



Medieval times  
■ Family, C1

# Santa Clarita Valley The Signal



FRIDAY, Sept. 19, 2008

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Today's Forecast



Sunny & very warm  
High: 91 Low: 61  
► Weather report, A2

2 MINUTE SIGNAL

### Business

The stock market finally found reason to rally Thursday, and Congress promised quick action as the Bush administration prepared a plan to rescue banks from the bad debt at the heart of the worst crisis on Wall Street since the Great Depression. C6

### Sports

The Valencia girls' tennis team won in convincing fashion over Oxnard High Thursday, sweeping in both singles and doubles play. The Vikings took six out of nine singles sets and won eight of nine on the doubles side. B1

### Family

As the music of Mary J. Blige boomed across the Hyatt Valencia banquet room, more than 60 women, all dressed in white, danced their way to their seats as the installation luncheon celebration of the newest chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., was underway. C1

### Election 2008

The party conventions and the Sarah Palin surge behind them, Barack Obama and John McCain are neck and neck again in their race for the White House — with the momentum and the political environment tilting toward the Democrats. B5



Good morning  
to Signal subscriber  
Ralph Nazarian  
of Canyon Country

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## New Castaic High sites on the menu

### Town Council may be apprised

By Jim Holt  
Signal Senior Writer

Hart district officials are focusing on a short list of four possible sites for the long-awaited Castaic high school, a school board mem-

ber said Thursday. "We hoped to have announced a site before Labor Day," said Steven M. Sturgeon, member of the William S. Hart Union High School District board. "We're invited to the Castaic Town Council meeting in October and, at that time, we should be able to give them something."

The meeting is scheduled for Oct. 15. Castaic residents have been awaiting a high school campus for more than 10 years. In 2003 the district signed an agreement with developer SunCal for a site in the proposed NorthLake development, overlooking Castaic Lake.

But on Monday, Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. of New York — the 158-year-old investment bank that funded many of SunCal's land development projects — declared bankruptcy. Sturgeon, responding to a report in The Signal that the Lehman bankruptcy could make the NorthLake project, and related high school

site even more unlikely, said the bank's troubles were irrelevant to the four sites being considered. He declined to identify the locations. "(The bankruptcy filing) does not deter the Hart board from making sure one gets built," he said. See SCHOOL, A4

### Aw, shucks!



Francisca Rivas/The Signal



Above: Nine-year-olds Luis Romero, Sarah Hojjati and Alyson Campbell, fourth graders at Mint Canyon Elementary School, took part in Thursday's third annual corn shucking contest. Left: Romero runs more corn to his classmates. Below: A group of fourth-graders cheer after learning they won the contest — shucking a total of 35 ears of corn.



## Detectives seeking help in Valencia murder case

By Brian Charles  
Signal Staff Writer

Detectives are asking the community for clues regarding the homicide of Anthony Lombardi, a sheriff's official said. Three teenage boys found Lombardi's blood-soaked body in the front seat of his car in front of his Undine Road home Tuesday. The killer stabbed Lombardi several times in the chest, said Lt.

Dave Coleman, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Homicide Bureau. Sheriff's detectives wrapped up the physical investigation of Lombardi's home late Wednesday night, Coleman said. Detectives questioned family members and deputies have some clues in the investigation. However, deputies aren't sharing those clues with the media to preserve the integrity of the case, Coleman said.

Autopsy results are expected by the end of the day providing detectives with a time of death, Coleman said. More clues won't hurt, Coleman said. "Any time the community can help us with an investigation we are open to it," he said. Anyone with information about the Lombardi murder can call the Homicide Bureau at (323) 890-5500. bcharles@the-signal.com

## Third type's the charm

### Rugged fire trucks aid in battling wildland blazes

By Brian Charles  
Signal Staff Writer

The Los Angeles County Fire Department's new tool in the fight against wildland fires looks like a cross between an ice cream truck and a monster pickup. The Type III fire engine is a boxy vehicle with lifted suspension that allows firefighters to get close to wildland infernos. Capt. Scott Polgar said. The Type III is designed with a shorter wheel base, shorter length, higher clearance and is all-wheel drive allowing the vehicle to go off-road on unpaved roads and deep into area forests, he said. Fire Station 132 on Sand Canyon Road is one of five stations the state picked to test the new truck. Polgar said. Wildfires in 2003 prompted Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to assign a Blue Ribbon Committee to improve fire fighting. The commission advised the Office of Emergency Services to purchase 150 Type III engines. Firefighters went through state-certified training to operate the vehicle, Polgar said. In return for the training, the state can call on those firefighters to respond to wildland fires throughout the state, he said. The Type III is a critical tool during California's year-round fire season, Polgar said. Before California bought the new trucks, firefighters only had two ways to battle back rural blazes. "We were restricted to fighting a fire from the air or running hoses from engines parked on the few graded unpaved roads in the forest," Polgar said. That is not an effective way to fight a fire when so much of the wildland terrain doesn't have graded or

See TRUCK, A4

## Laser prank could mean prison time

### Light was aimed at sheriff's copter

By Brian Charles  
Signal Staff Writer

A common practical joke might cost Matthew Ponck time in jail. Deputies arrested Ponck Saturday night for shining a laser pointer at a Los Angeles County Sheriff's helicopter. The helicopter pilots were searching the Ash Glen Circle area in Valencia when the laser was pointed directly at the aircraft, said Lt. Brenda Cambra of the Santa Clarita Valley Sheriff's station. Deputies in the helicopter tracked the

beam to the residence and sent ground units in to apprehend Ponck, Cambra said. Deputies arrested Ponck and charged him with a felony count of discharging a laser at an aircraft. If he is found guilty Ponck could serve up to four years in prison, Cambra said. The Los Angeles County District Attorney's office makes the decision whether or not to press felony charges against Ponck, Cambra said. Ponck's crime might seem harmless, but the light produced by a laser pointer is strong enough to cause eye damage, Cambra said. bcharles@the-signal.com

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