A11

INSIDE TODAY

INDEX

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7 SECTIONS / 58 PAGES

Annie's	Lifebeat	G1
Mailbox	Local news	C1
Bridge	Lotteries	D7
Business	Movies	G1
Classified	People	G1
Comics	Sports	D1
Crossword	Television	G10
Death notices	What's	
Editorial	Happening	G8
Legal ads		

URI SUCCUMBS TO QUICK GW; PC CAN'T FIND ITS GROOVE

George Washington runs over, around and through the University of Rhode Island Rams in a 79-50 drubbing in the Atlantic 10 Tournament quarterfinals, and Providence College drops a heartbreaker to Villanova, 69-66. **D-1**

THE HOUSING-PRICE PINCH

Rhode Island's real-estate prices over the last six years have risen three times faster than incomes, and that makes it tough for businesses trying to recruit employees, an economic-development study warns. **E1**



IMAX'S PEDAL TO THE METAL

NASCAR 3D puts you in the passenger seat for 200-mph stock-car racing thrills. **G1**

WEATHER

JUST A SPATTERING

Rain and snow showers will pepper the area today, and the high should reach 44. Tomorrow, chilly winds will clear the skies for the rest of the weekend. **C8**

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