



Suspect nabbed

A woman returned to her north Hermosa home and surprised a thief who struggled with her and fled, touching off a four-hour manhunt of the area with dogs and a helicopter, ending in the arrest of a suspect.

The incident began early Friday afternoon when the woman approached her Gould Avenue home to find a man walking out the front door "with several bags of loot from the home in his possession," Hermosa Beach Police Sgt. Paul Wolcott said. "As the suspect fled the scene, a brief struggle ensued where the suspect assaulted the victim to facilitate his escape," Wolcott said. "The suspect was last seen running from the area as police officers arrived on scene."

Hermosa police officers searched the area along with officers from Redondo Beach, Manhattan Beach and El Segundo. Meanwhile, e-mail alerts were sent to residents warn-

School gym building down for summer

by Robb Fulcher

A high-profile gymnasium-classroom-library building at Hermosa Valley School will be unusable through the summer as workers remove and replace stucco that did not set properly on the building's exterior.

"We had hoped the gym could be used by the community this summer, but it's a hardhat area now," Hermosa Beach City School Board member Greg Breen said on Tuesday.

The Hermosa Beach City School District will not have to pay for the repairs, Business Manager Angela Jones said on Tuesday.

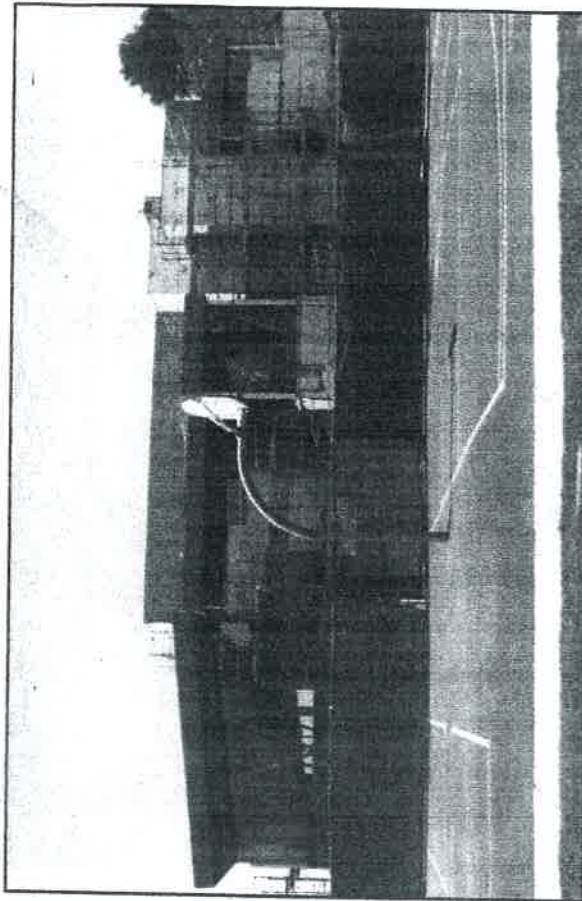
Jones said the school district's insurer, the Alliance of Schools for Cooperative Insurance Programs, told her the district would not bear financial responsibility for the repairs.

She said the building is expected to be reopened for use by fall, when students return from summer vacation.

The problem began to rear its head about October, when extensive cracking was noticed in the stucco on part of the two-story building housing the library.

Near the beginning of 2008 the school board discussed whether the stucco could be patched up or should be replaced. On March 12 the school board was told that the problem had been presented to the insurance consortium, according to the board's official meeting minutes.

On May 14 school district officials told the board that the problem



Repair work will render the Valley School gymnasium-classroom-library building impassable for the summer. Photo by Robb Fulcher

would be "corrected" during the summer "at no cost to the district."

Workers began removing the cracked stucco June 23, three days after the academic year ended. Scaffolding has gone up along the building's exterior and the ongoing work makes the entire building impassable to students and community members, Breen said.

Storied building

The setback is the latest in a series for the building, an \$11 million project that was seven years in the mak-

ing. The gym component was the subject of heated public hearings and a failed lawsuit by critics concerned about noise and parking problems near the campus on Valley Drive north of Pier Avenue.

Once the building was completed, the opening of the gym portion was delayed by more than half a year by problems including a water fixture that needed to be reworked before officials would clear it for occupancy.

A formal opening ceremony for the entire building was finally held in

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HB Gym

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November 2007 with speeches by officials and singing by children.

The two-story building contains a 2,000 sq. ft. library, 2,000 feet of classroom space (two regular classrooms and four specially equipped science classrooms), and the 7,500 sq. ft. gym.

The gym is large enough to hold one high school-sized regulation basketball court lengthwise. It is currently set up for three volleyball courts, or two shorter basketball courts that run width-wise.

The gym building was funded by a successful 2002 school bond measure, but in subsequent years some school board critics cited construction of the gym as a factor in their "no" votes that defeated ballot measures for another bond and for a parcel tax.

The 2002 bond measure funded construction of the building along with about \$8 million worth of renovations to Valley School, which serves third through eighth grades, and Hermosa View School, which serves kindergarten through second grade. **ER**