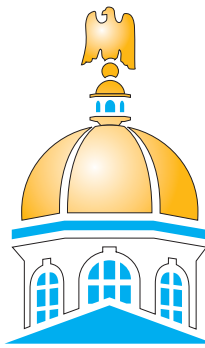


CONCORD MONITOR



Friday, March 12, 2004

Concord, New Hampshire

50¢

LACONIA

Firefighter drowns while diving

Man was training with colleague

By REBECCA TSAROS DICKSON
Monitor staff

LACONIA – A veteran firefighter and experienced diver drowned at Weirs Beach yesterday afternoon during a training exercise with his colleague.

Officials have withheld the identities of the victim and the other diver.

But three people who know the men said Mark Miller, a Laconia firefighter and EMT for 18 years, was diving in open water when he vanished at about 2:45 p.m. Miller was also the head of the fire department's dive team. JP Hobby, also a firefighter and EMT, was with him.

The two were diving to break in new suits and had given each other a

thumbs-up, indicating they would return to the surface, officials said. Hobby emerged, but Miller did not. Hobby went back under, but he could not find Miller. He yelled to a woman on the boardwalk nearby to call 911.

By 3 p.m., a swarm of fire and rescue personnel arrived from across the region: Nine fire departments, the Laconia police, the Belknap County Sheriff's Department, state Fish and Game, state Marine Patrol and two private Lakes Region diving shops

lined Lakeside Avenue with fire trucks and ambulances. A sports utility vehicle blocked access to the M/S Mount Washington's boarding ramp, where rescuers launched their exhaustive search.

Shortly after 7 p.m., officials said the rescue had become a recovery operation that would resume this morning.

Yellow police tape cordoned the Mount Washington ticket booth.

■ See **FIREFIGHTER** – Page A-8



ALAN MACRAE / For the Monitor

After boring a hole through ice, searchers use an underwater camera to look for a missing firefighter.

SPAIN

Bombings hit commuter trains

Nearly 200 dead; officials unsure who to blame

By TRACY WILKINSON
Los Angeles Times

MADRID, Spain – In the most devastating terrorist attack in Spanish history, 10 bombs that detonated minutes apart ripped through crowded commuter trains at three Madrid stations early yesterday, killing nearly 200 people, wounding 1,400 and sending this capital into convulsions of shock and horror three days before a national election.

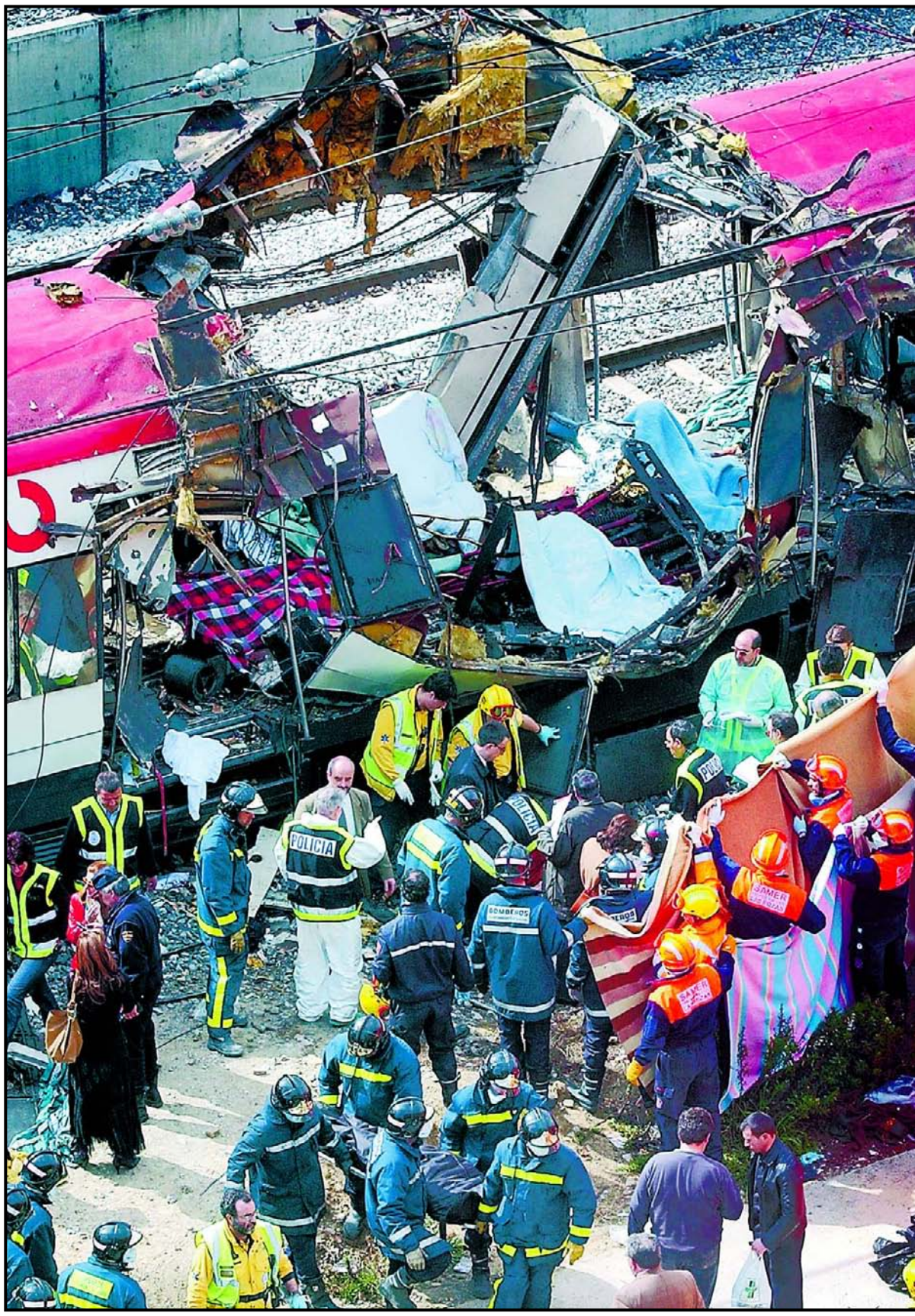
Authorities immediately blamed the Basque separatist group ETA for the deadliest wave of terrorism seen in Europe in almost two decades. But the scale of carnage went far beyond anything the separatists had ever carried out and led to speculation that other groups might be responsible.

Interior Minister Angel Acebes initially said it was "absolutely clear" that ETA was responsible. Late yesterday, however, he went before reporters to say the police had recovered a stolen van with seven bomb detonators and a tape recording of Quranic 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 purporting to claim responsibility for the bombings in the name of al-Qaida, 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



AP

■ See **BOMBINGS** – Page A-8

Rescue officials work at the scene of a bomb-damaged passenger train in Madrid, Spain, yesterday.

Senate nods to marriage ban for gays

Benson vows to sign measure if it passes muster in House

By JENNIFER SKALKA
Monitor staff

The state Senate overwhelmingly approved a bill yesterday that would reinforce a state law banning same-sex marriage in New Hampshire. It would also prohibit the state from recognizing gay marriages affirmed elsewhere. The final vote was 16-7.

After weeks of behind-the-scenes lobbying and an emotional, packed public hearing on the bill, there was little debate yesterday on the matter. The bill's lead Republican sponsor, Sen. Russell Prescott of Kingston, was silent during the Senate's 25 minutes of discussion. When the votes were counted, all six Senate Democrats and one Republican, Sen. John Gallus of Berlin, voted against the measure.

"This is codifying discrimination and prejudice in our statute," said Sen. Clifton Below, a Lebanon Democrat.

In stating his support for the bill, Sen. Frank Saporito, a Derry Republican, indicated that approving same-sex marriages, even those first recognized by other states, is a slippery slope.

"Why not legalize polygamy?" he said.

The bill goes next to the House for debate. Gov. Craig Benson said yesterday he'd sign the bill if it reaches his desk, though he also cited Attorney General Peter Heed's recent public comments affirming that New Hampshire law already bans same-sex marriage. In fact, state law says that a man can't marry a man and a woman can't marry a woman. It does, however, leave open the possibility that New Hampshire could recognize marriages granted elsewhere, legal experts say.

Benson also told reporters that

First step
Massachusetts lawmakers give preliminary approval to a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. ■ Page A-3.

Couples turned away
A California court halts same-sex weddings in San Francisco. ■ Page A-3.

Minimum wage will stay \$5.15

By NORMA LOVE
The Associated Press

The New Hampshire House rejected a bill yesterday to raise the state's minimum hourly wage, with the House speaker casting a rare vote to break a tie and kill the measure.

The vote was 173-172 to kill the bill to raise the hourly wage to \$6 from the current \$5.15, which is the same as the federal minimum wage. House Speaker Gene Chandler, a Republican, cast the deciding vote, without com-

House rejects abortion statistics gathering bill.
■ Page B-1.

■ See **WAGES** – Page A-6

■ See **MARRIAGE** – Page A-6

WEARE

Principal resigns over lack of school support

By ALLISON STEELE
Monitor staff

WEARE – Jim Spadaro, a principal who has struggled for years to run Weare Middle School with flat budgets and low community support for improvement projects, resigned this week after voters handed the district another round of setbacks.

Spadaro, who has worked in Weare for eight years and has

been principal of the middle school for four, said yesterday that he no longer believes he can serve the district without more help from taxpayers.

"I have always been very upfront with the community that as long as I felt supported by the people, I was here," said Spadaro, who called the school board with his decision on Wednesday morning, just hours

■ See **PRINCIPAL** – Page A-8

Sox's elder statesman muses on *The Rivalry*

Ex-player saw it firsthand

Ray Duckler



Monitor columnist

FORT MYERS, Fla. – We all simply call it The Rivalry. Mention it, and Johnny Pesky, 84, stills feels it. We know he always will.

He still feels the hard, clean slide of Joe DiMaggio, charging into second base to break up a double play, still feels the late-season losses to DiMaggio's hated Yankees, still wonders what happened to that little piece of luck his Red Sox never seemed to find when playing their hated rivals from the Bronx.

"It made you work a little bit harder," said Pesky, a part-time coach these days and goodwill ambassador

■ See **PESKY** – Page A-8



ELAINE SKYLAR / Monitor staff

Johnny Pesky signs autographs before yesterday's Sox game.

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2 to 4 inches

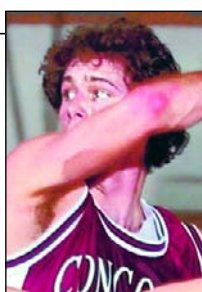
Snow today. High, upper 30s. Low, upper 20s. Carter Noordsij, 7, of New London draws the day. Forecast, B-2.



Tide goes out

The Concord boys' basketball team falls to Bishop Guertin in the Class L tournament. Story, C-1

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Current events

Several pets and one woman have been electrocuted on big-city streets. Story, A-4

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