**Man Arrested in Santee SWAT Standoff**

Several homes in a Santee neighborhood were evacuated Mar. 16 when the San Diego sheriff’s SWAT team responded to an alleged kidnapping.

The standoff resulted after a man reportedly took his girlfriend hostage. Neighboring homes were evacuated for over four hours.

Authorities were alerted to the 10900 block of Chantilly Court about 5 a.m. after a neighbor called to report that they had heard a disturbance, sheriff’s deputies said.

When deputies arrived, the suspect, 31-year-old Sean Arevalo, refused to come out of the house, then took his girlfriend hostage. He then grabbed her by the arm and pulled her into the room, Sergeant Tom Poulin of the San Diego Sheriff’s Department said. Arevalo also refused to speak to deputies and was armed with a knife, Poulin said.

The sheriff’s SWAT team was notified and quickly arrived on the scene. Several neighbors were also evacuated.

Phyllis Birrouty, who lives three houses away, was out watering her flowers when sheriff’s deputies, detectives, and members of the SWAT team arrived.

“A man came up and said ‘Ma’am, we’re having a hostage situation. This isn’t the best place for you to be’*,* so I went inside,” she said.

“They looked like they were going off to war,” said Joseph Birrouty, describing the SWAT team. “I’ve never seen anything like that before.”

The standoff lasted until about 10:40 a.m. when the SWAT team made entry into the home using a flash grenade, Poulin said. “The suspect was then taken into custody without incident,” he said.

According to sheriff’s deputies, Arevalo was a former resident of the home, but was kicked out when he and a female roommate had a dispute. On Mar. 10, deputies arrested Arevalo after he had threatened to shoot the female roommate. She was in the process of filing a temporary restraining order against him.

Dan Steele, who lives two houses away, has noticed sheriff’s deputies arriving at the home numerous times in the several months that the tenants have rented there. In what he describes as a community of “quiet, hard-working people”, the residents of the home were not well-liked.

“I’d like to see them go,” said Steele. “It’s just a bad environment.”

Arevalo is scheduled to be arraigned Mar. 18.