

# Sam Francisco Chronicle

★★★★★

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'I take responsibility'

MAJOR GAVIN NEWSOM

unlocked group homes. group home. mid-2006. their homeland. He took the blame for

UPDATE SANCTUARY CITY

OF WYVON

Hans Florine of Lafayette and Japanese partner set world record scaling the Nose on El Capitan

## 3rd time's the charm for speed climbers



Photos by MICHAEL MALONEY / The Chronicle

**Jacqueline Florine** yells encouragement to her husband, Hans, and Yuji Hirayama.

By Peter Finnrite  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK — A Lafayette rock climber and his Japanese partner snatched the world record for fastest climb up the Nose of El Capitan on Wednesday in a thrilling, heart-stopping display of strength, endurance, concentration and pure guts.

Hans Florine, 44, who grew up in Moraga, and Yuji Hirayama, 39, of Hidaka, Japan, pulled themselves over the top of the immense slab of granite and touched the tree that serves as the finish line in 2 hours, 43 minutes and 33 seconds.

It was 2 minutes and 12 seconds faster than the record set last year by the famous German climbing brothers, Alexander and Thomas Huber.

"I feel just like Lightning McQueen," said Florine, referring to the hero of the movie "Cars," affectionately. **CLIMB: Page A11**



Illustration by JOHN BLANCHARD / The Chronicle

**El Capitan's** 2,900-foot Nose route has drawn climbers for decades.



Yuji

**Hirayama**

believes his and Hans Florine's new record will be temporary.

### 2:43:33

Two hours, 43 minutes and 33 seconds is the new record for speed climbing El Capitan's 2,900-foot Nose route (at about 17.7 feet per minute) by a duo.

► That's a minute faster than the average length of a major-league baseball game in 1986 (but those have generally gotten longer since then).

► It's the same length as the epic 2004 Brad Pitt-Orlando Bloom film "Troy."

► And it's two minutes shorter than the time it took for the Titanic to sink below the surface after its iceberg collision on April 14, 1912.

Source: Chronicle research



Hans

**Florine**

planned to recapture the record since October, after the Huber brothers' success.

## Big Sur jumps — hum on go

By John C. CHRONICLE

**Big Sur** — Stokes 55,820-acre fire drove 500 firefighters Wednesday from the California coast. A mandatory 7 p.m. evacuation along Highway 1 and such well-known restaurants as the Viewliner and the Viewliner and four state parks.

Lightning sparked Complex Fire on Wednesday night. The fire has been destroyed since Wednesday night.

Ominously, the fire raged despite the best efforts of firefighters assisted by helicopters. "The terrain, the what make this fire so difficult to contain," said information officer for the California Fire Department. "The cause of the fire being lightning. The evacuation of the area is ongoing."

## Tough Operat McCain

By C. CHRONICLE

**GOP** presidential campaign to tap a tough California former adviser to Clinton to head his campaign. Clinton's publicans as evidenced by a recent senator's campaign new track.

Steve Schmidt was behind President Bush's election "war room," a core approach to his political "artillery" assume full operational the campaign, McCain, announced Wednesday.

Sources close to the campaign said Schmidt's decision to hire Schmidt is known as the toughest and fiercest behind Schwarzenegger.