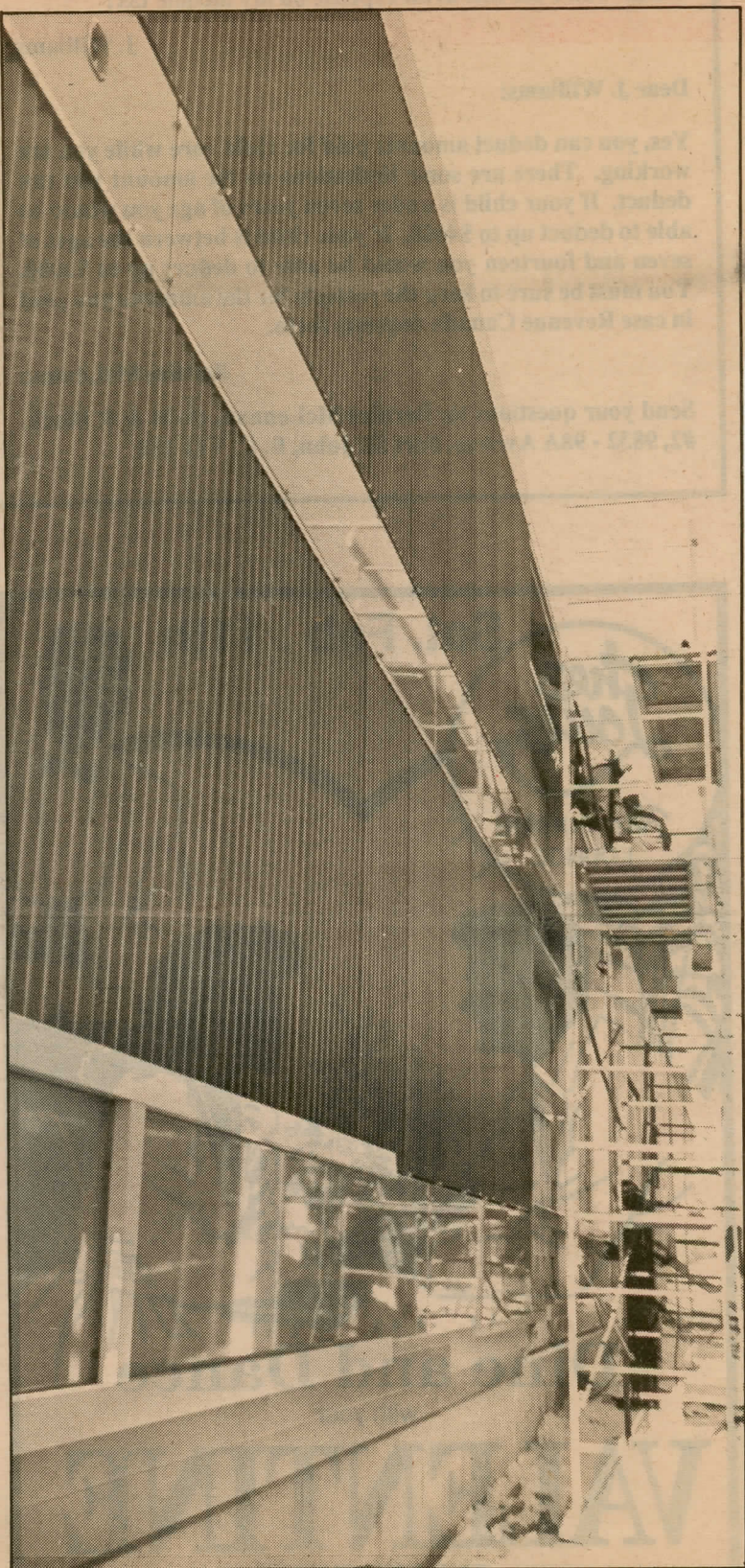


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RED AND SILVER GREY metal cladding is being installed on the outside of the North Peace Arts Centre. It DOES look red and blue, but that's because of a blue plastic protective coating which will be peeled off when the job is finished in a few weeks.

Arts Centre gets unanimous support on council motion

By Wendy Coomber
Daily News staff

In a move that surprised everyone on council last night Ald. Peter Vandergugten made a motion to send a delegation to Victoria to lobby for the Cultural Society's GO BC grant for the Art Centre.

Vandergugten, who has often voiced his opposition to the Centre, commented that many other communities were receiving GO BC grants and that Fort St. John should

"jump on it" while they still had a chance.

The Art Centre's fundraiser, Sue Popesku, said Vandergugten's move was a "delightful surprise" and totally unexpected.

Vandergugten would not say what prompted him to make the motion, which was unanimously accepted by council. When the cultural society first asked council last fall for their support in asking for the grant, Vandergugten was opposed, saying he felt council's approval of this

FEB 2, 1989
would discourage other groups from asking council to support their grant requests.

The grant request is for \$650,000, which makes up a large chunk of the \$1.9 million needed to finish the second phase of the Arts Centre.

The delegation proposed by Vandergugten would be the mayor and one alderman.

"I'm not reluctant to accept this onerous responsibility," a surprised Pat Walsh said quickly.

He said an official trip to Victoria was a wish that the cultural society had already expressed — that they would like community representatives "to go to Victoria and knock on the proper doors — or to knock down the proper doors."



Photo by Scott Crowson
The last stage of Phase one of the new Arts Centre is now under construction. The overdue shipment of exterior cladding has arrived finally and crews began installing the panels late last

week. Although the panels look red and blue now, the finished look on the outside of the building will be red and silver. Phase two will begin as soon as the fundraisers have the better part of the \$1.9 million needed for that phase.

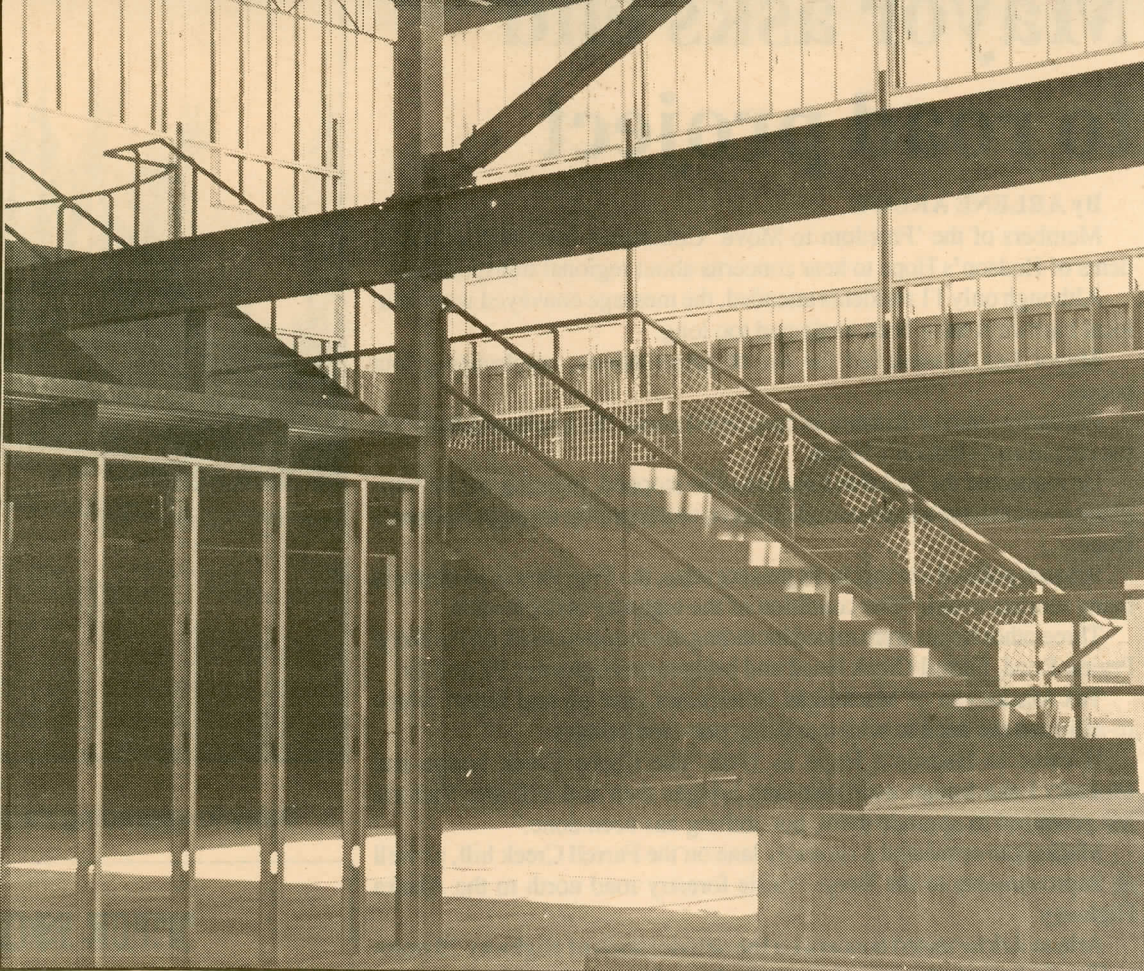


Photo by Pamela den Ouden

APR 1989

Arts centre gets outer beauty; inner beauty still to come

Penny drive covers one-eighth of new stage

JULY, 1989

Daily News staff

The Arts Centre penny drive got off to a good start Saturday at the Arts Centre open house when several hundred people passed through the partially-finished facility.

Many brought their pennies to place on the centre's stage — the fundraising campaign is nicknamed "Staging a Penny Drive" — and about one-eighth of the stage was covered by the end of the day.

"We had a really good response," said organizer Sue Popesku. "It's an incredible sight to see the stage covered with all that copper."

The drive will continue until the stage area is completely filled with one-cent pieces. Donation jars have been set up at various locations around town.

The pennies already on the stage won't be removed until the campaign is over and more will be added on a daily basis.

It's been estimated that 614,000 pennies are needed to cover the entire stage area.

Popesku said that once the 40 by 60 foot stage is completely filled in a few weeks, people will probably get a chance to see the finished result.

In the meantime, those wishing to guess how many pennies it will take to cover the stage may do so at the Artspace, located just up the street from the centre. For \$1 a guess, contestants will have a shot at \$100 in prize money.

"We'd like to thank all the people who dropped by to see the building and to donate their pennies on Saturday," Popesku said. "And we'd especially like to thank the children who volunteered to place all those pennies on the stage."

The crowds visiting the spruced-up site on Saturday also had an opportunity to buy tiles for the interior walls of the new facility. For \$20 a piece, each sponsor will have his or her name displayed forever on one of the ceramic decorations in the new centre.

Several visitors also purchased \$200 seats for the theatre.

Willa Temple, a longtime supporter of the arts, collected pledges for her upcoming swim. She plans to do 600 lengths on her 60th birthday.

Besides the fundraising campaigns — geared to generating the local share of the \$1.4 million needed to complete the interior of the building — an art exhibit was held.

Former Fort St. John resident Leanne Dorval had 30 paintings on

display. Back for the NPSS Homecoming on the weekend,

Dorval was on hand to explain the Inuit influences in her art.



Photo by Wendy Coomber

Every time it rains, it pours pennies from heaven.... (Left to right) Justin and Andrea Dorval and Justin Weis position pennies donated to the Arts Centre on the new stage. The task

kept the youngsters busy for quite a while, although only one-eighth of the stage was covered. The pennies will remain in place until the entire stage glitters with copper.

Art Centre penny drive halfway there

Aug 15, 1989

Daily News staff

So many pennies have been donated for the Arts Centre that wheelbarrows may be needed to transport the shiny coppers, says organizer Sue Popesku.

The Penny Drive began in earnest on the July 1st long weekend when an open house was held at the partially-completed Arts Centre.

The goal of this fundraising project is to collect enough one-cent pieces to entirely cover the stage area of the new 400-seat theatre, currently under construction within the complex.

It's estimated that 614,000 pennies are required.

At last word, only one-eighth of the stage had been covered by the volunteers. But since that time, many more pennies have been collected.

"We think we're about half way now," says Popesku. "We recently ordered 20,000 pennies from the bank to replace the nickles, dimes and quarters people have given us from their spare change."

It turned out that the bank didn't have that much copper in stock, so the penny drive organizers have been waiting for the special order of one-cent pieces to arrive from the mint.

"Judging by the weight of some of our collection bottles, we'll probably need a wheelbarrow to move all the pennies to the Arts Centre stage," says Popesku.

There are five donation bottles located around Fort St. John: the Artspace office, the Totem Mall Art

Gallery, the library, Overwaitea and Jessie Lee's Cabaret in the Fort Motor Hotel.

"The push is on to have everyone contribute their pennies during the next two weeks," Popesku says. "We're having a craft fair at the Arts Centre on Saturday, Aug. 26, and we'd like to finish off the stage at that time."

SWIMMING SUCCESS

As for the other recent Arts Centre fundraising effort, swimmer Willa Temple says she's still receiving money from people who didn't even make a pledge for her marathon swim.

On July 22, two days before she turned 60, Temple swam 600 laps of the North Peace Pool.

She set aside 12 hours to complete the daunting task and was hoping to finish in 10. However, she fooled everyone and swam the equivalent of 15 kilometres in just 8¾ hours.

Before she started her marathon, the community had pledged \$12,000, based on the successful completion of 600 laps.

However, it now appears that many residents were inspired to make a donation after hearing word of her astonishing achievement.

Since her swim, an extra \$1,000 has been contributed.

This brings the total to over \$13,000 so far. The amount is still climbing.

Further donations to the Arts Centre in recognition of Willa's swim may be made at the Artspace office, located on Mackenzie Street next to Coachman Men's Wear.

Arts Centre kicks off stage 2

DEC 1989

Daily News staff

Local fundraising for phase II of the Arts Centre begins in earnest this Saturday when an open house takes place at the partially-finished facility.

Two new campaigns begin that day, a penny drive and "Build a Wall."

Large brewer's bottles are being set up around town — at Overwaitea, Artspace, the Library, the Totem Mall Art Gallery and Circle K — so residents can contribute their pennies.

The object is to collect enough coppers to cover the centre's 40 by 60 foot stage. Those attending the open

house will be invited to place their pennies on the stage in person.

Sue Popesku, one of the fundraising organizers, estimates that about 614,000 one-cent pieces will be required.

"We'll have an opportunity later for everyone to guess how many pennies it will actually take to cover the entire stage area," Popesku said. "So dig into your pockets and bring out your spare change. Afterwards, once we get that \$6,140 worth of pennies, if anyone wants to volunteer to roll them, please come down and see us."

Another fundraising project being launched on Saturday is called "Build a Wall." Residents will be asked to purchase a tile to decorate the interior walls of the new Arts Centre.

The cream-colored tiles measure approximately six by 13 centimetres. For \$20, sponsors will have their names put on the surface of the tiles.

"This will allow you to have your name displayed forever in the centre as one of the supporters of the complex," said Linda Scarfo, organizer of the fundraising project. "The tiles are being hand-crafted by local artists. This is a way to contribute to the building of the centre if you can't afford to sponsor a theatre seat for \$200."

The seat sponsorship program, started some time ago, now has about 100 sponsors, Scarfo said. There are 400 seats in all.

\$1.4 MILLION NEEDED

Popesku said a total of \$1.4 million is needed to complete the second phase of construction at the Arts Centre. At present, only the exterior walls and the basic structure of the interior are in place. Phase II will finish off the interior.

The North Peace Cultural Society is hoping the provincial and federal governments will contribute \$1.1 million of this cost. Of the remainder, \$350,000 is expected to come from local donations, \$350,000 from corporate contributions and \$100,000 from foundation grants.

B.C. Hydro helped kick off the corporate campaign last week when it announced that it's contributing \$40,000 to the Arts Centre. The announcement was made on Monday when the utility's board of directors held a meeting here.

The Arts Centre open house, which coincides with Canada Day and the NPSS Homecoming, will be the only chance for the general public to see the inside of the building before it's completed.

"The 40,000 square-foot building has no inside walls at this point so the expansive space is worth a look," Popesku said.

Visitors on Saturday will also get to see an art exhibit by Vancouver artist and former Fort St. John resident Leanne Dorval. The subject of the 30-painting exhibit is the Inuit people and their heritage. It's called "Visions of the North."

Volunteers from the North Peace Cultural Society will also be at the open house, to answer questions about the completed construction and the phase II plans for the Arts Centre. Members of the Public Library Board will be on hand to discuss plans for the new library which will be housed in the centre.

In addition, visitors to the open house will get a chance to meet Willa Temple. She plans to swim 600 lengths at the North Peace Pool on her 60th birthday to raise some money for phase II.

The open house will take place between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.