

Two women inmates found using heroin

By AARON ALDRIDGE
Staff Writer

A Newport woman will spend up to seven years in prison for violating the terms of her probation by snorting heroin while she was incarcerated at the Sullivan County House of Corrections.

Crystal Blanchette, 27, of Pleasant Street, was sentenced last week in

Sullivan County Superior Court to between two years and 265 days to seven years in prison for the probation violation and 60 days in jail for possession of heroin.

According to court documents, a female inmate, Morgan Hurley, allegedly received a bag of heroin that was hidden in a new pair of sneakers she received as a gift Dec. 23. Hurley allegedly shared

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the heroin with Blanchette in their cell.

Corrections officers were made aware of the drugs when a note was found on the floor outside a cell that read, "The reason room three is on edge is Morgan has dope in her pillow case, it was brought in with her new sneakers."

An officer went to the room and observed Hurley "scrubbing her shoes in the sink."

The two inmates were removed from the cell and interviewed. Both of them initially denied using any drugs.

A urinalysis was conducted and both inmates tested positive for drugs. The inmates and their cell were searched, but no drugs or drug paraphernalia were located.

Blanchette admitted to snorting heroin with Hurley, but said she had nothing to do with bringing the drugs into the jail.

Jail superintendent Ross Cunningham said this was the first incident of this type since he started working at the jail Aug. 20.

"Measures have been put in place to manage this as much as possible," Cunningham said.

The way the drugs were brought into the jail presents a problem for officers, Cunningham said. In this case, the sole of a new shoe was removed, a packet of heroin was placed inside and the sole was reglued to the shoe. In order for officers to find the drug they would have had to destroy the property during a search.

"We have a better review process when handling property now," Cunningham said. "This was an eye opener to the staff."

Blanchette is currently serving her sentence at the New Hampshire State Prison for Women and Hurley is being held in Cheshire County pending the outcome of an investigation.

"There is an ongoing criminal investigation," Cunningham said.

Aaron Aldridge can be reached at (800) 545-0347 ext. 139, or by e-mail at aaldridge@eagletimes.com.