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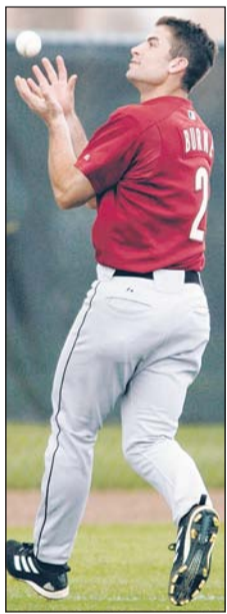
Little guy a big expert on presidents

Katy third-grader Noah McCullough has become a celebrity because of his knowledge of U.S. presidents. Now he's rubbing elbows with this year's candidates. **Page 1D.**

HOUSTON

Things getting political in this year's films

Politics will be the main focus of this year's South by Southwest Film Festival, which opens tonight in Austin and runs through March 20. **Page 1D.**



SPORTS

No pressure, just hard work

Chris Burke, the Astros' first-round pick in 2001, is soaking up as much knowledge as he can without the pressure of trying to make this year's team. He's already slated to start at AAA. **Page 1B.**

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WEATHER

Clouds, Milby rain buckets

Overcast skies, chance of rain. High 68, low 56. **Page 40A.**



'This is mass murder'

- Synchronized train bombs kill nearly 200, create hellish scene in Madrid
- Al-Qaida affiliate claims responsibility, but Spain suspects Basque group



Andrea Comas / Reuters

A Spanish policeman sorts through debris Thursday after an explosion demolished a train at Madrid's Atocha train station.

Explosives hidden in backpacks on crowded rush-hour trains were set off over a 15-minute span, killing almost 200.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

A total of 10 bombs exploded in a 15-minute span along nine miles of the commuter line. Police found and detonated three other bombs.



Sources: Spain's Interior Ministry, Associated Press

MADRID
Prado Museum
Atocha station
7 explosions

- **7:39 a.m.:** Three backpacks loaded with explosives blow up on a commuter train at Atocha station.
- **7:44:** Four backpack bombs explode on a commuter train entering Atocha station.
- **7:49:** Backpack bomb explodes as a commuter train enters Santa Eugenia train station, nine miles from Atocha.
- **7:54:** Two bombs explode on double-decker commuter train in El Pozo station, six miles from Atocha.
- **10:00:** Police carry out controlled explosions of three booby-trapped backpack bombs—two in Atocha, one in El Pozo.

El Pozo station
2 explosions

Santa Eugenia station
1 explosion

Jay Carr / Chronicle

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 Thursday. The explosions killed nearly 200 people, wounded 1,400 and sent this capital into convulsions of shock and horror three days before a national election.

INSIDE

■ World leaders voice outrage over terror attack: **Page 21A.**

■ E-mail to Houston family: "This is Spain's 9/11": **Page 21A.**

Authorities immediately blamed the Basque separatist group ETA for the deadliest wave of terrorism seen in Europe in 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.

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 ones at

See **BOMBINGS** on Page 21A.



Jose Huesca / Associated Press

Two victims of Thursday's train bombings in Madrid wait outside a station for aid.

Hunt for killers begins; U.S. eyes own rail security

By **DAN EGGEN** and **WALTER PINCUS**
Washington Post

WASHINGTON — U.S. officials cited circumstantial evidence Thursday that Islamist terrorists may have been behind the bombings in Madrid, but cautioned it was too early to tell whether al-Qaida or one of its affiliates was responsible.

The attacks, in which 10 bombs exploded in trains and stations along a commuter line in Spain's capital city, bore several hallmarks of Osama bin Laden's network or its allies, including the synchronized nature of the explosions and the clear targeting of civilians, counterterrorism officials said.

Spanish officials, who initially placed blame for the bombings on the Basque separatist group ETA, said later in the day that new lines of investigation were opened

See **SPAIN** on Page 22A.

Team hopes 'Milby Love' good for two more wins

State title, unbeaten season on the line

By **MK BOWER**
Houston Chronicle

They have won 37 games in a row, putting themselves in position to accomplish a rare undefeated state championship season. They have captured the imagination of their school and community.

And with two more wins, they will capture a piece of history.

As the Milby Buffs prepare for this weekend's state boys high school basketball tournament in Austin, their remarkable run at

history is as much about the school they represent as the basketball team.

Milby, a Class 5A high school in Houston Independent School District with an enrollment of just under 2,500, is located in southeast Houston at 1601 Broadway, just inside Loop 610 near Texas 225. It is home to a diverse mix of students. And as first-year head coach Jimmy Duffer says, "Milby is a special place."

And this year's team is a special team.

See **MILBY** on Page 12A.



Associated Press

SUSAN LINDAUER

Age: 41

Hometown: Takoma Park, Md.

Education: Smith College

Employment history: Fortune, U.S. News & World Report, Seattle Post-Intelligencer; aide for U.S. Reps. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore.; Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif.; Ron Wyden, D-Ore.; and Sen. Carol Moseley Braun, D-Ill.

Ex-aide in Congress charged as Iraqi spy

By **RICHARD W. STEVENSON** and **ERIC LICHTBLAU**
New York Times

WASHINGTON — Federal prosecutors charged a former congressional aide Thursday with working with the Iraqi intelligence service before the war.

Investigators said she had tried to influence U.S. policy toward Iraq by presenting herself as an intermediary to a highly placed relative, Andrew Card, the White House chief of staff.

The woman, Susan P. Lindauer, 41, was arrested Thursday morning

■ Suspect held a variety of jobs in Washington: **Page 12A.**

by federal agents at her home in Takoma Park, Md., outside Washington. In New York, federal prosecutors unsealed an indictment that said she had met repeatedly with representatives of the Iraqi intelligence service starting in 1999 and that she had traveled to Baghdad in 2002 for meetings with Iraqi intelligence officials.

Speaking as she was led away from an FBI office outside of Baltimore, Lindauer described herself as

See **SPYING** on Page 12A.