



These popular Okanagan treats offer a sweet way to cool down



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Popyrin caps off dreamweek in Montreal going from No. 62 to No. 1

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\$1.90 + GST



Isabella Cucnik, 13, is pictured with her music teacher (and grandmother) Lynne Leydier at the Canada West Performing Arts Festival.

Singla Bros. contribute to SOS Medical Foundation

Singla Bros. Holdings Ltd. empowered the community with a significant contribution to the South Okanagan Similkameen Medical Foundation's \$10 million Oncology Campaign.

Recognizing the vital role of robust healthcare in their community, the Singlas recently pledged \$200,000 in support of the new Oncology Clinic. Paul Singla emphasized that this contribution reflects their deep gratitude towards Penticton Regional Hospital, which has served their family members over the years.

In 1970, Paul Singla arrived in Penticton from India to embark on a construction career. He bought his first property in 1972. His brother Bhushan came in 1976 and Subash in 1980. Together the family established the thriving Singla Bros. Holdings Ltd.

For half a century, the Singla brothers have not only enriched the Okanagan's housing landscape but also nurtured community spirit through their developments.

The new Oncology Clinic is poised to significantly enhance healthcare in the South Okanagan Similkameen region, with increased nursing staff and treatment bays. It promises to provide essential comfort and mental health support, accommodating social workers and caregivers. Scheduled to open at Penticton Regional Hospital in July 2025, the clinic marks a pivotal step in advancing local healthcare.

Ian Lindsay, CEO of the SOS Medical Foundation, expressed gratitude for donors like the Singlas, whose commitment ensures top-tier healthcare for residents of the South Okanagan Similkameen.

For more information about the campaign contact: ian.lindsay@interiorhealth.ca

Special to The Herald

Local teen golden at Canada West festival

By Keith Lacey
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

Musical and artistic talent run deep in Isabella Cucnik's family.

The talented 13-year-old Penticton girl's grandmother is Lynne Leydier, the founder and owner of Sound Stage Productions, Studio and Theatre Company, which has been producing top-notch musical theatre in Penticton for more than 25 years. She has also given singing lessons to hundreds of students over the same period of time.

Her mother Elizabeth also enjoyed success in musical theatre.

Isabella showcased her outstanding vocal skills recently by claiming top spot in her age division in the musical theatre category at the Canada West Performing Arts Festival.

The festival was held at the University of Victoria.

This event has only been around for three years and is organized in partnership with the provincial performing arts associations in Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C. The festival is held in rotation with Saskatchewan having hosted in 2022, Alberta in 2023 and this year in Victoria.

It features the top amateur music and speech arts competitors from each province.

Cucnik has been taking singing lessons from

her grandmother since age five.

She entered and won first place in the Penticton Kiwanis Music Festival last winter, which qualified her to compete at the provincial Kiwanis competition, which was held recently in Fort St. John.

She captured first place at the provincials, which qualified her to compete in the Canada West competition. She and two other young girls from B.C. qualified for that event.

"I kind of just grew up around it, I guess," said Cucnik. "I like classical and musical theatre. Those are my favourites right now, but I like all kinds of music."

Competitors got to choose three songs to perform in front of musical theatre adjudicators, said Cucnik.

At the Western Canada competition, she had to not only sing three songs, but also put them together into a musical theatre production.

"She had to fill 15 minutes with introductions to each song," said Leydier. "The judging is very strict as you are disqualified if you go over the 15 minutes, so she had to prepare the three songs as part of a performance, sort of like a mini concert."

Cucnik said she was confident she had sang well, but said you're never sure what judges you've never met before are going to think.

"I was hoping I did well, but I wasn't 100 per cent sure what the judges would think," she

said. "When I found out I had won, I was obviously pretty happy."

Cucnik took home some cash and nice prizes for winning her division.

While she loves singing, dancing and performing, Cucnik said she's still too young to know if she'll pursue any of them in post-secondary studies or perhaps even professionally. "I'm not sure," she said. "I have a lot of time to think about it."

Leydier said she couldn't be prouder of her granddaughter.

"She sings very well, but she's also a really good dancer," she said. "She really excels at all the arts. She's a young lady of many talents."

Teaching your granddaughter presents its own challenges, but Isabella is always striving to improve and has a great attitude and that makes teaching her a pleasure, said Leydier.

"I try and treat her like I do all my other students, but obviously I'm partial to her development," she said. "It's a little different having your granddaughter as a student, but she works very hard and is very open and receptive to learning and improving. She handles things very well."

Cucnik says she plans on continuing with her voice and dance training and looks forward to competing in future Kiwanis competitions and hopefully qualifying for the Western Canada Performing Arts Festival next year.

B.C. leads country in latest crime stats

By Keith Lacey
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

The latest information from Statistics Canada shows that five of the country's top 10 cities with a population over 100,000 have made the list for having the country's highest crime rates are here in British Columbia.

The information released last week indicated Kamloops had the highest crime severity index (CSI) for any Canadian city with a population in excess of 100,000 residents in 2023.

Chilliwack was second in the national rankings, while Nanaimo was sixth, Kelowna came in seventh and Abbotsford-Mission 10th.

In Kamloops, police reported 13,116 criminal incidents per 100,000 residents in the fast-growing city in British Columbia's southern Interior.

According to the information released by Statistics Canada, Kamloops actually experienced a two per cent decrease in its CSI rating from 2022, however, the latest statistics show it still had the highest CSI rating of any Canadian city with a population exceeding 100,000

residents.

Kamloops finished first in the CSI in 2023, with a rating of 165.3, a 10 per cent increase from 2022.

Statistics Canada said the numbers used not only detail the volume of reported crimes, but also their severity. The agency cautions that the data is not meant to be used in isolation or as a universal indicator of an area's overall safety.

B.C.'s overall CSI for last year was 104.1. The provincial crime rate was 7,404 incidents per 100,000 people.

Both Kamloops and Chilliwack have populations not far exceeding the 100,000 population threshold.

According to Statistics Canada, Chilliwack had the second-highest CSI in the country, at 156.2.

It also had the country's third-highest crime rate, at 11,615 police-reported criminal incidents per 100,000 people, a 17 per cent increase from 2022.

According to the Statistics Canada web page, the conventional crime rate and the Crime Se-

verity Index (CSI) are two complementary ways to measure police-reported crime.

The crime rate measures the volume of crime per 100,000 population, including all Criminal Code violations (except traffic violations). The CSI measures both the volume and the severity of crime and includes all Criminal Code and other federal statute violations, according to the website.

The CSI has a base index value of 100. Both the conventional crime rate and the CSI measure crime based on the most serious violation in the criminal incident.

The following are the country's top 10 for crime rates (100,000 or more):

1. Kamloops
2. Chilliwack
3. Red Deer, Alta.
4. Lethbridge (tie)
4. Winnipeg (tie)
6. Nanaimo
7. Kelowna
8. Saskatoon
9. Edmonton
10. Abbotsford-Mission

FOOD	A2	SPORTS	B1=3
VALLEY NEWS	A3	LIFE & ARTS	B4
OPINION	A8	PUZZLES	B5
LETTERS	A9	CLASSIFIEDS	B6-7



DECENT
H: 29 L: 15
POP: 30%
UV INDEX: 7

QUOTE OF THE DAY

A war is justified if you're willing to send your son. If you're not willing to send your son, then how do you send someone else's?

—Jesse Ventura, former Governor of Minnesota

