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NEW ORLEANS EDITION

Donors' families grieve all over again

Use of bodies by Army prompts sadness, anger

By Stewart Yerton
Business writer

When Robin Ragan's mother said that upon her death she wanted her body donated to science, Ragan supported her wish. So when Mary Phillips Munster died of complications from cancer in May 2001, at the age of 71, the family drafted a handwritten note donating her body to Tulane University.

Mary Phillips Munster's husband, Jack Munster, signed the note and wrote a check for \$75 to cover the expense of moving the body to the university. Now Ragan and her father, both of Metairie, say they want to know exactly what happened to their loved one's remains.

Like other survivors of people who have donated their bodies to science in Louisiana, Ragan was shocked and saddened this week by reports that Tulane had used a middleman to send bodies from its program to other research insti-

See **CADAVER**, A-6

Tax bill survives House vote

Blanco now must push measure through Senate

By Robert Travis Scott
Capital bureau

BATON ROUGE — The renewal of \$160 million in business taxes — the centerpiece of Gov. Kathleen Blanco's budgetary strategy — won a squeaker vote on the House floor Thursday and now

faces an unpredictable battle in the Senate.

A bipartisan group of "strange bedfellows" who opposed the bill fell one vote short of killing it. Blanco needed 70 votes, or two-thirds of House members, and prevailed 70-33 after attaching a compromise amendment.

"It truly was an amazing vote," said Blanco, who despite strong support from House leaders had insufficient votes Wednesday to pass the bill.

Facing her first major legislative crisis as governor, Blanco pressed her case Thursday in a meeting with a number of representatives, including an opposition

See **TAXES**, A-4

THREE PARTS OF THE BLANCO TAX PLAN

HOUSE BILL 1
As amended and passed Thursday by the House, would extend for five years a 2.8 percent temporary state tax that companies pay on their utility bills as well as sales taxes on a list of other items.

HOUSE BILL 2
Would phase out state sales taxes on manufacturing machinery and equipment.

HOUSE BILL 3
Would phase out the state's franchise tax on corporate debt.

RUSH-HOUR BLASTS KILL 192 IN SPAIN

Basque group, al-Qaida splinter among suspects



AP PHOTO

Firefighters remove a body from a bomb-damaged passenger train after Thursday's attacks in Madrid in which nearly 200 people were killed. 'I saw bodies flying,' one witness said. 'There was a security guard dripping with blood. People were pushing and running. ... I escaped with my life by a hair.'

By Elaine Sciolino
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MADRID, SPAIN — Ten bombs ripped through four commuter trains in Madrid on Thursday, killing at least 192 people and wounding more than 1,400 in the deadliest terrorist attack on a European target since World War II.

Spanish authorities initially blamed the Basque separatist group ETA. But after finding a van with detonators and tape of Quranic verses near Madrid, they held open the possibility of militant Muslim terrorism.

A group claiming links to al-Qaida took responsibility in a letter delivered to an Arab newspaper. An American counterterrorism official said the claim should be viewed skeptically.

Spain, a U.S. ally in the war on Iraq that has 1,300 troops stationed there, was explicitly threatened as a target in an audiotape reportedly made by al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden in October.

As the country struggled to absorb the devastation three days before general elections, Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar said, "March 11 now has its place in the history of infamy."

Michel-Antoine Goitia-Nicolas, president of the Louisiana Basque Society, a cultural organization of people of Basque ancestry and heritage, condemned the train bombings.

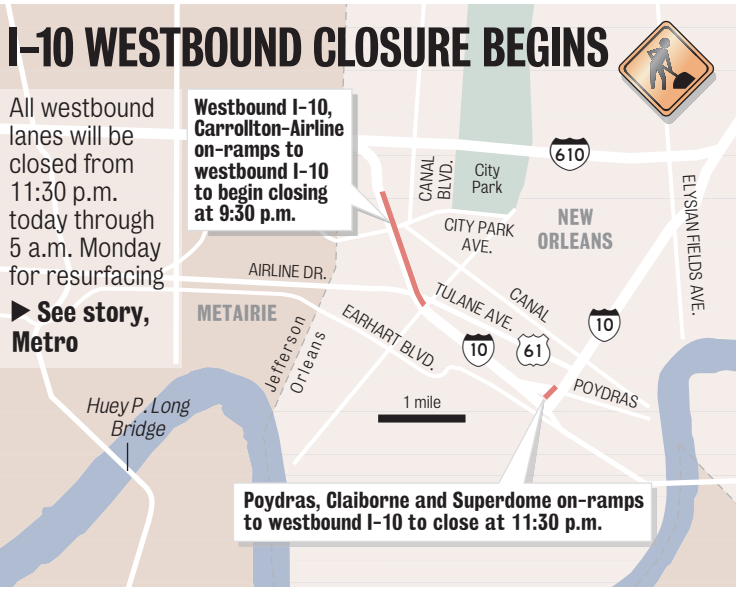
"We stand against the terrible criminals who attacked these innocent victims in this act of barbarity," Goitia-Nicolas said in a statement that urged foes of terrorism to unite in prayer. "We ask that the individuals who committed these acts be held as criminals against all people who love freedom, and that the Bas-

See **SPAIN**, A-6

► So much evidence makes it hard to identify culprit, A-7



AP MAP



STAFF MAP

No holds were barred in Belsome vs. Byrnes

Spectrum of politicians took sides in ugly race

By Frank Donze
Staff writer

The scorched political battlefield left behind after Tuesday's election for a seat on the state appeals court offers ample evidence that in New Orleans, even the

lowest-profile campaign can be transformed into a blood sport.

Though only about 12 percent of the eligible voters went to the polls, almost all of the city's major political players chose sides in a contest that saw the combatants spend an estimated \$1 million-plus to fuel dueling media assaults that depicted both candidates as unfit for the bench.

In the end, Civil District Judge Ro-

See **JUDGE**, A-8