



**ANNOYING SALESMEN?**  
BUSINESS: They don't have to be jerks to make the sale. B5

**FRIDAY**  
April 18, 2008

**TODAY'S FORECAST A2**  
Sunny and pleasant  
High: 78 Low: 49



**HEALTHY LIVING**  
Teen drinking:  
It's a deadly rite  
of passage.  
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**50 cents**  
Breaking News: the-signal.com

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# Jury trial set for accused rapist

■ **Adrian Arriano** pleaded not guilty to 27 counts.

By **Parimal M. Rohit**  
SIGNAL STAFF WRITER

SAN FERNANDO — Formal charges were officially filed against accused rapist Adrian Arriano on Thursday morning at the San Fernando Superior Court. After Deputy District Attorney Angela Jordan read 27 total counts to the judge, Arriano entered a

## Events leading to Adrian Arriano's arrest

- **Jan. 6, 2007** — A woman is raped at knifepoint in her apartment.
- **March 29, 2007** — Another woman is raped at knifepoint in the 19500 block of Four Oaks Drive.
- **June 26, 2007** — Erin O'Brien was able to fight off a man who broke into her apartment. He fled, and she was able to give investigators a good description.

- **Sept. 10, 2007** — Deputies responded to a Newhall home, where a woman said she had scared off someone trying to break in. Deputies searched the area and found — and arrested — Arriano, who matched the rapist's description.
- **Oct. 2007** — DNA evidence from the two rapes confirmed they were committed by the same man. The DNA matched a sample taken from Arriano.

plea of not guilty.

Superior Court Judge Barbara Schepher scheduled a jury trial in the matter for June 13.

Arriano, 30, of Canyon Country, was

arrested last Sept. 10 and is charged with 27 counts in connection with several rapes and break-ins around Canyon Country during the first half of 2007.

Charges include one count of

attempted murder, nine counts of forcible rape, four counts of sexual penetration by foreign object, three counts of sodomy, three counts of forced oral copulation, four counts of

burglary, one count of false imprisonment by violence, one count of residential robbery and one count of assault to commit a felony during a burglary.

The burglary charges were originally filed under one case and the rape and assault charges under another, but the two were consolidated into one single filing, according to Schepher.

If convicted, Arriano, a twice-deported illegal immigrant, could face life in prison.

Arriano's next scheduled appearance is on May 19 for a pre-trial conference in Dept. H.

He is being held at the Men's Central Jail in lieu of \$10.5 million bail.

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## Council to decide on adding Hasley Hills to city

■ 1,500 homes would be annexed.

By **Katherine Geyer**  
SIGNAL STAFF WRITER

The Santa Clarita City Council on Tuesday will consider filing a request with the county to redraw the city's boundaries to include the Hasley Hills portion of Castaic.

The annexed portion would encompass 5,000 residents and 1,430 acres of land in the Hasley Hills, Live Oak and North Bluffs communities and Valencia Commerce Center. The area consists of 1,500 homes and 6 million square-feet of industrial buildings.

The council will have the option of approving the request to send an application to the county Local Agency Formation Commission. The city expects that LAFCO would be finished processing the application sometime between January and June of 2009.

In April of 2007, members of the citizens group called the Castaic Annexation Support Team presented the city with a list of signatures of support from 72 percent of residents and business owners in the area, surpassing the city's 60 percent requirement.

Members of the Castaic Area Town Council have asked the city numerous times over the past year to hold off on sending the application to LAFCO until the west side communities can see the results of the two studies currently underway that will help determine the best governance option for the west side. The studies will compare the options of incorporating into one west side city, annexing in the city of

See ANNEXATION, page A4

## LIFE IN A REFUGEE CAMP



Canyon High's Cynthia Lapos makes her red hand print on Wednesday as part of an effort to present 10 million prints to the United Nations to press for more assistance to refugees in Darfur and Sudan.

## Canyon students recreate 'camp'

By **Sharon Cotal**  
SIGNAL STAFF WRITER

As they crammed themselves into the small refugee tents Thursday, Canyon High School students got the feel of what it's really like to have to leave one's home and live in a refugee camp —

just like the more than 2 million people in Darfur, Sudan, who have been forced to flee since 2003 because of violence in that country.

The simulated refugee camp, called Camp Darfur, was made up of eight authentic United Nations tents, each filled with information about genocide and crimes against humanity through-

out recent history.

"We want the students to get a better understanding of what life is like outside the United States, and a better appreciation for the life they have here at home," said Nancy Nazarian-Medina, advisor to the Human Rights Watch Student Task force, which

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## Former Valencia woman found guilty of murder

■ Rothwell may face 16 years to life in prison.

By **Parimal M. Rohit**  
SIGNAL STAFF WRITER

An Orange County jury convicted a Valencia woman who called herself the devil and stabbed an acquaintance who said he found God of second degree murder, officials announced early Thursday morning. The verdict was announced in Superior Court Judge Daniel Barrett McNerney's courtroom in Santa Ana.

Samantha Rothwell, 21, was at a party at the Hotel Huntington Beach on the night of Aug. 15, 2006 when she stabbed 18-year-old Walter Rivas, who was standing on a balcony outside of a room. According to prosecutors, Rothwell, who was on the balcony smoking, stabbed Rivas when he said he "saw God."

Rivas was in Long Beach earlier that day, visiting the grave of Bradley Nowell, frontman for the popular band Sublime, who died of a heroin overdose in 1996.

Later that evening, Rivas attended a birthday party at the Hotel Huntington Beach. Rothwell, who visited from her home in Valencia, attended the same party. Witnesses at the party said that Rivas was on the balcony with Rothwell and told her, "I think I saw God at the beach."

According to the witnesses, Rothwell subsequently responded, "I am the Devil. Don't tell me about God."

During the trial, Senior Deputy District Attorney Sonia Balleste told jury members that Rothwell then grabbed a small pocket knife from her room and stabbed Rivas in the jugular vein and back.

When Rothwell returned into the hotel room to join the group that was inside, she told everyone that the stabbing was not a "big deal" and for them "to get over it," according to Balleste.

Rivas' last words, according to two witnesses, were, "Tell my mom I love her."

Rothwell's attorney, Senior Deputy Public Defender Christopher Hilger, said to the jury that she stabbed Rivas during "an emotionally impulsive moment."

With the felony conviction, Rothwell could face up to 16 years to life in prison. Her sentencing will be on June 13 at the Orange County Superior Court.

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## Erosion creates unsafe tree

By **Katherine Geyer**  
SIGNAL STAFF WRITER

An oak tree dangling over Placerita Canyon Road and a utility line could be just one windy gust or rainstorm away from crashing to the ground.

The city of Santa Clarita is scheduled to remove the tree by Monday, according to Byron Moline, general services manager for the city. The tree sits atop a roadside hill and years of water erosion have eaten away at the

hillside, exposing the tree's roots. A resident became concerned that the tree could fall at any time.

The tree is about a mile past the Placerita Canyon Nature Center's main entrance, east of Highway 14. "It seems to be continually eroding away," said Frank Hoffman, recreational services supervisor at the nature center. "Any big rain or any big wind and it just might very well come down."

He said the tree is on private property and said he only noticed the erosion a few weeks ago.



A large portion of an oak tree's roots are exposed along Placerita Canyon Road, threatening to topple it onto the road.  
BRYAN KNEIDING/  
The Signal

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