

Cops bust worldwide drug ring

Authorities in Chicago and around the country arrested almost 300 members of an international drug ring Thursday, striking a blow against an ecstasy and marijuana operation that stretched from North America to Vietnam, federal prosecutors said.

Fourteen members of the ring, including its alleged leader, face narcotics conspiracy or related charges in U.S. District Court in Chicago.

"Chicago is a polydrug city," Richard Sanders, special agent-in-charge of the Drug

Enforcement Administration's Chicago office, said at a news conference Thursday. "There is an appetite here for heroin and cocaine, but we can't forget about the appetite we have for MDMA [ecstasy] and other drugs. ... DEA is focusing on all drugs."

In the Chicago area, the investigation led to the seizure of 30,000 Ecstasy pills, 170 pounds of marijuana and more than \$500,000 in suspected drug proceeds, authorities said.

The investigation also included what

DEA officials said is a first: A police officer in Vietnam going undercover to help the DEA's Hanoi office, which first uncovered the ring.

"I think it will be a revelation to most people that DEA has an office in Hanoi," said Gary Shapiro, first assistant to U.S. Atty. Patrick Fitzgerald.

The arrests were the culmination of a two-year international effort dubbed Operation Sweet Tooth.

The DEA-led probe uncovered a drug

operation that authorities said brought ecstasy to Canada in powdered form, where it was pressed it into pills and shipped it to the U.S., in particular Illinois, Minnesota, Ohio, Georgia and North Carolina.

The ring also brought Canadian-grown marijuana, known as "B.C. Bud," into the U.S., Sanders said.

The defendants would send drug proceeds to Canada and Vietnam to try to disguise the origin of the money, prosecutors said.



Sharon Dickey adopted her greyhound Anna when the Geneva Lakes racetrack closed. About 160 of the track's dogs still need a home. [TERRY HARRIS/TRIBUNE PHOTO]

Former racers find homes off the track

The hundreds of greyhounds that were retired when a Wisconsin dog track closed two weeks ago are still moving pretty quickly.

Adoption agencies sounded the alarm last month as the Geneva Lakes racetrack in Delavan prepared to close, leaving the dogs in need of homes.

Since then, agencies and the track's adoptions department have been overwhelmed by the number of people wanting to take the dogs home as pets.

"It's crazy. Insane," said Kathy Urzedowski of Greyhounds Only Inc., a Chicago-area adoption agency. "All of us are processing applications as quickly as we can."

"People are going to have to wait to get a greyhound, but they will get one," she said, as long as their application is approved.

Milt Roth, general manager of Geneva Lakes, said there are about 160 dogs left at

the track, down from 400 just a month or so ago.

Early on, dogs often went to adoption agencies—where many remain—but now they're mostly going straight to homes.

Applications have come in from all over the Midwest, especially the Chicago area, and as far away as Oregon, Roth said.

Still, the track is not in danger of running out of dogs, and even when all are gone from Geneva Lakes, Kenosha's Dairyland racetrack will still have to place retired dogs, Roth said.

Getting a greyhound is not as simple as going to the track or an agency and taking home a pet. Because the dogs need an adjustment period and because their personalities can be very different, adoption procedures include applications and interviews at a minimum and sometimes a home visit.

Math professor honored

Frustrated math students should be heartened by the story of Dr. M. Vali Siadat.

Siadat had little interest in math when he was in high school in Iran.

"I never thought I would be a mathematician," he said. "I was always afraid of mathematics and mathematics teachers."

Yet, on Thursday, Siadat—who has been teaching math for 31 years—was in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., being honored as Illinois' 2005 Professor of the Year. Since 1997, Siadat has been chairman of the Department of Mathematics at Richard J. Daley College.

Siadat, 60, is best known for developing and implementing a program that greatly helped college students understand basic mathematics.

The program, called the Keystone Project, quizzes students frequently, almost daily, on the subject matter at hand. This emphasis on frequent quizzes forces students to keep current on their studies and enhances focus and concentration. Siadat first studied this theory while doing doctoral work at UIC.



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Media baron indicted

Conrad Black, who once controlled the Hollinger International media empire that owned the Chicago Sun-Times and other publications, was charged with three other executives Thursday with looting millions of dollars from the company, cheating on taxes and dipping into corporate coffers to finance his lavish lifestyle. An arrest warrant was issued for the 61-year-old Black.

Arrest made in CTA threat

Tariq Ali, 28, who allegedly mailed a bomb threat to the CTA in 2004, was arrested without incident Thursday morning on the North Side, authorities said. Ali appeared in U.S. District Court on Thursday. If found guilty of the charges against him, he could face up to 10 years in prison and a fine.

Man jailed for threats

A Chicago man blamed for making threats on a Southwest Airlines flight was sentenced to 1½ years in prison. Edward Dee, 56, pleaded guilty July 20 to interfering with a flight crew and making threats involving air travel. Dee was aboard a flight to Seattle when authorities said he became angry after a flight attendant refused to serve him a third vodka.

Teen killed in shooting

A 17-year-old boy was shot to death Wednesday night while talking to friends on the West Side street where he lived, police said. Andre Richardson, of the 2700 block of W. Jackson Blvd., was shot at about 8 p.m., police said. Police said the shooting might have been gang-related. No one had been arrested as of Thursday night.