

# CENTRAL COUNTY CONTRA COSTA TIMES

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## A'S WONDER

Will Chavez get his groove back?  
IN SPORTS/B1



## DIVA REDUX

In yet another career turn, singer shows how J. Lo she can go • IN TIMEOUT/D1



PG&E gives credit to the energy efficient  
IN BUSINESS/C1

## E-voting demise could be near

■ Elections chief holds up new standards that may well spell the death of ATM-like devices across California

By Ian Hoffman  
MEDIANEWS STAFF

California's elections chief is proposing the toughest standards for voting systems in the country, so tough that they could banish ATM-like touch-screen voting machines from the state.

For the first time, California is demanding the right to try hacking every voting machine with "red teams" of computer experts and to study the software inside the machines, line-by-line, for security holes.

The proposals are the first step toward fulfilling a promise that Secretary of State Debra Bowen made during her 2006 election campaign to perform a "top-to-bottom" review of all voting machinery used in California.

County elections officials balked at the proposed standards in a letter Monday to Bowen and hinted broadly at the same conclusion reached by several computer scientists: If enforced rigidly, the standards could send many voting machines, especially touch-screens, back for major upgrades.

Local elections officials are...  
See E-VOTING, Page 17

## Golf course neighbors fear demise of greens

■ Pleasant Hill residents say replacing recreation site with commerce would harm their neighborhood

By Danielle Samaniego  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Nobody likes to lose a good neighbor.

Residents within Pleasant Hill's Grayson Woods are concerned about what the future holds for the 9-hole, par 3 golf course nestled in the heart of their neighborhood. Golf course owners are looking into alternate uses for the property as business continues to struggle.

"Just sitting in the backyard and looking out at the golf course, it's great. I can't imagine anything better than a golf course back there," said Ben Freeman, who has lived on Iron Hill Street for a year and a half. His backyard faces the first green.

The course was built in 2001; the first homes went up in 1998. Residents who moved in then

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## SWIMMING PAST WORLD RECORD



NATALIE COUGHLIN swims the backstroke at the world championships in Melbourne, Australia.

## Coughlin beats her best time

Swimmer Natalie Coughlin, a graduate of Carondelet High School and UC Berkeley, glided Tuesday past the world record she set for the 100-meter backstroke in 2002. The 24-year-old from Concord, in Melbourne, Australia, for the 12th FINA World Championships, clocked in at 59.44 seconds, a 0.14-second improvement over her previous record time. Story on Page B1.



GOLD MEDALIST NATALIE COUGHLIN of Concord, right, grins with silver medalist Laure Manaudou of France.

## Teens' film on 'the cube' a festival hit

■ Documentary in competition in New York, but prom timing a puzzle for young moviemakers

By Jackie Burrell  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Prestigious indie film festivals, such as Robert de Niro's Tribeca Film Fest and Austin's SXSW, usually feature a mix of big name stars and quirky directors. But it's a rare director who has to juggle film premieres and prom. Last summer, four East Bay film students set their cinematic sights on the Bay Area's passionate Ru-

### SPEEDCUBING

- World record for solving a traditional 3x3x3 Rubik's Cube: 10.48 seconds
- One-handed: 20.09 seconds
- With feet only: 1:18.15 seconds
- Blindfolded: 1:28.82 seconds (includes time spent memorizing the cube)
- Most cubes completed while blindfolded: 5

bik's Cube subculture. The result, a quirky 15-minute documentary called "Piece by Piece," just aired at the South by Southwest Film

Festival — not in the student film division, but along the pros.

Next up, the film is headed for Tribeca in New York, where it was one of 200 films selected out of 4,500 submissions. And its young directors — students at Carondelet and Acalanes high schools, and recent grads from Miramonte and Albany High who met last summer at Jeff Castle's West Side Filmworks workshop — are madly juggling schedules in the hopes that they can go.

"We got an e-mail from Jeff about SXSW," said Carondelet junior Emma Thatcher. "I couldn't

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## Withdrawal plan on path to Bush veto

■ Senate set to pass spending bill with timetable for troop pullout, but president has vowed to reject measure

By Noam N. Levey  
LOS ANGELES TIMES

WASHINGTON — Setting the stage for a direct confrontation with President Bush over the war in Iraq, the Senate on Tuesday for the first time backed a timeline for withdrawing U.S. troops.

The 50-48 vote turned aside a Republican bid to strip the timelines from a \$122 billion emergency spending bill being sought by the White House to pay for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

With Republicans unexpectedly giving up plans to block the bill, the closely divided Senate appears poised to pass the bill and its controversial timelines as soon as today.

With the House having approved its own timelines last week, congressional Democrats are now close to presenting the president with a stark choice: Veto the essential war funding or negotiate directly with war

### HOW THEY VOTED

Here is how California's senators voted on whether to eliminate from an emergency spending bill amendment language supporting withdrawing U.S. forces from Iraq by March 2008. The measure failed 48-50.

	Yes	No
Feinstein (D)		✓
Boxer (D)		✓

### INSIDE

■ Truck bombs kill at least 63; U.S. soldier, contractor die in separate incidents. Page 12

critics in a way he has never done.

"He doesn't get everything he wants now, so I think it's time that he started working with us," said Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., a chief architect of the Democratic campaign to pressure the president to alter his war policy. "The president must change course."

The Senate bill would require  
See WITHDRAWAL, Page 17

## Water flow hinges on wildlife permits

■ Fish-kill license at issue as Department of Fish and Game director goes before state Senate committee

By Mike Taugher  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

The only way to avoid a threatened shutdown of the state's largest water-delivery system is to adopt federal endangered species permits that are widely seen as flawed, California's top wildlife official said Tuesday.

State regulators cannot issue their own permit within a court-imposed 60-day deadline, Department of Fish and Game Director Ryan Broderick told a state Senate committee. Adopting the federal permits is problematic because they already are

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being rewritten to address shortcomings, he said. They also were never meant to meet more protective state standards.

Testifying 19 months after the committee first inquired why the State Water Project lacks a permit to kill protected fish, Broderick said his agency was never asked to issue one.

Several state senators expressed frustration with the Department of Water Resources for refusing to seek a permit and with Broderick's department for not forcing the issue.

"You didn't take the step to try

See PERMITS, Page 11

### Weather

SUNNY  
Highs 60s, Lows 40s  
Forecast: Page C6



### Making the grade

■ API scores improve for elementary students, lag for high schools. Page 3

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Comics.....D6 Obituaries.....A8  
Classified.....E1 Opinion.....A16  
Crossword.....E7 Stocks.....C5  
Gary Bogue.....A2 TV.....D8

### Questions linger

■ Lawmaker calls for congressional hearings on Tillman's death. Page 12

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