

# Dream smashed

**Students who came from Hungary for spaghetti bridge contest devastated after finding project ruined prior to event**

By **RON SEYMOUR**  
The Okanagan Saturday

**S**paghetti bridges are meant to be broken — but not before the weight-supporting showdown event starts.

An intricate pasta structure built by Hungarian students was mysteriously destroyed Friday before the start of the 27th annual Spaghetti Bridge Building Contest at Okanagan College in Kelowna.

Malicious vandalism or an accident, no one could say for sure. Either way, the students were bitterly disappointed to have come all the way from Budapest to Kelowna only to be robbed of the chance to compete in the contest.

"Our school spent a lot of money to have us come over here and try to win the event, and then this happens," said Peter Tarrosi, 23, through a translator.

"We're not sure if it was sabotaged or not," said Norbert Schauer, 24. "All we know is we left the bridge where (contest organizers) told us to, assuming it would be safe, but it obviously wasn't."

The pair, from Budapest's University of Technology, was one of three Hungarian teams to compete in this year's event. Other



GARY NYLANDER/The Okanagan Saturday

**Norbert Schauer, left, and Peter Tarrosi of Hungary hold up the remains of their bridge, damaged during Friday's Spaghetti Bridge Building Contest at Okanagan College in Kelowna.**

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Peter Tarrosi

teams from the institution have won several previous competitions at Okanagan College.

About 9 a.m., contest organizers told the teams competing in the crowd-pleasing heavyweight division — in which progressive weight is applied to the spaghetti bridges until they break apart — to leave their creations in a back corner on the stage in the theatre where the event was held.

When Tarrosi and Schauer returned a few hours later to get ready for the 1 p.m. competition, they learned their bridge had been

broken. It was the only one that was destroyed.

It wasn't possible to fix the bridge, on which the pair had worked almost non-stop since arriving in Kelowna Monday to get ready for the competition.

"We'd worked on building it with only a few hours sleep each night," Tarrosi said. "It was very upsetting to see it was destroyed before the competition."

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**THE WINNERS**

Following are results from the 27th annual Spaghetti Bridge Building Contest Friday at Okanagan College in Kelowna:

**Post-secondary individual**

- First — Nima Mazaheri Namini, ABA University, Tehran, Iran. Bridge weighed 168.9 grams.
- Second — Tim Westwick, Okanagan College. Bridge weighed 278.6 grams.

**Post-secondary team**

- First — Peter Sandor, Roland Erdosi and Katalin Kitti Kromplak, College of Nyiregyhaza, Hungary. Bridge weighed 58.7 grams.
- Second — Alesha Fell, Jamie Schenkeveld, Spencer Costigan and Mike Verhage, Okanagan College. Bridge weighed 72.1 grams.

**Secondary individual**

- First — Luca Starone, Charles Bloom Secondary, Lumby. Bridge weighed 184 grams.
- Second — Johnathan Halbgwachs, Charles Bloom Secondary, Lumby. Bridge weighed 190.2 grams.
- Third — Anna Offenwanger, George Elliott Secondary, Winfield. Bridge weighed 190.7 grams.

**Secondary team**

- First — Brock Pendergraft, Alex, McCallum, Tim Paradis and Chris Schroeter, Osoyoos Secondary. Bridge weighed 59.4 grams.
- Second — Shaun Saunders and Quinn Logan, Kelowna Secondary. Bridge weighed 60.1 grams.
- Third — Rob Gore, Arianna Ormond and Tom Hardy, Kelowna Secondary. Bridge weighed 64.5 grams.



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Roland Erdosi of Hungary checks his bridge during the 27th annual Spaghetti Bridge Building Contest Friday at Okanagan College. Erdosi's team went on to win the heavyweight category, with the team's bridge holding 255 kilograms.

**Contest**

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Contest organizer Michelle Lowry, who handles public relations for Okanagan College, said she believes the destruction of the Hungarians' bridge was an "unfortunate accident."

The heavyweight bridges were on the floor in a dark part of the theatre stage, behind a curtain, and Lowry believes someone accidentally stepped on the Hungarians' bridge.

"I feel awful about what happened, but I don't think it was intentionally destroyed," Lowry said.

The competition attracted two

other teams from Hungary, as well as one from Iran, in addition to local students.

Asked if the spaghetti bridges might not have been stored in a more secure area where they couldn't be accidentally stepped on, particularly given the time, effort and expense put into participating in the

competition by the foreign teams, Lowry said: "This is a lesson learned. We can't change the past, but we can do better in the future."

Another Hungarian team, Roland Erdosi and Peter Sandor, won the competition. Their spaghetti bridge supported a weight of 255 kilograms before breaking