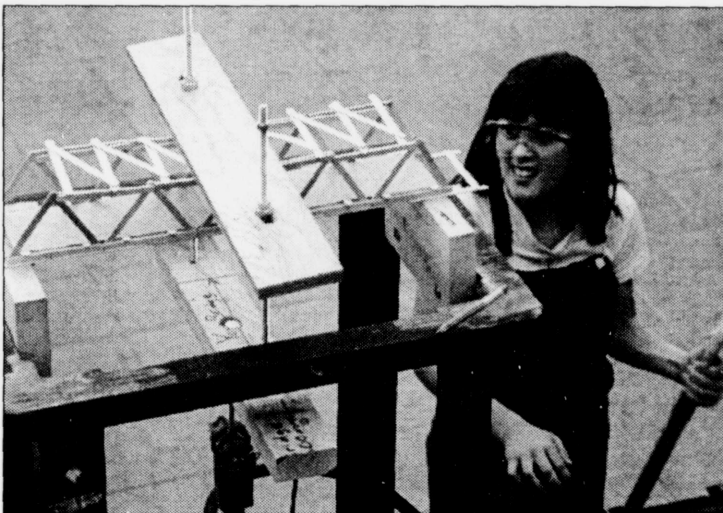


Hopes/Crushed



Brittney Goetz applies the force to the hydraulics that ultimately crushed her popsicle stick bridge. She placed third in the elementary division and received mention for the aesthetics of her presentation. JOHN MCKENZIE/FREE PRESS

Judge wants more details on cocaine trade in PG

Sentencing delayed while report is compiled

A one-time criminology student has pleaded guilty to trafficking in cocaine.

Now, Sanjib Singh Manhas is waiting to be sentenced.

On February 5, 2001, the 26-year-old pleaded guilty to three counts of trafficking in cocaine, while the Crown stayed a sole charge against his co-accused, Nathan Daley Brown Williamsen.

All of Manhas' trafficking incidents took place in Prince George and Chetwynd in the month of May 1999. In total, three deals were negotiated between Manhas and an undercover police officer to exchange roughly \$15,000 in cocaine. But before Manhas is sentenced. The judge wants details. And lots of them.

"It is, in my view, necessary that great care be taken in the [sentencing] process, given the level of public preoccupation with sentencing which has emerged in recent years," writes Justice Glen Parrett.

With that, he noted that the Criminal Code requires counsel to present a "very clear statement with respect to the accused's background and circumstances." In this case, he feels, that

requirement has not been met.

"The information before the court falls, in my view, far short of providing me with the information necessary to embark upon the balancing of interests required and the circumstances as they are presented before the court..."

With that, he ordered the prosecution to present evidence of how much cocaine is a problem in the region, with specifics about that "problem" and a background of Manhas.

On the first deal, an undercover police officer met up with Manhas at the Bon Voyage Motel on May 13, 1999. After that meeting, the officer was quickly sent away to the Mohawk Station. In the parking lot, the two exchanged two ounces of cocaine, with an estimated value of \$3,200. Further testing proved the cocaine to be 73 per cent pure.

A second meet was set up less than a week later, after a number of phone calls. Manhas met the officer in Chetwynd, where another two ounces of cocaine were exchanged for \$3,200. This time, however, the drugs only came back as 42 per cent pure.

The third deal was set to happen at the Mackenzie Junction on May 27. The deal was for four ounces of cocaine for \$8,000. Manhas was busted at the scene, and five ounces of cocaine were seized.

Sentencing dates have yet to be set.

New form telethon hits \$200,000

By FRANK PEEBLES

Free Press staff writer

Changing the Spirit of the North telethon was a risk, but one organizers had to take. Production staff at PGTV felt that their program costs and staff efforts would be better spent in other ways. The traditional live variety talent show concept spread resources too thinly, whereas a PBS-style telethon (a movie or televised concert event interrupted at regular intervals for donation pitches and sponsor plugs) would be easier and cheaper to produce.

This was the first year for this new format and it worked beautifully. All the money raised goes to the Spirit of the North Healthcare Foundation to improve the healthcare system all across the region.

The final total was a whopping \$219,544. Foundation spokesperson Tom Shand was asked if he had anticipated such a large dollar turn-out. "No. No. We had publicly been aware of \$100,000 and that was our internal goal. As it got closer, and people communicated what they were doing, we thought might hit the 200,000 level, but we ended up even higher."

All the TV station had to do was air the movies *North and American Graffiti*, occasionally pausing the flick to talk about the important medical needs of the community.

All the money raised goes to the Centre of Excellence project run by the foundation. It has \$2 million price tag, but with a single fund-raising effort they are already a tenth of the way there.

advertisement

Improving BC's Education System

By Erwin Schwarz

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The Centre for Education Information is partially funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training & Technology.

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