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High Court Halts Gay Marriages



ROBERT DURELL *Los Angeles Times*
THWARTED: Patti Cooper, left, hugs partner Jeanne Rizzo after learning that they could not be married Thursday.

California justices vow to rule on the legality of San Francisco's action in the next few months. The city can pursue its case in lower courts.

By MAURA DOLAN AND LEE ROMNEY
Times Staff Writers

SAN FRANCISCO — The California Supreme Court unanimously ordered San Francisco on Thursday to stop marrying gay couples and announced that it would rule on the legality of the city's actions within the next few months.

City officials immediately complied with the court's order, directing the clerk not to issue any more same-sex marriage licenses as of 2:33 p.m. Thursday. The ruling from the high court came four weeks after Mayor Gavin Newsom ordered his staff to issue same-sex licenses, arguing that to do otherwise would violate the equal protection clause of the California Constitution.

Although the court's action leaves those existing licenses in place — at least for now — it was a setback for Newsom and his allies. The justices said that when they heard the case this spring, they would only consider the fairly narrow question of whether San Francisco officials had the authority to deem a state law unconstitutional. Unless the city wins that argument, which most legal experts consider a daunting prospect, the marriage licenses that have already been issued will probably be void.

[See Ruling, Page A14]

RELATED STORY

Massachusetts: A state constitutional amendment banning gay marriage gains. **A15**

COLUMN ONE

A Food Fight Over a Fungus

■ Quorn, a substitute for meat, has been eaten by millions in Europe, but a U.S. activist says the 'odious' product is literally sickening.

By ROSIE MESTEL
Times Staff Writer

STOKESLEY, England — Refrigerated trucks trundle down the pretty country lanes laden with pale, doughy masses of fungus — 32 tons or more a day.

"Pure mycoprotein — good enough to eat, won't taste of anything, very bland," declares manufacturing manager Pete Willis, tearing off a golf-ball-sized sample from a 2,000-pound glob.

Workers in white boots shepherd the fungal paste through a sea of vats and clanking machines that mix, press, slice and dice the raw dough.

What comes out at the end is a matter of perspective — luscious artificial meat patties that taste just like moist chicken, or dangerous vat-grown "vomit-burgers" that are sickening consumers from coast to coast.

The product is Quorn, a fungus-based meat substitute that millions of Europeans have eaten for years. It entered the U.S. market in 2002 to rave reviews by consumers, but was quickly met with a dogged anti-Quorn campaign by an influential consumer group, the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

Michael Jacobson, the CSPI's executive director, claims that Quorn, which he derisively terms an "odious" "mold"-based product, makes people ill — and he wants every last nugget expunged from American soil.

He has started a "Quorn complaints" website, published anti-Quorn letters in medical journals and petitioned the Food and Drug Administration to yank the product, which he likes to note is made by a former subsidiary of the pharmaceutical juggernaut AstraZeneca.

"It seems in the FDA's eyes severe vomiting, diarrhea and anaphylactic reactions do not constitute harm," Jacobson said. "I think that's pathetic."

Quorn's manufacturers, based in the bucolic Yorkshire town of Stokesley, say they are perplexed and not a little irked over the complaints about what they prefer to describe as their "mushroom"-related product.

More than 1 billion servings of Quorn's 100-plus dishes have been eaten in Europe since the first savory pie was rolled out [See Quorn, Page A9]

House OKs Larger Fines for On-Air Indecency

By RICHARD SIMON
Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — The move to crack down on raunchy radio and TV broadcasts pushed forward Thursday as the House voted overwhelmingly to sharply increase fines for violations of federal indecency rules.

"American parents, Congress has finally heard you," said Rep. Joseph R. Pitts (R-Pa.).

The 391-22 vote in support of the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act was a rare display of election-year bipartisanship. A similar bill is moving through the Senate, and Congress is expected to send a compromise bill to the White House soon.

The House measure would raise fines from \$27,500 to a maximum of \$500,000 per violation and require a hearing on revoking a broadcaster's license after the third offense. Increased fines would apply not only to broadcasters but to performers if their actions were found to be willful. Theoretically, fines could reach into the millions.

The bill authorizes the Federal Communications Commission, in determining the fine, to take into account such factors as the size of the viewing or listening audience and the size of the company accused of violating decency standards.

Under the legislation, a station that receives programming [See Indecency, Page A15]

Train Bombings Kill Nearly 200 in Spain

1,400 Injured; Basque, Islamic Groups Attract Suspicion



REUTERS
AFTERMATH: A policeman walks past a train car at Madrid's Atocha station, where the first of the explosions occurred. Ten bombs detonated minutes apart on four commuter trains.

Al Qaeda Link Is One Possibility

Although separatists remain prime suspects, authorities wrestle with competing theories.

By SEBASTIAN ROTELLA AND TRACY WILKINSON
Times Staff Writers

MADRID — The size and savagery of Thursday's synchronized train station bombings suggest a significant shift in tactics by Basque separatists — or the work of an entirely new player in Spain.

Spanish authorities are wrestling with competing theories over who was responsible for the attacks that killed nearly 200

people and injured 1,400 others. Swift to blame militants of the Basque separatist group ETA fighting to secede from Spain, officials by the end of the day were forced to acknowledge that they were pursuing a more complex investigation.

Forensic evidence, including the type of explosives used, and the arrests in recent weeks of purported Basque terrorists armed with powerful bombs point to ETA as the prime suspect in Thursday's attacks, investigators said in interviews, echoing Interior Minister Angel Acebes.

ETA purportedly had planned a Christmas Eve bombing at another Madrid train station [See Blame, Page A5]



ASSOCIATED PRESS
BLOODIED: An injured youth is led away by a paramedic in Madrid.

By TRACY WILKINSON
Times Staff Writer

MADRID — In the most devastating terrorist attack in Spanish history, 10 bombs detonated minutes apart ripped through crowded commuter trains at three Madrid stations early Thursday, killing nearly 200 people, injuring 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 act of 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 Thursday, however, he went before reporters to say 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 claiming responsibility for the bombings in the name of Al Qaeda, having "infiltrated the heart of Europe."

The rush-hour blasts paralyzed Madrid. Political parties canceled what remained of their election campaigns, the right-wing government of Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar declared three days of mourning, and frantic relatives searched for loved ones at morgues and hospitals.

"This is mass murder," an ashen Aznar said after an emergency Cabinet meeting. "The date of March 11 now holds its place in infamy."

A hellish scene of destruction and anguish repeated itself at the three stations, including Atocha, the largest in Madrid and a hub for subways and long-distance trains just south of the famed Prado Museum.

About 7:40 a.m., three bombs shattered a commuter train that had just pulled into Atocha. Minutes later, four explosions ravaged a train a short distance away. Another bomb exploded at the Santa Eugenia station, four stops away, followed by two [See Madrid, Page A4]

RELATED STORY

Wall Street: Terrorism concerns spark a late sell-off in stocks; the Dow falls 168. **C1**

INSIDE

Ex-House Aide Accused of Spying for Iraq

Maryland woman allegedly tried to sway U.S. policy as an agent of Hussein's regime. **A13**

Saint Joseph's Magical Run Comes to a Halt

In their first defeat of the season, the Hawks lose 87-67 to unranked Xavier. **B7**

L.A. Weather

Mostly sunny today after morning low clouds and locally dense fog. L.A. Downtown: 75/55. **A2**

California News.....**B1**
The Nation ...**A8** Lottery.....**B5**
Sports.....**B6** Astrology.....**D16**



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
STANDOFF: Assembly Speaker Park Kwan Yong, second from right, is blocked by lawmakers loyal to President Roh Moo Hyun.

Roh Apologizes, but S. Korean Lawmakers Vote to Impeach

By BARBARA DEMICK
Times Staff Writer

SEOUL — In a historic first for South Korea, the National Assembly voted today to impeach President Roh Moo Hyun after a trivial political spat snowballed into a crisis that has in effect paralyzed the nation.

Under South Korea's Constitution, the impeachment still needs to be approved by the Constitutional Court. But in the interim period, which could last

six months, Prime Minister Ko Kon is to serve as acting president.

Roh, a self-styled political outsider, has had a stormy relationship with South Korea's entrenched political parties since taking office a little more than a year ago.

In today's voting, an unlikely collaboration of two leading parties at opposite ends of the political spectrum mustered 193 votes — more than the two-thirds of [See Roh, Page A7]

Key Republicans Admit Anxiety Over Campaign

Some say Bush's team has moved too slowly and has failed to address economic concerns.

By MARK Z. BARABAK AND JANET HOOK
Times Staff Writers

WASHINGTON — As President Bush steps up his reelection bid, key Republican officials and strategists are expressing concern about his campaign, saying the White House took too long to engage in the race and lacks a clear strategy for addressing voters' economic worries.

While most Republicans remain confident that Bush will win a second term, there is a growing sense within the party that the battle with John F. Kerry is likely to be closer and harder-fought than many thought just a few weeks ago.

"People are anxious," said David Carney, a Republican strategist in New Hampshire and White House political director for Bush's father. "There's a

lot of fretting going on out there."

Much of the hand-wringing stems from recent polls that showed Bush trailing Kerry nationwide. Most Republicans see that as the inevitable result of steady pounding from Democrats who have been campaigning — and bashing the president — for well over a year.

On Thursday, the Bush campaign rolled out two new television ads in response, including a 30-second spot that criticized the presumed Democratic nominee by name for the first time. "John Kerry," the ad says. "Wrong on taxes, wrong on defense."

But not everyone blames [See Reelection, Page A12]

THE RACE TO THE WHITE HOUSE

On the road: Bush attends 9/11 memorial groundbreaking and campaign events. **A12**

Ad war: The president enters the fray with a direct attack on John F. Kerry. **A12**