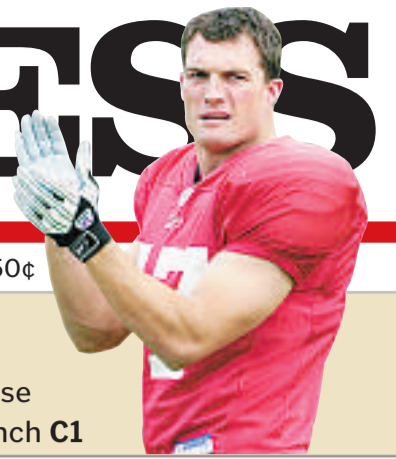


THE NEWS-PRESS



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CELEBRATE READING

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IT'S PARTY TIME

■ **LIFESTYLES** Spring breakers invade Fort Myers Beach E1

END OF AN ERA

■ **SPORTS** Tampa Bay set to release five-time Pro Bowl safety John Lynch C1

Bombs blow apart trains in Madrid, leaving 192 dead and 1,400 wounded

Who's behind attack?



PHOTOS BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

■ Rescue workers sift through a destroyed intercity train at the Atocha station in Madrid after a number of blasts rocked railway stations Thursday, just three days before Spain's general elections. The blasts killed at least 192 rush-hour commuters and wounded more than 1,400 in Spain's worst terrorist attack ever.

The News-Press wire services

The bombings of commuter trains in Madrid on Thursday prove at least one of two nightmare scenarios:

■ Al-Qaida has pulled off its first big attacks on the West since 9/11.

■ Basque terrorists in Spain, and maybe terrorists everywhere, are learning the tactics of al-Qaida and its affiliates.

Investigators in the next few days will try to determine which is true after a series of bombs hidden in backpacks exploded in quick succession, blowing apart four commuter trains and killing at least 192 people and wounding more than 1,400.

Panicked rush-hour 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



■ People light candles in Barcelona, Spain, on Thursday for the victims of the attack in Madrid.

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 is-

weeks before Thursday's attacks, several ETA plots were foiled. Police discovered two backpack bombs in a train station on Christmas Eve. A van was found recently containing explosives similar to those used in the backpack bombs Thursday.

But the well-coordinated attacks also have the hallmarks of al-Qaida. The bombers targeted civilians — something ETA has avoided. An Arabic-language newspaper in London received a letter claiming credit from an al-Qaida offshoot organization. And after the bombings, police discovered a van near a train station with bomb detonators and an Arabic tape inside, fueling speculation that the bombings were the work of Muslim extremists.

"It matters a lot who the perpetrators are," said Phil Gordon, a foreign policy analyst at the Brookings Institution, a think tank in

Washington. He served as European Affairs director on President Clinton's National Security Council.

If it's ETA, the aftermaths would be relatively limited and "seen as a local issue" in other European capitals, he said. But if al-Qaida is responsible, "it will be more of a Sept. 11 for them."

Spain has been one of the United States' closest allies in the war on terrorism. That has raised speculation that Muslim extremists might have targeted the country because of those ties.

The bombings occurred exactly 2½ years after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, and was Europe's worst since the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jetliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, that killed 270 people.

■ Also see al Qaida A3

■ Also see scene A3

■ Also see Wall Street D1

Feds allow condo near eagle's nest

Decision shocks critics, experts

BY ANDREA STETSON
Special to the News-Press

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is recommending that a developer be allowed to build a condominium even though it would be within 200 feet of a bald eagle nest in north Collier County.

Cocohatchee Partners Ltd., an arm of Signature Communities of Naples, wants to build as many as five condominiums on its property off Vanderbilt Drive near Wiggins Pass. Federal guidelines say no building should be erected within 750 feet of a bald eagle nest and an additional

750 feet during nesting season. But the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's report reduces that threshold.

There are enough bald eagle nests in Florida, so letting a developer build a condominium near a nest in north Collier County won't be a problem, the report said. The bald eagle is listed as a threatened species in Florida.

"Since 1982 the number of bald eagle nests has more than doubled," said Bert Byers, a spokesman for the service.

"While human disturbance may lead to abandonment of this nest, the eagles may build a nest elsewhere. The loss of this nest, including the loss of

■ See EAGLE A2

Ex-aide accused of helping Iraq

Md. woman denies she was paid agent

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — A former news reporter and press secretary for four members of Congress was charged Thursday

with being a paid Iraqi intelligence agent and trying to contact her distant cousin — White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card — to alter U.S. policy.

Susan Lindauer, 41, was taken into custody in her hometown of Takoma Park, Md., and made a brief court appearance in Baltimore, where a federal magistrate ordered a psychiatric evaluation and released her to a halfway house, pending the posting of \$500,000 bail.



LINDAUER Charged with being agent

"I'm an anti-war activist and I'm innocent," Lindauer told WBAL-TV outside the Baltimore FBI office. "I did more to stop terrorism in this country than anybody else. I have done good things for this country. I worked to get weapons inspectors back to Iraq when everyone else said it was impossible."

Neither Lindauer nor two defense lawyers spoke after the court appearance.

She was charged with conspiring to act as an unregistered agent of the Iraqi Intelligence Service and with engaging in prohibited financial transactions with the Iraqi government. The indictment makes no mention of her congressional work. She was not directly charged with espionage.

She could get up to 10 years in prison on the most serious charge.

The indictment said she accepted \$10,000 for working for the intelligence service from 1999 to 2002.

Man allegedly lured teens

Officials claim drugs used to get sex

BY SARAH LUNDY and KEVIN DUFFY
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GASKIN Accused of sexual assault

A Lehigh Acres man is accused of inviting teenagers to his house and sexually assaulting them, Lee County sheriff's officials said.

Frederick Gaskin, 42, of 2605 Sixth St. is charged with four counts of sexual battery, one count of a lewd or lascivious act and two counts of lewd battery.

Investigators learned about Gaskin in November when a Cape Coral High School resource officer alerted them of a possible sexual assault of a

student. They charged Gaskin, who lives alone, with one count of sexual battery. He was also charged

then with giving three girls the prescribed narcotic Xanax at his home and sexually assaulting one of them.

After his arrest, stories of assaults emerged involving other girls throughout the county ranging in ages from 12 to 16, according to Det. John Long.

Gaskin could not be

reached for comment.

Officials said Gaskin, between the summer of 2002 and fall of 2003, met the girls through friends and continued to talk with them over the Internet. He told them he was in his mid-20s, invited teenagers to his house and told them to bring friends. There they would use his pool, large-screen television and a computer.

In addition to Xanax, detectives said Gaskin supplied alcohol and other drugs, such as OxyContin and Percocet, to the teens, authorities said. He also allegedly offered money for sex with two of the girls.

Neighbor Jody Bukowski befriended Gaskin

■ See ASSAULT A3

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JAM program making mark

Lee project keeps tabs on juveniles

BY ALISON KEPNER
akepner@news-press.com

Lee County sheriff's Cpl. Bobby Magee approached Mitchell Mabbitt's house Thursday as the 16-year-old greeted him at the door.

Mitchell, who has been on probation since October, proudly showed him a certificate he earned for completing a seven-week drug rehabilitation program as the officer praised him.

"Mitch is doing fantastic," Magee told Mitchell's mother, Theresa.

She partly credits the Lee County Sheriff's Office's Juvenile Arrest and Monitoring program, which has officers such as



MARC BEAUDIN/THE NEWS-PRESS

■ Lee County sheriff's Cpl. Bobby Magee of the JAM unit talks with Sam Bruseth, 14, and his mother, Kitty Bruseth, on Thursday during a routine check in Lehigh.

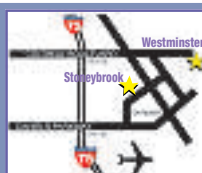
Magee randomly checking in him," she said.

Countywide, officers

"I see a very big change

■ See PROGRAM A2

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