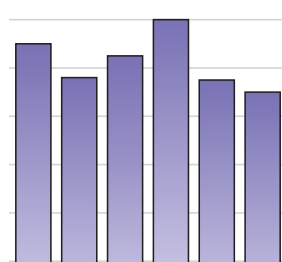




IT'S ITZHAK

»Famed violinist will launch philharmonic's second season. **Metro**



MORTGAGE MAGIC

»Refinancing may boom again as rates hit lowest level since July. **Business**

Britney

»Mother of falling waistlines playing Pepsi Center on Monday. **Go!**



The Gazette

COLORADO SPRINGS • MARCH 12, 2004

FRIDAY

50 CENTS DAILY • \$1.25 SUNDAY

INSIDE | SPORTS

FALCONS FALL



Forward Joel Gerlach watches the end of Air Force's 60-48 loss to Colorado State in the first round of the Mountain West Conference Tournament on Thursday. Air Force must wait and hope for an at-large invitation to the NCAA Tournament. The announcement will be Sunday.

PREP ACTION

In semifinals: Fountain-Fort Carson beats Pueblo South, and Sierra loses to Broomfield.

In quarterfinals: Evangelical Christian Academy boys become first team in school history to advance past state tournament's first round.

CANUCK SUSPENDED

Vancouver forward Todd Bertuzzi suspended for rest of season and postseason for sucker punch on Colorado's Steve Moore.

HOCKEY



First round WCHA series between Colorado College and University of Denver starts today.

VA benefits find accused rapist, but police can't

By BILL HETHCOCK
THE GAZETTE

A former Fort Carson soldier accused of raping a woman and assaulting two police officers has collected more than \$70,000 in Veterans Affairs disability benefits during more than two years on the lam.

Makani Kenny-Hall, 27, receives \$2,223 monthly for a service-related knee injury and bipolar disorder, Department of Veterans Affairs and 4th Judicial District court records show. He received his latest VA disability check March 1.

A year ago, while fleeing charges, he got a lump-sum payment of \$27,000 from the VA after a veterans group went to bat for him and his disability status was increased.

By law, Kenny-Hall and other veterans accused of serious crimes shouldn't be getting a penny from the VA, regardless of their disabilities.

The VA admits, however, it still is trying to get a handle on enforcing that law and saving an estimated \$209 million annually in improper payments.

Kenny-Hall is charged with sexual assault in a September 2001 attack. The woman, whom he knew, made a taped phone call from the police station after the attack. When she asked

SEE SUSPECT • PAGE 5

Loan winning over lawmakers

Some see trade-off for tobacco dollars as good way to shore up budget

By KYLE HENLEY
THE GAZETTE

DENVER • Lawmakers are leaning toward a plan to borrow as much as \$1 billion to shore up the state budget.

The loan would be secured by giving up the state's claim to future payments from the national tobacco settlement. Colorado's share of the settlement — the

states sued tobacco companies for the cost of treating smoking-related diseases — is about \$100 million a year.

Without the loan, called securitization, the state would have to cut spending by \$194 million during the 2004-05 fiscal year, which starts July 1, and slice \$393.5 million out of the 2005-06 budget.

"We think you are going to have to securitize and you are going to have to do

the whole thing," Rep. Brad Young, R-Lamar, told fellow House Republicans on Thursday. Young is on the Joint Budget Committee, the six-member legislative panel that sets the state budget.

Many states have used their tobacco settlement money for a variety of projects that have nothing to do with

SEE TOBACCO • PAGE 5



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ALSO: Lawmakers look at restricting obesity lawsuits, easing in-state tuition rules. **Metro 8**



SOLIDARITY: A protester Thursday in the capital of the autonomous Basque region holds up a sign reading in Spanish, "They were killed because they were Spaniards, I'm also a Spaniard," during a demonstration to protest the attacks on trains in Madrid that killed more than 190.

Bombings spawn new fears



PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CASUALTY: Firefighters carry out a body from a passenger train Thursday in Madrid. Eight trains were bombed.

Planning, scale of Madrid attacks makes blame hard to place

NEWS SERVICES

MADRID, Spain • The size and savagery of Thursday's synchronized train station bombings suggests 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 about who was responsible for the attacks that killed at

least 192 people and wounded about 1,400. Officials were swift to blame ETA, the Basque militant group seeking autonomy. By the end of the day, however, officials were forced to acknowledge they are pursuing a more complex investigation.

After the first three bombs went off in one train in the Atocha station in the heart of Madrid, panicked rush-hour

commuters trampled one another, abandoning bags and shoes. Seven other bombings followed on other trains.

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.

SEE SPAIN • PAGE 6

RESPONSIBLE: E-mail might link al-Qaida to blasts. **Page 6**

SCENE: Chaos, carnage followed train bombings. **Page 7**

California high court orders San Francisco to halt gay marriages

THE WASHINGTON POST

SAN FRANCISCO • The California Supreme Court ordered San Francisco on Thursday to stop issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples after lawsuits by the state and conservative groups. It ordered hearings within three months to decide the legality of the unions.

SPEECH TO EVANGELICALS: Bush repeats call for ban on same-sex marriage. **Page 4**

The high court, however, didn't void the more than 4,161 marriage licenses that San Francisco has issued to same-sex couples since Feb. 12, as the California attorney gener-

al had requested.

Rather, in its unanimous ruling, the seven-member panel said it will let those on both sides of the issue argue their cases as early as May.

The Supreme Court decision stops, at least for now, the wave of same-sex marriages in San Francisco that inspired local leaders in other states to officiate at gay wed-

dings. Gay and lesbian couples from across the nation have flocked to San Francisco to be married. After the court's ruling, city officials in San Francisco stopped issuing marriage licenses, leaving gay couples lined up at City Hall.

The ruling came on the same day

SEE MARRIAGE • PAGE 5

FORT CARSON

More than 10,000 Fort Carson troops are expected home from Iraq by the end of April. Here's the latest about the returns:

Who's here: So far, 2,986 Fort Carson soldiers have returned.

Who's coming: Today, 256 soldiers come home.

What's Next: On Sunday, 494 troops are expected back at the post.



Breezy and warmer
High 60 Low 30
Highs will reach 10 degrees above average. **A2**

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