

The Augusta Chronicle

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THE SOUTH'S OLDEST NEWSPAPER — ESTABLISHED 1785

Friday, March 12, 2004

WEATHER



Sunny
High: 68 Low: 32
More weather on Page 8B

NOTE TO READERS

There is no Applause section in today's newspaper. *The Chronicle* has shifted its weekly entertainment guide from Friday to Thursday to help readers get a head start on their weekend planning. For details, see Page 1D. For a list of events, see Page 3D.

INSIDE TODAY



SPECIAL

Section details tidbits on health

The *Augusta Chronicle's* Your Life section makes its Friday debut with alcohol detectors, walking for health, and a little-known study that should make every overcaffeinated java junkie happy — coffee may help prevent diabetes.

YOUR LIFE, 1D

More retirees claim mishandled funds

Dozens of Procter and Gamble retirees who sued AG Edwards over allegations that its Augusta manager mishandled their retirement assets find out that they are not the only ones.

BUSINESS, 14A

INDEX

Advice	6D
Automotive.....	1-2E
Bill Kirby	1B
Bridge	5D
Business	14, 15A
Classified	1-20E
Comics.....	4, 5D
Crossword	5D
Editorial.....	4, 5A
Fishing	6C
Horoscope	6D
Jumble.....	5D
Metro	1-7B
Movies	3D
Obituaries.....	4, 5B
Sports	1-8C
Your Life	1-6D

ONLINE

For more news coverage, visit augustachronicle.com.

DEATHS

- Mr. Charlie Black Evans
- Mr. Charlie Buie Sylvia
- Mr. Richmond Cheek Barnwell
- Mr. Callie Coleman Washington
- Mrs. Betty Cribbs Hepzibah
- Mrs. Sarah DeLoache Evans
- Mr. Edward Farmer Greensboro
- Mr. Jim Harris Augusta
- Mrs. Mildred Jenkins Tignall
- Ms. Francis Mahoney Florida
- Mr. Roger Matthews Augusta
- Mr. Alan McClendon Washington
- Mrs. Eloise Moseley Fairfax
- Mrs. Rosa Owens Augusta
- Mrs. Sara Rich Swainsboro
- Mr. Juan Sibaja-Carmona North Augusta



Train bombing in Spain claims 192



PETER DEJONG/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rescue workers remove a victim from a train at Atocha train station after an explosion there in Madrid, Spain. The blasts wounded more than 1,400 and were the worst terrorist attacks in Spain.

Culprits of attack remain unknown

By Mar Roman
Associated Press

MADRID, Spain — A series of bombs hidden in backpacks exploded in quick succession Thursday, blowing apart four commuter trains, killing at least 192 people and wounding more than 1,400.

Spain at first blamed Basque separatists but a shadowy group claimed responsibility in the name of al-Qaida for the worst terrorist attack in Spanish history.

Panicked rush-hour commuters trampled on one another, 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 that is seeking greater autonomy.

Campaigning for the election was called off and



BERNAT ARMAGUE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

People light candles in Barcelona, Spain, for the victims of the attack on trains and stations. Bombs tore through morning trains in Madrid.

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

The 10 backpack bombs exploded in a 15-minute

Please see SPAIN on PAGE 6A

Government pushes to end sales of sports supplement

By Lauren Neergaard
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The government ordered an end to sales of the steroidlike supplement andro, made famous by baseball's Mark McGwire, in the latest crackdown on over-the-counter pills that claim to help people get in better shape.

Thursday's move against andro came even as the government faced a legal challenge to its pending ban on sales of another supplement, ephedra.

Andro, short for androstenedione, is a steroid precursor — the body converts it into testosterone,

and, to some extent, estrogen.

Thus it poses the same health risks as directly using an anabolic steroid, the Food and Drug Administration said Thursday in warning 23 manufacturers to cease sales or face federal seizure of their products and other penalties.

Among the risks the FDA cited are heart and liver damage, and some gender-specific problems: testicular atrophy, impotence and breast enlargement for males, and facial hair, menstrual problems and increased risk of breast and uterine cancer for females. Children can undergo early puberty and stunting of

bone growth.

"These are irreversible, irreversible health consequences," FDA Commissioner Mark McClellan said.

Athletic use of performance-enhancing drugs is drawing harsh political scrutiny, even from President Bush, and legislation pending in Congress would ban over-the-counter sales of andro, athletes' trendy new steroid THG, and more than two dozen other steroidlike substances.

The Bush administration endorsed that legislation Thursday, and already had put sellers on notice that THG was an illegal steroid.



ANDREW DAVIS TUCKER/STAFF

Ernest Jones Jr., of Augusta, leaves his car in a parking bay in downtown Augusta on his way to University Health Central.

Downtown parking lots may change

By Preston Sparks
Staff Writer

About twice a week, Ernest Jones Jr. uses a parking bay on Broad Street while visiting University Health Central for a workout. And nearly twice a week, he says, he has a problem either finding a parking space or exiting the bay.

"You can't get out of here in a safe manner," he said Thursday after easing his truck into a parking bay space. "You have to be extra careful."

Teresa Smith, the director of Augusta's Public Works department, says the bays have caused problems for some motorists, with walls too high to allow a clear view of oncoming traffic.

Now, a streetscape master plan is being talked about and will address the issue along with other changes to Broad between Fifth and 13th streets. The plan will consider traffic lights, sidewalks, trees, street signs, benches

READER POLL

Would you be in favor of removing Broad Street's parking bays?
Vote online at www.augustachronicle.com.

INFO MEETINGS

WHAT: Public information meetings on downtown streetscape master plan
WHEN: 5-7 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday
WHERE: Marbury Center, 1275 Broad St.

and the possibility of removing the parking bays or lowering the bay walls.

"The walls are high enough that you can't see very well," Ms. Smith said. "And people keep hitting them."

In the end, officials say, any changes, which would have to be funded by the special

Please see PARKING on PAGE 6A

SAVANNAH RIVER SITE POLLUTION

Some object to end of watch

By Dave Williams
Morris News Service

ATLANTA — Eliminating monitoring of radioactive contamination coming from the Savannah River Site into Georgia would make it impossible to track water pollution from the former bomb plant, environmentalists and state lawmakers charged Thursday.

"There are grave threats to the Savannah River watershed from decades of bomb building, as well as failure to clean up the wastes that are there," Rep. Nan Grogan Orrock, D-Atlanta, said during a news conference unveiling a report on the U.S. Department of Energy's cleanup practices at the plant near Aiken.

The department authorized a \$1.9 million grant for Georgia three years ago after the discovery of tritium in a drinking-water well in Burke County. Tritium is a radioactive isotope that was used for decades in the manufacture of nuclear weapons at SRS. Environmental activists have cited the discovery as evidence that polluted groundwater is migrating from below the plant across the Savannah River into Georgia.

The grant money went to establish an office in Augusta to coordinate monitoring for radioactive contamination in groundwater at a series of sites on the Georgia side of the river from Augusta downstream to Savannah.

But the federal agency noti-

MORE ON SRS

► Site cleanup might be doing more harm than good/6A

fied the state Environmental Protection Division late last year that the funding would be cut off. The money was to have run out in January, but the Energy Department gave permission for the monitoring program to use about \$60,000 to keep the effort going until next month.

Eliminating monitoring "is an egregious act, on top of decades of neglect at that site," Ms. Orrock said.

The 77-page study, released Thursday by the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research, said the site's waste management practices threaten to seriously contaminate the Savannah River.

The institute's report said federal officials are leaving large amounts of residual radioactivity from high-level waste in tanks that are being closed for use, and that wells along the Georgia side of the river already have tritium levels that are 20 times higher than normal.

Energy Department spokesman Rick Ford said the agency agrees with some of the report's findings. He disputed a contention by EPD officials that the federal grant was not supposed to end after three years.

"It was intended to establish the office but not fund it in perpetuity," he said.

Associated Press reports were used in this article.

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