

Up 42%, without incurring debt – record amount
Major projects hike 2020 capital works plan to \$27 million

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Westmount’s spending in 2020 on infrastructure and other asset-based items is expected to leap to a record high of \$26.9 million from \$18.7 million in 2019, itself a record high.

“This is the largest capital works budget ever,” said city director general Benoit Hurtubise before its scheduled presentation November 4, after press time.

The 42-percent increase is driven by \$7.2 million for “special projects” that in-

clude greenhouse reconstruction, set to start next year; a new roof for city hall; and work on the municipal garage. All these are to be funded from appropriated surplus.

The total amount of spending would be achieved without incurring debt, according to preliminary documents.

In addition to the \$7.2 million from surplus, another \$16.5 million is slated to come from the operating budget (pay-as-you-go) and \$3.2 million from government grants.

The plan to spend a total of \$9.7 million on buildings (special projects plus another \$2.5 million) shifts the emphasis from other infrastructure as reported by Mayor Christina Smith two weeks ago.

In addition, a break-
down of all the other continued on p. 23

Skeete visits Akiva, praises language lab



Second from left, the head of the provincial government’s secretariat for English-speaking Quebecers, Christopher Skeete, tries out Akiva School’s new language laboratory during the system’s launch on October 28, along with Deborah Abecassis, left, and, to the right, Sidney Benudiz, Robert Iny, and Rachelle and Rick Merovitz. See p. 19 for story.

PHOTO: MARTIN C. BARRY

Don’t Miss It
City’s Remembrance service. Sunday, November 10. Westmount Cenotaph. 2 pm. One of the city’s two ‘Westmount Park’ 1810 cannon is ready and is expected!


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Cllr. Brzeski: ‘I think we can do better’
Westmount diverts more than 53% of garbage from landfill

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY


Westmount residents are being called on to divert more of their waste material from landfill by increasing their use of the city’s environmental recuperation programs such as ones for recycling, organics (kitchen waste and leaves), construction and bulk material as well as hazardous waste.

Annual figures released last month by the Montreal agglomeration indicate Westmount diverted from landfill some 54.4 percent of its total waste generated. This is slightly higher than 53.5 percent in 2017 and 52.6 percent in 2013.

While actual figures calculated by Westmount for 2018 show a slightly higher diversion rate of 56.7 per-
cent compared to the continued on p. 22


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Place Kensington celebrates its 30th anniversary

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Place Kensington residents and guests gathered at the St. Catherine St. seniors' retirement residence on October 24 to celebrate Place Kensington's 30th anniversary.

Place Kensington first opened its doors in 1989 at a time when the concept of an upscale retirement residence for seniors was very new, Place Kensington executive director Sylvia Zagury said in an address. Westmount city councillor Cynthia Lul-



Sylvia Zagury, executive director of Place Kensington, addresses residents and guests during the 30th anniversary gathering on Oct. 24.

ham, who has represented District 7 since 1995, said she could remember the automotive garage, Campbell-Timmins, which used to occupy the lot where Place Kensington was built.

While she was disappointed to lose access to the garage's services, Lulham said she was pleased with the arrival of Place Kensington because it beautified St. Catherine St.

"It was not very attractive before that, I think you would agree," she said. "It looked very industrial. So, having lived in the community for 40 years, I was very pleased when Place Kensington opened."

Activities held during the late afternoon and evening included a 30th anniversary dinner. This was followed by a performance by nine members of the Nouvelle

Génération Chamber Orchestra (ONG) under the artistic direction of Natasha Turovsky.

Soloist Alexandru Sura thrilled the audience with his arrangement of *Mémoires Roumaines* for cimbalom and strings.

Other members of the orchestra included solo violinists Veronika Cherniak and Olga Semionova, as well as violinists Veronica Ungureanu, Anastasia Virlan and Zhanna Li, Revaz Memichev on viola Kateryna Bragina on cello and Roman Manolache on double bass.

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Comin' Up, p. 21

Dodge on June real estate transfers, p. 16

Social Notes
(Bach Before Bedtime), p. 25



Harpist Suzanne Berthiaume entertained Place Kensington residents and guests in the ground floor lounge at the St. Catherine St. retirement residence during a 30th anniversary celebration held on Oct. 24.


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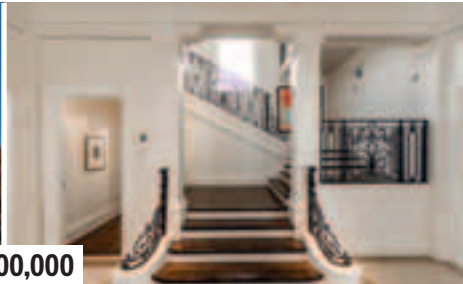


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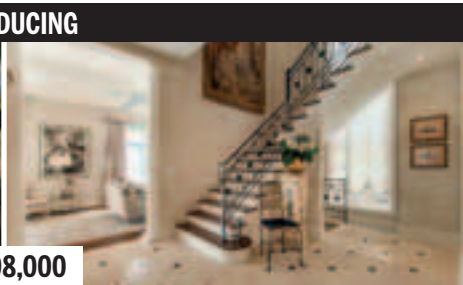


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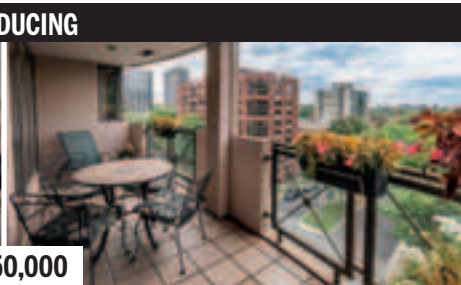


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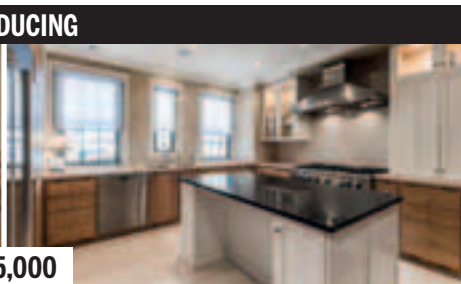


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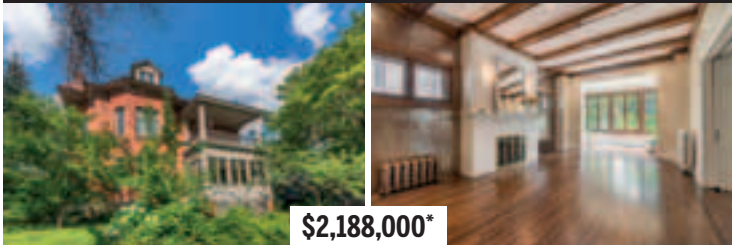
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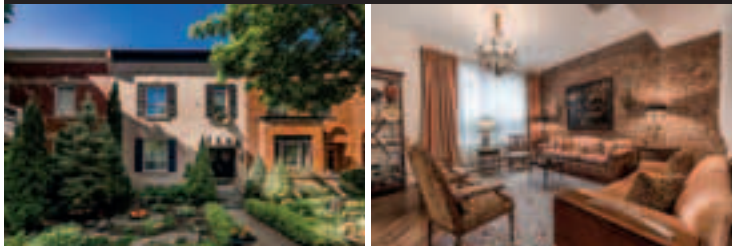
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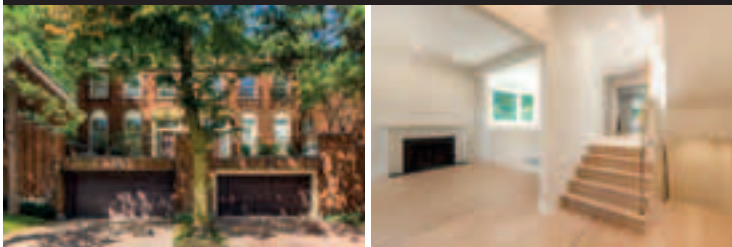
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EDITOR JUMPS TO SUGGESTION
– CITY SHOULD REMOVE ITS
DEAD TREES

Re: the letter by Peter Howick of October 29, “Remove, Replace Dead Trees Please,” (p. 6).

With all due respect, I think the editor may have jumped too quickly to his suggestion that the trees in question may not belong to the city of Westmount. Dollars to doughnuts they do because concerned homeowners eliminate potential hazards. Westmount’s Public Works department doesn’t seem to share this cautionary approach.

I have been trying for over three years to get Westmount to take a serious look at “its” tree on my front lawn.

Every time that I am lucky enough to talk to a real person at Public Works, they tell me my tree is just fine. This is said while someone else from Westmount has been displaced to remove the huge broken branches on the road, on my driveway or on my lawn that have all come down in wind and rain; and not always torrential wind and rain. I had to remove the ones from the roof myself.

Westmount has told me with a straight face that my tree is healthy as we walked together through piles of unnaturally black-spotted leaves.

I am so worried about the consequences of this diseased, and nearly dead, tree falling on my house, my cars, my kids, the neighbourhood dog walkers, the mailman and the Amazon guy that I have even offered to pay to have it removed! My offer



was refused, even when I said I would replant.

Sometimes things are really what they appear to be: dead trees that need immediate removal, and replacement, by the city of Westmount.

I shudder to think what it is going to take.
CLAIRE FRIPP, BELMONT AVE

A TRIPLE THREAT AT
ATWATER METRO WORK

Re your photo in the October 22 issue (p. 8) with a reader’s letter attached (“Watch Your Step at Alexis Nihon Detour”), I feel compelled to point out another perhaps even more serious hazard at the same place. Besides being careful

walking or biking over the temporary elevated pedestrian and bicyclist paths running parallel to each other along a makeshift wire fence divider, there is also the Wood Ave.-side exit of these two paths that people should be warned about.

Like last week’s letter, I include a photo (see above) that shows not only the side-by-side, pedestrian/bicyclist exit paths both spilling onto de Maisonneuve on the left, but also the Alexis Nihon parking garage driveway exit on the right, all three converging precisely at the same spot. In short, pedestrians are not the only ones who should be alert here, but also bicyclists and car drivers – a triple threat.

RICHARD ORLANDO, SHERBROOKE ST.

am afraid our “recyclables” as well as our garbage might be ending up in Third World garbage dumps, which is not only polluting but also immoral to be inflicting our garbage on poorer people elsewhere in the world.

I have not heard from city officials, and have not even received an acknowledgment of receipt. It is not the first time that an email and/or a phone message of mine has gone unattended, except for a tree expert who promptly attended a concern I had about a sick tree.

Hopefully city officials read your publication. MAYA KHANKHOJE, METCALFE AVE.

CHECK THE TREES, PLEASE



The attached photo was taken at 12 noon on November 1. The strong wind had the last say. The tree in question had no chance. Would it be too much to ask the city to verify all trees that are in the dog run as well as the rest of the park in order to avoid possible injury?

NATHALIE ALLARD, PRINCE ALBERT AVE.

WHAT SHOULD BE RECYCLED?
AND WHERE DOES IT GO?

On October 3, I wrote to the environmental section of Westmount city hall asking them about the final destination of our garbage and recyclables and also suggesting that the city inform its residents of what is truly recyclable and what is not, like other municipalities do. In the distant past, we were asked to separate glass, paper and plastics (and only certain types) in separate containers but for many years now we are asked to mix everything in the same bin. I

WHITHER GOEST ENGLISH?

I get it, shortcuts are necessary. We use universal passwords for banks, Facebook and Expedia accounts. And abbreviations abound: BTW, IDK, LOL, IKR?

But I fear that these shortcuts have led to the use of lazy language, something I recently witnessed first hand. Ugh.

Last fall, I ordered a decorative box for my daughter’s 14th birthday; gold and black, adorned with treated flowers. The box was to be inscribed with a Marilyn Monroe quote for the 14-year-old girl in all of us; “Imperfection is beauty, madness is genius, and it’s better to be ridiculous than absolutely boring.”

Unfortunately, the box arrived as “Imperfection is beauty, madness is genius and it’s better to be ridiculous, then absolutely boring.”

Clearly, it was not my intention to urge my daughter to be absolutely boring after being a beautifully imperfect, ridiculously mad genius, as this inscription actually sug- continued on p. 26

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

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Police Report**Greene burglaries have police on alert**

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Police at Station 12 are advising merchants to be extra cautious when locking up at the end of the business day, following a string of break-and-enter burglaries between October 28 and 30 on Westmount's Greene Ave.

As two of the break-ins took place just a few minutes apart, community relations officer Stéphan Laperrière acknowledged that whoever was responsible was brazen enough to risk being caught by remaining on the scene.

Shortly after 3 am on October 30, a clothing boutique on Greene was entered illegally through a window at the back.

However, according to Laperrière, a security camera captured images of the crime in progress and the investigators believe two suspects were involved.

Also on Greene sometime after 8:30 pm on October 28, perpetrators using a similar *modus operandi* entered a nearby business through the store's rear.

A protective security grill that had been placed over a back window was removed by undoing some screws. "They took the time to unscrew six screws on a security cage," Laperrière said.

The suspects stole clothing sold by the retailer, as well as fashion accessories. But again surveillance cameras nearby or within the store recorded everything and the images are now part of an investigation.

Earlier that evening, around 8:20 pm, unknown suspects broke into yet another Greene Ave. commercial establishment, although this time through the front door.

While there was no mention in the subsequent police report whether there were any surveillance cameras deployed at the crime scene, Laperrière speculated, based on the similarities, that "it's possible it was the same people."

Finally, the Station 12 police blotter reports that on October 29 an attempted break-in also took place on Greene Ave., although the details were not available by the *Independent's* press time.

Laperrière's advice to local business owners? "Make sure that, before you leave, the store is as secure as possible," he said, advising merchants to keep their eyes open for potential security breaches.

And surveillance cameras are also useful, Laperrière continued. "They allow you to see if the same suspects are involved in several incidents and give police officers something to work with afterwards."

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Understanding the administrative ‘strategic plan’

Next year’s planning program ‘key’ to future development

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

In this, the first year of Westmount’s five-year “strategic plan” for the Urban Planning department, the focus has been on finding administrative ways through by-law revisions to shorten the permit process without changing requirements, according to department director Tom Flies.

But key to the community’s architectural and development future will be next

year’s vision for where the community, through public consultations, wants the city to go in the future, he told the *Independent* last week.

“Do we want a community based on sustainability and preservation, or is the objective to upgrade and use the newest cutting-edge technologies and materials, or a combination of all of these?”

He said he finds there has been some “confusion or misunderstanding” in the minds of some residents regarding the strategic plan, which he describes as mainly “an administrative road map” for determining the main areas to be tackled and in the correct order (see story February 12, 2018, p. 4).

1,981 active files

These include restructuring the department and expediting the issuing of permits, for which it currently has 1,981 active permit files under review.

This consumes much of its time and has over-shadowed the need to update its master planning program to create a vision for the future.

This planning program which, in its

original form dates back to 2001, “has had a huge focus on heritage preservation but not on where we want to go from here,” Flies said. “This will be a major public discussion for next year and a key document from an urban planning perspective.”

While public consultations on the planning program had initially been planned for this fall, he said, it turned out that too many other consultations were going on such as those for the revitalization of Westmount Park taking place in November.

Focus on by-laws

This year, as the department started to update and consolidate by-laws, the focus has been to start with those dealing with “minor” permit requests regarding landscaping.

This will involve two by-laws but no changes to guideline requirements.

These are permits that include backyard fences or mechanical units, for example, that could be decided by the department’s Board of Inspections within about five days rather than reviews of some six weeks, as currently required by the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC).

Also, to help with restructuring the department and changing administrative procedures, city council October 23 appointed a professional services mandate to Bourassa Brodeur Bellemare for up to \$112,032 to undertake these changes to free up the time for Flies and others to deal with the volume of construction work and emergency items.


Another area to be worked on, he said, is the city council’s desire to deal with the needs of the commercial areas in the face of rising rents and online sales over which the municipality has little control.

All of these issues are being woven into the strategic plan as the Urban Planning department expands its own resources (space and personnel), streamlines procedures and prepares to update its planning program to deal with future needs.

We welcome your letters

We welcome your letters but reserve the right to choose and edit them. Please limit to 300 words and submit before Friday 10 am to be considered for publication the following week.

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No helmets? Had to abandon jumps and e-scooters

Cyclists warned about time change, \$128 tickets for no lights

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

With the return last Sunday to standard time when it's dark at evening rush-hour, police have begun warning cyclists and pedestrians about the need to be visible.

On October 25, police in conjunction with the Association of Pedestrians and Cyclists of Westmount held a Friday warning campaign at de Maisonneuve and Melville, reports association president Dan Lambert.

Cyclists were informed that lights are compulsory on bikes after dark and that police would start handing out \$128 tickets this week.

Some free lights were given to cyclists who did not have them, he said.

As well about five e-scooters and four jump bikes were pulled over because the riders wore no helmets, Lambert said. "They had to leave their scooters or bikes there. That is an incentive to wear a helmet but tickets will be an even bigger incentive," which is planned for this week.

Respect for pedestrians

"At the same time, our association stressed the importance of respecting pe-



A police campaign in conjunction with the Association of Pedestrians and Cyclists of Westmount October 25 at the bike path in Westmount Park and Melville.

destrians, especially at such places as de Maisonneuve and Melville where the bike path crosses intersections. Cyclists were also reminded to slow down along the bike path through Westmount Park," Lambert said, "where there are often children and seniors."

Following last year's warning and ticketing operations, 92 percent of cyclists riding along de Maisonneuve during the evening rush-hour were equipped with lights, he said.

The SPVM's Montreal-wide visibility campaign for pedestrians and cyclists start-



This youngster learns about bicycle safety and is given a light for the bike from police officer Ioan Stefanov October 25 during a campaign at the bike path through Westmount Park at Melville.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF D. LAMBERT.

ed October 23 and runs to November 6. The first week was for warnings, second week for ticketing.

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Top right: staff members Dawna Hobbs as Professor Hooch and Andrea Wahba as a Slytherin student; bottom right: staff and volunteers; top and bottom left: "Hogwarts students."

PHOTOS COURTESY OF WENDY WAYLING, WESTMOUNT PUBLIC LIBRARY.



A whole series of events was held by the Westmount Public Library at Victoria Hall October 26, including feasting in two sit-

tings (depending on age) and a pumpkin contest.

Winners (by age category) were "Harry

with Leaf Wings" by Emerie Garcia de la Vega (5-8), "Hagrid" by the Goddard family (5-8 family category), "Quidditch Balls"

by Lea Bernardin (9-13) and "Donut box" by the Khalifa family (9-13 family category).

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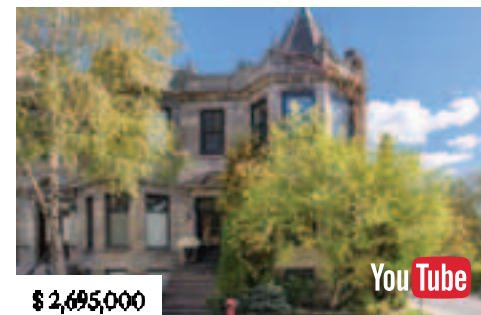
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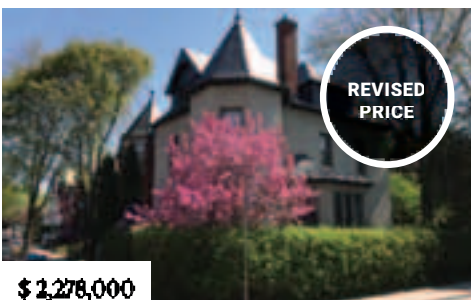
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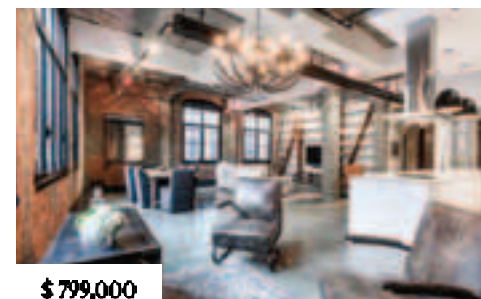
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The regiment's commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel John Shone, welcomed all the guests to the launch cocktail of the RMR Museum's latest exhibition titled "Remembering Afghanistan: Reflections of Canadian Soldiers." PHOTOS BY RALPH THOMPSON.

Remembering Afghanistan

'Reflections of Canadian Soldiers' opens at Westmount armoury

BY HEATHER BLACK

The opening of the exhibition "Remembering Afghanistan: Reflections of Canadian Soldiers" took place on October 24 at the St. Catherine St. armoury. Created by the Royal Montreal Regiment Museum

and the educational organization Je Me Souviens, the exhibition focuses on the experience of war and the volunteer participation of over 60 members of the Royal Montreal Regiment (RMR). A reserve unit, the RMR was awarded the theatre honour "Afghanistan" for its contribution to Cana-

da's mission from 2001 to 2014.

At the event, the RMR's commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel John Shone, described the touring exhibition as "a way to remember what happened." He also said, "And what was created by the RMR Museum and Je Me Souviens will not be forgotten."

Assistant Curator Melanie Presseau-Dumais commented, "The exhibition is built on interviews and each person's experience was unique." She then introduced video clips of soldiers speaking about their tours in Afghanistan. Two of the recorded reservists also described their experience in person.

Lieutenant-Colonel George Siket spoke of his tour in Kandahar as an opportunity for service, to use training, and adventure, but he also mentioned fallen colleagues. Warrant Officer Alan Vincent praised the RMR "for creating an *esprit de corps* and camaraderie" where combat participants can talk about these experiences. Teachers Ariane Paquet of Je Me Souviens and Chantal Clabrough from Westmount High, who helped develop the learning ma-

terials, spoke of need to inform students and foster citizenship skills.

The exhibition includes videos on mounted iPads, photographs, artifacts, and large information panels about soldiers who served in Afghanistan. The text reflects four themes of RMR participation: "influence," participation in psychological or media operations (PSYOP); "mentoring," participation in civilian-military cooperation (CIMIC); "reconstruction," contribution to the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar; and "security," training of Afghan security forces. The exhibition will be open to the public until November 10, when it will tour schools and other organizations.

Je Me Souviens' Marina Smyth said that a teacher's guide was developed for use online and with the touring exhibition. Another recorded soldier, Warrant Officer Harold Strul of the Royal 22 Regiment commented, "During Remembrance Week, we speak to students of all ages and it's a great opportunity to convey what we do and who we are."



Members of the Afghan Women Centre in Montreal: from left, president Makai Aref, Asthma Hamnawa, Angela Zahire, Mazary-Aymaq and Anisa Shams. They did all the catering for the ceremony, which included traditional Afghan food; vegetarian bolani and sumbusa and shami kabab (beef and potato) with a lettuce and sweet pepper salad.

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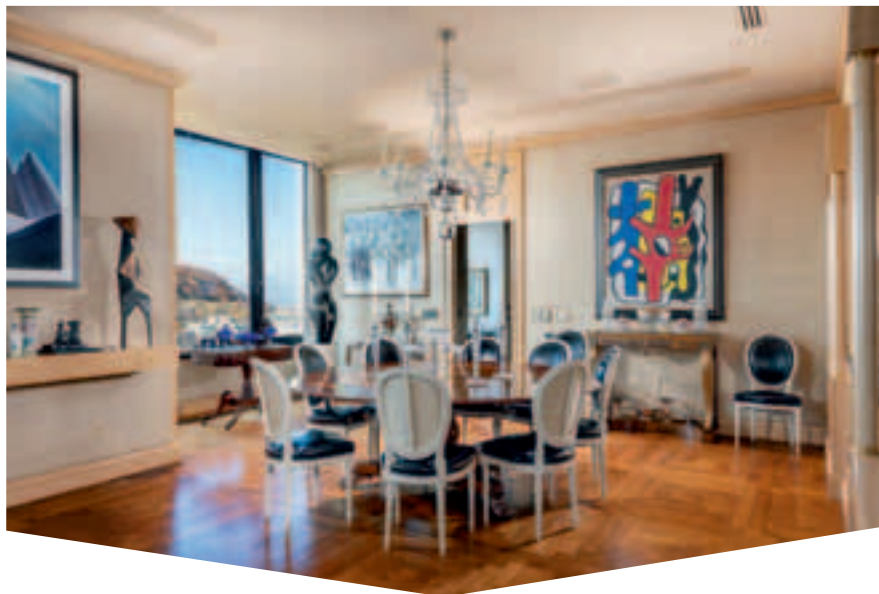
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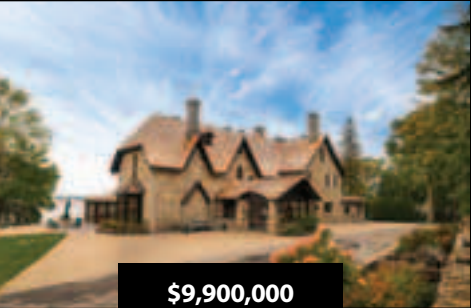
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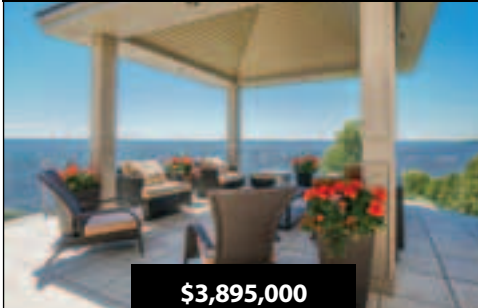
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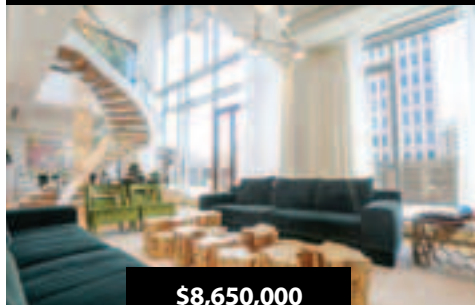


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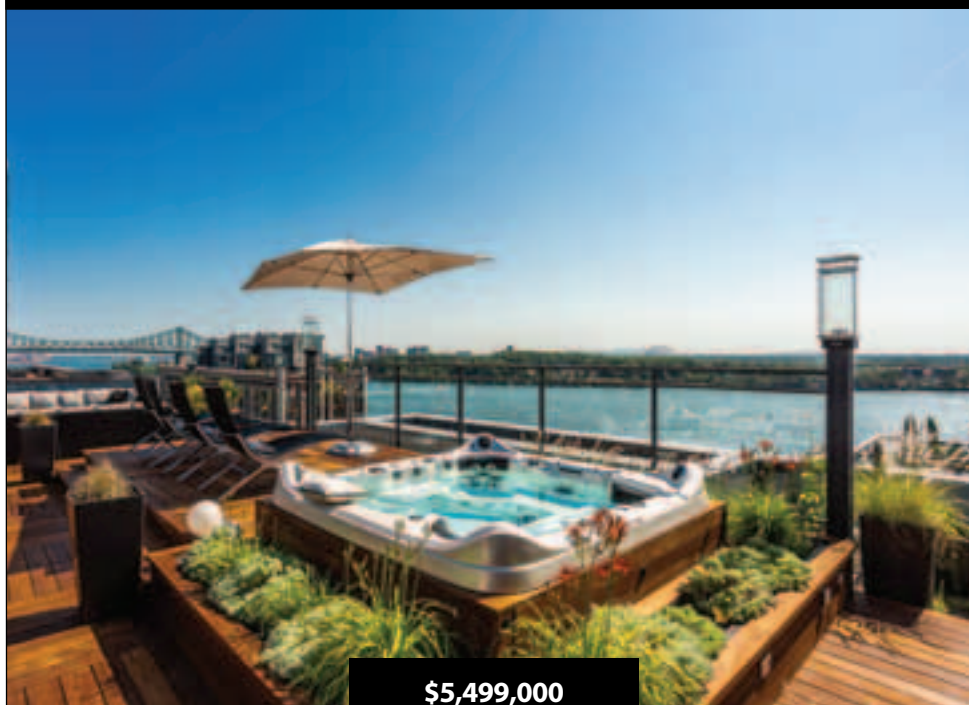
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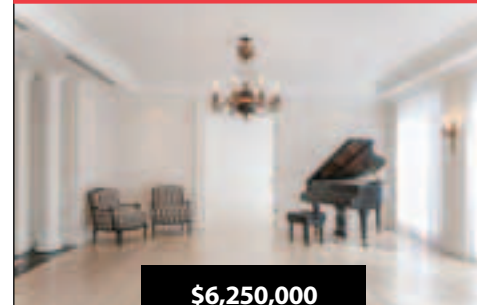
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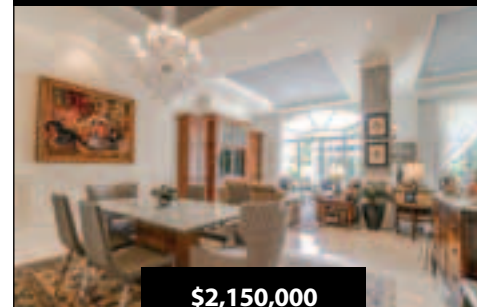
ON CONCRETE | IMPRESSIVE TERRACE



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"ICÔNE", DOWNTOWN

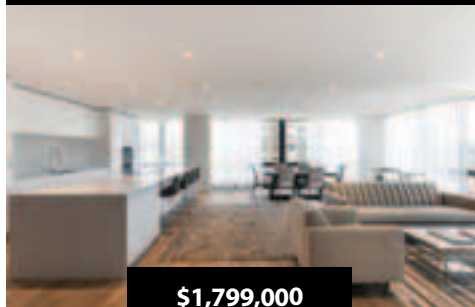
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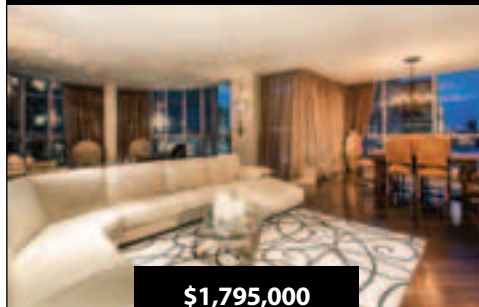
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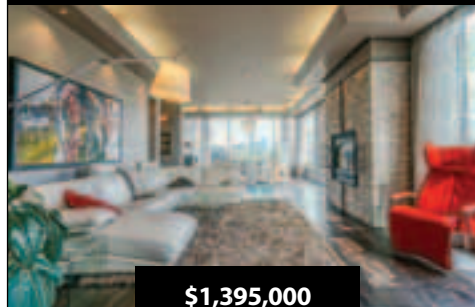
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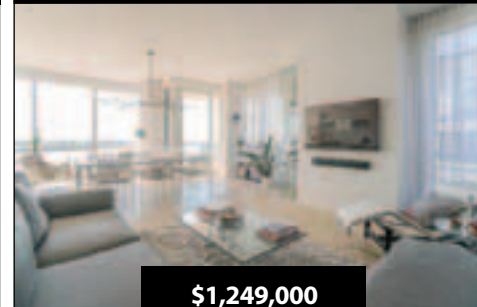
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ANDY DODGE,
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Note: The following article relates to the registration of deeds of sale for Westmount property in June 2019, gleaned from city and non-city sources. A list of sales can be found on p. 17.

Deeds signed in June often involve younger families buying into Westmount and giving themselves the summer to settle into their houses or carry out repairs before the kids go back to school and the



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June transfers: low prices, strong volume

family routine starts.

This year was no exception, with a long list of lower-priced homes moving, but only two houses changing hands for prices over \$2 million.

One of Westmount’s smallest houses, 534 Lansdowne Ave., sold for only \$640,000, second-lowest price of the year because its semi-detached neighbour, 536 Lansdowne, sold for \$500,000 in March. Only one other house sold in the first six months of this year for less than \$1 million, and that was 317 Melville Ave., also in March. Another five sale prices in June were under \$1,500,000, which is becoming the lower-price benchmark for Westmount houses these days.

Top price of \$3,300,000 was paid for 76 Belvedere Place, one of the summit area’s only semi-detached houses, whose property includes a separate lot reaching into the woods. The only other sale price higher than \$2 million involved 528 Argyle Ave., another semi-detached home on the slope above Montrose Ave. The average for the month came to \$1,686,761, the lowest average price since June last year when 21 sales averaged \$1,590,833. Still, those prices averaged only 25.8 percent above their municipal evaluations; this year the 19 sales



76 Belvedere Place, highest price, \$3,300,000; highest mark-up, 71.25 percent.

had an average mark-up of almost 36 percent, based on the same valuation roll.

Interestingly, the highest mark-up involved 76 Belvedere Place, the highest-priced house, while the lowest mark-up was for 534 Lansdowne, the lowest-priced house for June.

Condos

Six condominiums sold in June, only one for more than \$1 million and with three prices continued on p. 24



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- Jewish General Hospital
- Info-Santé/Info-Social
- Lethbridge-Layton-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre
- Miriam Home and Services



Bought & Sold – real estate transfers in June 2019

| ADDRESS | VENDOR | PRICE | 2017 VAL | RATIO (%) |
|---------------------------|---|-------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| 38 Anwoth | Abdel Samodi & Khadija Chafia Samodi | \$1,695,000 | \$1,345,100 | 26.01% |
| 528 Argyle | Stewart Shapiro & Lucille Verebes | \$2,118,000 | \$1,674,800 | 26.46% |
| 19 Barat | Robert-Jean Chénier | \$1,950,000 | \$1,317,700 ¹ | 47.99% |
| 76 Belvedere Place | Cheryl Polansky | \$3,300,000 | \$1,927,000 | 71.25% |
| 55 Chesterfield | Ronald Andrew Stern & Amy Bloom | \$1,860,000 | \$1,341,400 | 38.66% |
| 436 Clarke | Maria Malgorzata Borowska | \$1,380,000 | \$962,600 | 43.36% |
| 589 Côte St. Antoine | Bianx S.E.C. | \$1,260,000 | \$900,000 | 40.00% |
| 6 Grove Park | Michel St-Germain & Mariette P. Howell | \$1,720,000 | \$1,428,400 | 20.41% |
| 486 Lansdowne | Oren Steinmetz & Rebecca Wood | \$1,370,000 | \$1,121,900 | 22.11% |
| 499 Lansdowne | Michael Schroeter & Elise Schroeter | \$1,790,000 | \$1,348,700 | 32.72% |
| 534 Lansdowne | estate Catherine Dominique Christine Gerols | \$640,000 | \$551,900 | 15.96% |
| 63 Somerville | Robert Delisle & Louise l'Heureux | \$1,200,000 | \$749,000 | 60.21% |
| 7 Thornhill | Alexandra Schwartz & Colin Brown | \$1,775,000 | \$1,202,300 | 47.63% |
| 9 Thornhill | Omar T. Quraishi & Katharine Anne Carpenter | \$1,685,000 | \$1,212,900 | 38.92% |
| 21 Thornhill | Paul Desmarais & Mary Dailey Pattee | \$1,800,000 | \$1,510,500 | 19.17% |
| 782 Upper Belmont | Li Zhuang | \$1,800,000 | \$1,516,700 | 18.68% |
| 8 Weredale Park | Charles Roth | \$1,571,800 | \$1,271,000 | 23.67% |
| 6 Winchester | Deborah Dixon & Ralph Leavitt | \$1,165,000 | \$789,600 | 47.54% |
| CONDOMINIUMS | | | | |
| 438 Claremont | Emir Ozgur Gurtuna & Simone Garneau | \$560,000 | \$461,800 | 21.26% |
| 399 Clarke #4B (405) | estate Bruce Campbell | \$430,000 | \$456,100 | -5.72% |
| 4500 Côte des Neiges #402 | Anas Hariri & Wafaa Jammow | \$387,000 | \$352,900 ² | 9.66% |
| 215 Redfern #110 | Ekaterina Ermakova & El Moataz Shawki | \$1,100,000 | \$814,000 | 35.14% |
| 215 Redfern #206 | Robert Battat | \$709,000 | \$520,100 | 36.32% |
| 4825 St. Catherine | Toni Lynn Hakem | \$411,000 | \$367,500 | 11.84% |
| MAY SALES: | | | | |
| 51 Holton | Lydjie Tremblay | \$1,625,000 | \$1,202,100 | 35.20% |
| 1-5 York, 27% | Jawaid Khan | \$550,000 | \$295,596 ³ | 86.06% |

¹Valuation is a combination of \$1,039,000 in Westmount, \$278,700 in Montreal. ²Valuation is a combination of \$39,600 in Westmount, \$313,300 in Montreal. ³Valuation is 27 percent of \$1,094,800.

Pursuant to a request to the city of Westmount's city clerk under *An act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information*, the *Independent* received a list of addresses that received "welcome tax" bills in and near June 2019. Other information published here was researched by columnist Andy Dodge.

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Margaret Trudeau.

Margaret Trudeau talks mental health at Victoria Hall

By RALPH THOMPSON

Margaret Trudeau was the guest speaker at Victoria Hall October 30 at a sold-out event, the second in a series on health, organized by the Library and Community Events team.

Councillor Mary Gallery, commissioner of library, culture, sports and recreation, brought the evening to order and intro-

duced Mayor Christina Smith, who summarized Trudeau's accomplishments including her role in the public eye and as a mental health advocate, a best-selling author of four books and on the stage, co-writing and performing in the one-woman-show *Certain Woman of an Age*.

Trudeau stepped onto the stage and talked, non-stop for an hour, barely breathing between extracts from her personal life

story, her challenges, and mental health science along with comical recollections of her personal situations.

Her presentation was effervescent, energetic, funny, frank but, one sensed, extraordinarily genuine.

"I have quite a story to tell," Trudeau said with a slight hesitation followed by chuckles from the audience. "For some reason, I've lived a very bizarre, interesting



From left, Councillor Mary Gallery, Margaret Trudeau and Mayor Christina Smith. Donna Lach, assistant director, library and Community Events, presents Trudeau with a silk scarf (draped over her shoulders), created and donated by Westmount artist Nimi Nanji Simard.



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and rich life, but I have also led a life that has been plagued by mental illness.”

Quoting from her book *Changing My Mind*, her parents would say “there’s something different about Margie.” She was capricious and temperamental, quick to laugh and feel despair, flailing arms, pouting and crying. With little knowledge of mental health in the 1950s, “I floated under the radar,” she said.

It is not known why she was bipolar; “I could have been born this way, it could be genetic or caused by the two concussions I suffered after falling off my bike. Nobody knows... but like a lot of mental illness, it started to show in my late teens.”

High achiever, traveller

She was a high achiever graduating at a young age with a bachelor of arts in sociology. She travelled to London and then Morocco all alone, where she was introduced “Strawberry Fields Forever” and marijuana. Alcohol wasn’t her thing, “I didn’t like Baby Duck [wine].” It was on a visit to Tahiti with her parents – her father was the federal minister of Fisheries and Oceans – that she met Pierre Elliot Trudeau, 29 years her elder, then minister of Justice and the “black sheep of the Liberal Party,” who was fascinated by the young carefree flower child.

Dated secretly

He later contacted her, they secretly dated for two years, got married, and “he

changed my destiny” said Trudeau. She found his acquaintances old and boring, and she called 24 Sussex Drive the “crown jewel of the federal penitentiaries.”

Apparently, Diefenbaker said “I don’t know whether he should have married her or adopted her.”

After their second child, Margaret became very depressed. She saw a psychiatrist and travelled, but was plagued by depression followed by hypomania. She was hospitalized but continued a roller-coaster life.

She lost her son Michel at age 23 years in 1998. She lost the will to live. She lost any sense of reason. “I’d spent 50 years in denial.”

But a “nosy, nosy friend” contacted her sons and they forced her to go to a psychiatric hospital “screaming like a banshee.” But here she encountered a lovely doctor and other compassionate, good people. “Do you want to live?” asked the doctor. She decided to stay. It was a long battle, including three years of cognitive behavioural therapy.

In 2006, Trudeau told the world she had bipolar disorder, she was no longer ashamed of her mental illness and has become an advocate for mental health, writing two further books *Changing My Mind* and *The Time of Your Life*.

As she concluded her presentation, she was given a standing ovation and a long line queued for signed copies of her books.



This is Margaret Trudeau’s second speaking event in Westmount in the *Independent’s* lifetime. Our caption from December 5, 2007: Margaret Trudeau talk to Justin’s McGill Debating Union colleague (and *Independent* editor) David Price prior to her speech at the Shaar Hashomayim December 2. She addressed the Israel Cancer Research Fund and The Pink Lady Fund’s brunch honouring Arlene Abitan, Barbara Seal and Julie Gniwisch. She spoke movingly about her bipolar condition. She advocated that mental health be treated as importantly as physical health and that sufferers seek treatment without stigma. Justin briefly spoke and related that he was often asked how he deals with being the son of Pierre Trudeau. “The answer is before you. I am so proud of my mother.” 589 people attended the event, which raised \$242,000.

PHOTO: MICHAEL BOURGUIGNON

Akiva’s language lab gets top grade from ‘secretariat’s’ Skeete, Premier Legault

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

During the opening of a new language lab at Akiva School on October 28, staff at the Kensington Ave. school were praised by the head of the provincial government’s secretariat for English-speaking Quebecers, as well as by Premier François Legault who sent a pre-recorded message.

Coalition Avenir Québec MNA for St. Rose Christopher Skeete, who leads the secretariat, was the featured guest at the launch.

‘Congratulations’

“Let me congratulate you on the inauguration of this language lab, an initiative that can only cement the reputation of this institution,” Skeete said.

“While Akiva School is indeed an important institution to the Jewish community, it is undoubtedly true that its achievements are to the benefit of Quebec as a whole,” he added.

While saying he was well aware of everyone who helped make the language lab possible, Skeete said he wanted to single out the contribution of Magali

Sauves, Akiva’s director of French studies.

Premier Legault also mentioned Sauves by name. “I would like to say to her and all her team ‘bravo’ for this great initiative, ‘bravo’ for this French-language laboratory,” said Legault.

Built by multinational language lab developer Robotel, which has a branch in Laval, the Akiva language facility helps students learn languages in small groups and at their own pace, or one on one with a teacher.

Simultaneous speaking

The Akiva language lab also allows the students, who are fitted with headsets, to speak simultaneously while advancing their oral language skills.

The developers say this helps overcome the fact that in a traditional language learning environment, the average student speaks for less than 20 seconds for every hour of class time.

While the Akiva language lab’s platform was created by Robotel, the content was designed at Akiva by the school’s own French educators.

Rabbi Eric Grossman, head of the

school, said he didn’t need to be persuaded of the merits of language labs for greatly improving the learning of languages.

When he was preparing to enter university in Israel, he decided he wanted to study for a bachelor degree entirely in Hebrew.

Although he didn’t speak Hebrew, he learned the language in a language lab within six weeks and was able to enroll and study at a Hebrew-language university as a result.

After trying out the new system along with other guests, Skeete agreed that it does indeed appear to be an improvement over traditional classroom language teaching. “What I like about this is that you can’t hide,” he said.

“Sometimes if you’re more of an introverted student, the teacher might not know what you’re up to. This way there is no shyness, there is no feeling left out.”

See p. 1 for photo.



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When I was at the veterinary clinic to drop off my dog for daycare, I first saw this white shorthaired cat from the back ... and then he turned around slowly and elegantly. I just stood there and marvelled at the sheer beauty of his light green eyes against his gleaming coat and perfect pink nose.

I then found out that he is Jessie and that he is being boarded there for Gerdy's



Well, well, who do I see wrapped up and peeking out of the blankets? Domino! Such a wonderful fellow, companionable and playful.

Such a great photograph from Domino's foster family!

Dominio is a good boy, just a bit over four years old, at that young-adult stage of interest in everyone and everything. He is in foster care for the Montreal SPCA, very praised by his foster family already as he settled in well, and makes them laugh as the official "undercovers" snorer and smoocher.

Domino is a black-and-white mixed-breed shorthair, medium sized and healthy. He is up to date with his inoculations and he is neutered.

His hips have the potential for dysplasia and he takes daily preventative supplements to ward off. His SPCA identification

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Jessie

Rescues & Adoptions. I then continued my visit with him and he trotted to the front of his cage, presenting his paw gently to me and bent his head forward for attention. He loved being given a treat and was very keen to please.

Even though Jessie came to the rescue as a severely neglected fellow, his world has turned around completely and he will be the perfect companion in a home environment. He is five years old, very healthy, up to date with his inoculations and neutered. It is time for him to enjoy the cuddling of that special person who will cherish him. For more information on Jessie, please contact the volunteers at Gerdy's Rescues



& Adoptions at info@gerdysrescue.org.
Your neighbour, Lysanne

Snuggle buddy Domino

number is 42102790, and his foster family's email is econgo@rocketmail.com for more information and adorable photographs of him.

Your neighbour, Lysanne



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Comin' Up

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10

City's Remembrance service. Westmount Cenotaph. 2 pm.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13

Public consultation on Westmount Park. Victoria Hall. 7 pm.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16

► Treats & Treasures Craft Sale & Bazaar. Free. Centre Greene, 1090 Greene Ave., 10 am to 4 pm.

► "Why am I Afraid to Change?" (videos in English with French subtitles) presented by The Krishnamurti Information Centre of Montreal. \$7. Atwater Library, 1200 Atwater Ave. 2-4 pm,

► "Luminosité," a quartet performance by Montreal Music Collective, the third of a series of seven. Tickets Eventbrite.ca, \$10-\$25. Westmount Park United Church, 4695 de Maisonneuve Blvd. 7:30 pm (6:45 reception).

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18

Regular, mid-month city council meeting. City hall. 5:30 pm.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21

"Marian Dale Scott: A Studio of Her Own" by Gwendolyn Owens, McGill University. \$5. Westmount Room, Westmount Public Library. 7 to 9 pm.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22

J.S. Bach's *The Brandenburg Concertos* by AKAMUS Orchester Berlin. \$25 to \$105. St. Léon Church, 4311 de Maisonneuve Blvd. 7:30 pm.

Also: *J.S. Bach's The Orchestral Suites*. Saturday, November 23. 7:30 pm.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24

Sundays the Shaar presents Dr. Victoria Kaspi, astrophysicist, McGill University on "Cosmic Observations." \$5 per person. Registration required 514.937.9474 x 139. Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, 425 Metcalfe Ave. 12:00 noon.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26

Westmount Toastmasters' club contests in international speech and table topics. Victoria Hall, 4626 Sherbrooke St., Club Room, second floor. 7 to 9 pm.

ONGOING

Parenthood drop-in. Free. Two Doulas is partnering with Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom to offer a weekly drop-in for coffee, cookies, and company with your babies (one year and younger). Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom. Wednesday mornings from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon.

To include your event in *Comin' Up*, write us at editor@westmountindependent.com.

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Garbage in Westmount, October 17 and 18.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.

Garbage, *cont'd. from p. 1*
agglomeration, both are essentially little changed from the previous year (see table). It's possible that the discrepancy in figures may result from Montreal receiving additional information other than what came from the city, Westmount's environmental coordinator Patricia Racette said.

Westmount also generated less overall total waste in 2018 than the previous year, which Councillor Marina Brzeski, commissioner of sustainability, said was "a positive step."

On the other hand, "I think we can do better," she said, comparing the agglomeration results for Westmount of 54.4 per cent with those credited to some municipalities such as Pointe Claire (72 per cent) and Beaconsfield (71 per cent).

PLAYSAFE:
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The War Amps new "kids-to-kids" safety video, featuring stories from young amputees who have lost limbs in accidents, delivers the hard-hitting but positive message: "Spot the danger before you play!"

Visit waramps.ca/playsafe for the video and safety resources.



The War Amps

"The city offers the opportunity to improve our environmental effort and we should now focus our attention on composting more of our organics" that may now find their way into landfill.

New ideas coming in 2020
"We're working hard to get people to participate," said Public Works director Robert Talarico. "We're going to be pushing new ideas for 2020," with details to come later.
The city was one of the first on the island to launch the curbside residential green bin pick-up for kitchen waste in 2009 (see story April 29, 2009, p. 1). But its composting from apartment buildings had been put on hold by the agglomeration until last year for a lack of composting facilities.

The city is now in the throes of launching Phase 2 of its apartment building kitchen waste collections for 50 buildings. While half the buildings have already received letters advising them of the details, "three are already composting," Racette said.

Brzeski said she hoped this would help

BUILDING PERMITS  What's permitted

Council approves 12 building permits

The following 12 requests for demolition, exterior construction, alteration or renovation were approved at the October 23 meeting of the city council on the recommendation of the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC). There were no refusals.

Approved
431 Prince Albert: to replace storm windows;

1 Rosemount: to install a waterproofing membrane on the foundation above ground at the apartment building;

3993 Montrose: to repair landscaping steps and to install a new hand-rail;

644 Lansdowne: to rebuild a rear balcony;

22 de Casson: to modify the walkway;

53 Bruce: to rebuild the brick walls at the back on the west and north facades, demolish rear stair enclosure and rebuild stairs on the main floor and extend rear balconies;

639 Grosvenor: to replace windows and a door provided the balcony door is wood (interior and exterior) without any cladding.

129 Irvine: to replace a window provided it is a double-hung one as per the original;

377 Roslyn: to restore the front porch;

Westmount "regain our leadership (in recuperation) for which we were known in the past."

The city's goal as part of the Quebec government's guidelines is ultimately not only to generate less overall waste material (garbage) but also to send less to landfill since many of these sites are filling up (see story September 30, 2014, p. 1).

365 Lansdowne: to create space for parking in the rear yard;

41 York: to replace a door;

485 Victoria: to replace windows and a door provided the mullions (item 001 and item 002) are preserved and that the proposed window have a 50/50 proportion as per the original.

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| Westmount's reported waste management results | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------|
| | 2018 Agglo Figures Tonnes | % diverted | 2018 Westmt. Figures Tonnes | % diverted | 2017 Agglo results Tonnes | |
| Total waste generated | 11,286 | | 10,505 | | 12,185 | |
| Diverted from landfill | 6,142 | 54.4 | 5,963 | 56.7 | 6,514 | 53.5 |
| Recyclables (residential, commercial+ public bins) | 2,134 | 35 | 1,992 | 33 | 2,134 | 17.4 |
| Organics (garden + kitchen) | 2,565 | 42 | 2,529 | 42 | 2,741 | 22.5 |
| Construction, bulk | 1,368 | 22 | 1,368 | 23 | 1,565 | 12.8 |
| HHW | 33 | 0.5 | 33 | 0.6 | 36 | 0.3 |
| Textiles (clothing) | 22 | 0.4 | 22 | 0.4 | 30 | 0.25 |
| Electronics | 19 | 0.3 | 19 | 0.3 | 19 | .16 |
| Sent to landfill (garbage) | 5,144 | 45.6 | 4,542* | 40.9 | 5,671 | 46.5 |

In some cases the rounding of figures may have distorted some totals.
*Residential garbage collection from Westmount's garbage contractor

Atwater Library screens Shaffer's *Mr. Mergler's Gift*



Oscar-winning former NFB documentary filmmaker Beverly Shaffer is seen here with Peter Yu, who appeared in her 2005 short film *Mr. Mergler's Gift*, at the Atwater Library on Oct. 17 following the screening of the film.

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

While it's said that some filmmakers including Orson Welles never liked to view their films after they were completed, Westmount documentary filmmaker Beverly Shaffer isn't one of them.

Especially when it comes to her 2005 short documentary, *Mr. Mergler's Gift*.

Shot towards the end of Shaffer's more than 30-year career at the National Film Board, the film was screened at the Atwater Library on October 17 as part of Projection, a week-long series of events all over Montreal examining life-and-death issues.

Shaffer's documentary *I'll Find a Way* won an Academy Award for best live-action short film in 1977.

Mr. Mergler's Gift was short-listed for an Academy Award in 2005.

The film was chosen for the Projection series as it deals sensitively with an end-of-life issue: the relationship of a terminally-ill music teacher who takes on the task of teaching the basics of piano to a

young girl in the months leading up to his death.

Daniel Mergler taught many generations of Montreal-area school children to play piano. Xin Ben Yu was his last student. He gave her 26 lessons.

The film telling their remarkable story includes a lavish soundtrack featuring recordings of piano performances by Xin Ben Yu as well as Alexandre Solopov of McGill University's Schulich School of Music, who later took her on as a student.

"In some films, I see things I would improve upon," Shaffer said in an interview, after being asked whether she's critical of her own work when seeing it years later. "But this film I just love watching it. And I still get into tears. It's incredible."

"But it's a good cry," she continued. "It's not a sad cry. And you're not manipulated. You know, some directors they manipulate. They want you to cry. But this is a good cry."

The Atwater Library screening was also an opportunity to reunite Shaffer with one

of the people seen in the film.

Xin Ben Yu's father, Peter, was on hand to answer questions about his experience, and about his daughter, who went on to have a professional career in music – a di-

rect result of the gift she received from her mentor.

Mr. Mergler's Gift can be viewed online for free at the National Film Board's web site (www.nfb.ca/film/mr_merglers_gift).

Major projects, cont'd. from p. 1

spending by category shows \$8 million for roads, \$4 million for water and sewers, \$1 million for vehicles, \$1.4 million for parks, \$2.3 million for Hydro Westmount's distribution network, and \$0.5 million for information systems (IT).

The city's asset-based capital works spending has increased more than 85 per cent over five years, when the 2016 capital works budget of \$14.5 million became the first to be adopted without increasing debt (see story November 10, 2015).

Major work proposed for 2020

Roads: \$8,055,500

Road and sidewalk reconstruction

- Springfield, Stayner, St. Sulpice, Sunnyside (Upper Bellevue to Belvedere)
- Sidewalk reconstruction and asphalt resurfacing
- Dorchester (westbound lanes Atwater to Greene)

Additional projects

- Roslyn steps, resurfacing of various lane, intervention plan for retaining walls and public steps across the city.

Water network and sewers: \$3,966,200

Rehabilitation of water main and replacement of services

- Lexington, Claremont (Côte St. Antoine to Sherbrooke)

Reconstruction of the water main and services

- Mount Pleasant (Sherbrooke to Holton) and Stayner
- (Scheduled work by Montreal on primary water conduits is to take place on Clarke (de Maisonneuve to Sherbrooke) as well as de Maisonneuve (Clarke to Melville).

Buildings: \$9,661,800

Special projects plus other work

- Roof of city hall,
- Greenhouse conservatory and frog pond

including professional services,

- Public Works garage and yard,
- Library roof, masonry repair and new mechanical room,
- Lockers and showers at Public Works mess hall,
- Replacement of Victoria Hall boilers,
- Public Works garages and yard.

Vehicles: \$1,000,000

- One heavy vehicle for waterworks, 2 salt trucks, 2 light duty trucks, 2 salt boxes, 1 flusher/watering truck, 1 passenger vehicle.

Parks: \$1,390,000

- King George (Murray) Park pond and an aluminum rink board, Prince Albert playground, a community bike program, new benches and planters, reconstruction of tennis and basketball courts at Stayner.

Hydro Westmount: \$2,330,000

- Infrastructure upgrades, Glen substation, replacement of lead cable, charging stations for electrical vehicles.

IT: \$503,100

- Facility security, infrastructure upgrade, applications systems, hardware acquisition, GIS.

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'A dream come true'

Duchess of Sussex wears Prijic Smith's jewellery



Meghan Markle, the duchess of Sussex, wore Vargas Goteo rings while attending a roundtable discussion with The Queen's Commonwealth Trust and One Young World at Windsor Castle on October 25, according to a press release from the company.

The firm was established in 2010 by Westmounter Alex Prijic Smith. The same release said, "Each collection raises awareness and contributes directly to ... anti-shark finning, manta ray conservation, coral reef restoration, anti-ivory poaching and

anti-rhino poaching organizations. All jewellery is responsibly made in-house in our Montreal based workshop.”

Sussex wore two pieces: the company's bow knot and manta kiss stack rings.

The bow knot retails for \$180 in gold vermeil and \$150 in silver. The gold manta kiss stack ring retails for \$600.

“Vargas Goteo is so honoured Meghan wore our pieces!” Prijic Smith told the *Independent* via email. “What a surprise to wake up to the news ... To see my work out there and, on such a remarkable woman, really is a dream come true.”

Cloutier exhibits at Atwater



Westmounter Odile Cloutier presented her latest collection of paintings October 24 at the Atwater Club. According to the event's press release, "Her style originates from her inspiration of modern art... Her portraits and landscapes both reflect elements from the cubism style. The blending colours and textures in her canvases encourage observers to enter a world of fantasy." Cloutier is also an interior designer with an office on Greene Ave.

PHOTO COURTESY OF O. CLOUTIER.



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Bach Before Bedtime fundraiser a Sunday morning success



Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

What a wonderful way to spend a Sunday morning!

Local res **Caitlin Wetherly** (attending with husband **Douglas Pospisil** and their son **Cedric**) and **Nick Niro** (with his wife **Yasmine** and their children **Paloma** and **Rafael**) organized the first fundraiser for Bach Before Bedtime, held at Selwyn House School.

Created by Westmounter **Dorothy Fraiberg**, the series presents music to children, “removing barriers between the musicians and the audience through interactivity.”

And what fun interactivity there was! The crowd of little people – parents were almost outnumbered – was enchanted, not to mention enchanting. They clapped their hands and stomped their feet along with the music, calling out answers as musicians searched for animals represented through the sounds of the music.

(The bassoon made the best elephant imitation ever!)



Caitlin Wetherly, Dorothy Fraiberg and Nick Niro.



Jenny Burdon and Andrew Wetherly.

Outfits ranged from ruffled tulle skirts, leopard tops, pink-satin-lined hoodies and floral-embroidered leather jackets, with accessories including sparkling headbands, fuchsia rubber boots and on-trend sneakers.

And that was just the children. Many adults wore jeans. As did the musicians, who donned furry animal hats at the end of their performance, much to the amusement of the young enraptured audience.

Arriving guests were enticed by the alluring aroma of freshly baked croissants graciously sponsored by La Meunière Urbanine. Kids loved the chocolate-dip fruit plate (Metro) and Starbucks coffee was a wake-up magnet for the adults.

For the occasion, the Selwyn House entrance was a seasonal symphony, with a pumpkin bouquet and massive mounds of glorious chrysanthemums.

Westmounters attending included

Jenny Burdon and Andrew Wetherly, Nadia Niro and John Anthony Luzio with twins (identical!) **Freya and Ruby, Barbara Maldoff, Anne and Andrew Garschagen** and their daughter **Romy, Caitlin Gill and Daniel Forest** with their son **Nicholas, Emma Castro and Steve DiGregorio** and their son **Alessandro, Jacqueline Hopmeyer** and son **Harry Goldsmith, Marissa de Miguel and Sebastien Dolan, Olivier** *continued on p. 26*



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Social notes, *cont'd. from p. 25*

grove with her children Isabelle and Alexandre, Norman Hebert Jr, Jaclyn Hoffman and her son Charles, Allison Jaskolka, Hadrien Montagne and son Charles, Ranjit Singh and his daughter Sienna, Frank Niro, and Jackie Yermus and son Jacob.

Thanking the packed room, Fraiberg mentioned that the fall Place des Arts Back to Bach season is almost sold out. No wonder. Rumour has it that the children in the audience from all over Montreal get down and boogie, jumping out of their seats and moving around to the music.

Musicians for this Sunday fun day were Jeff Poussier Leduc (bassoon), Antonin Cuerrier (clarinet), Emily Burt (oboe), Catherine Chabot (flute), and Flo Rousseau (horn). But the music didn't stop after the concert. As they departed, children picked up bell sticks, hopping and skipping home as they danced to their own tunes.

The fun morning musical raised \$6,000.



Harry Goldsmith, Jacqueline Hopmeyer and Barbara Maldoff.



Ruby and Freya Luzio.

Letters to the editor, *cont'd. from p. 6*

gests.

It should read “than” not “then,” as its meaning is “instead of,” not “after.”

Typos happen all the time, that’s not the issue. The offence lies in the fact that when I pointed out the cringe-worthy slip of the

almost-homophone to the architect of this disaster, I didn’t receive the expected “Wow, thanks for pointing out the error before I subject anyone else to this box of horrors!”

Instead, I was told: “No one else noticed or complained.”

No one else noticed or complained?!

I returned the article and requested a reprint, an alternate, or a refund – each request was promised, none was delivered. A merchant lacking scruples, for certain.

The endgame isn’t great: my now 15-year-old was shortchanged a birthday gift and I am \$180 out of pocket.

But what is truly infuriating is the demonstration of bad grammar and the non-chalant way in which the error was dismissed.

Is grammatically correct English important anymore?

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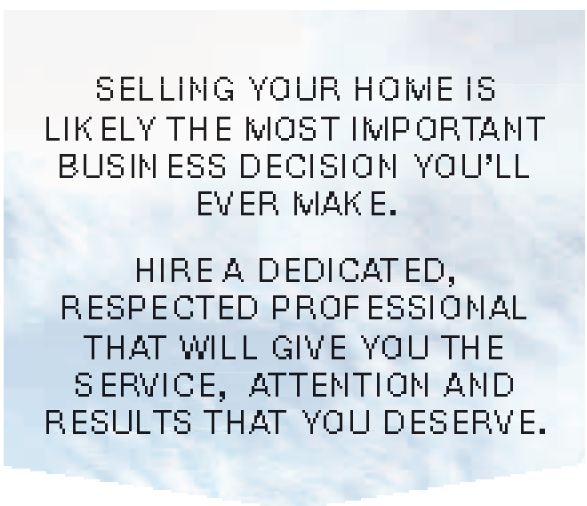
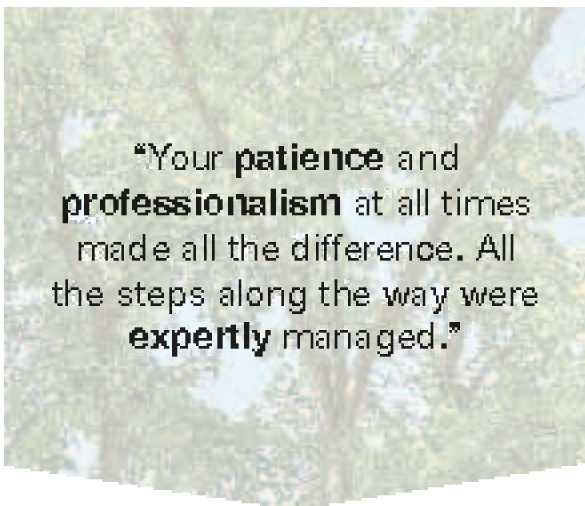
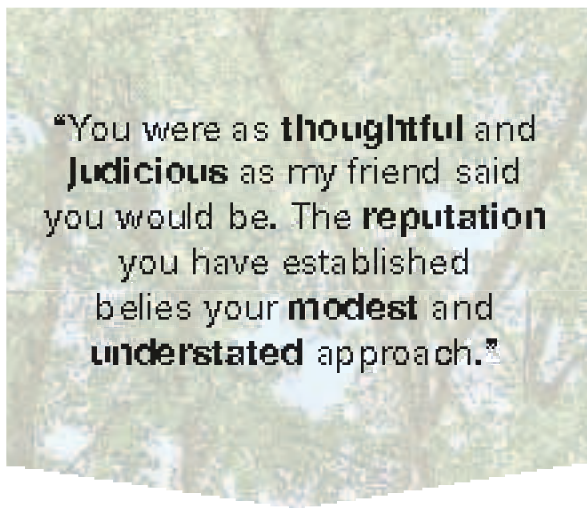
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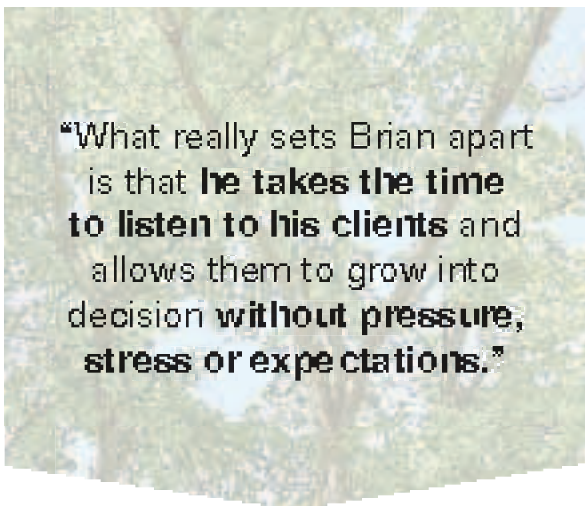
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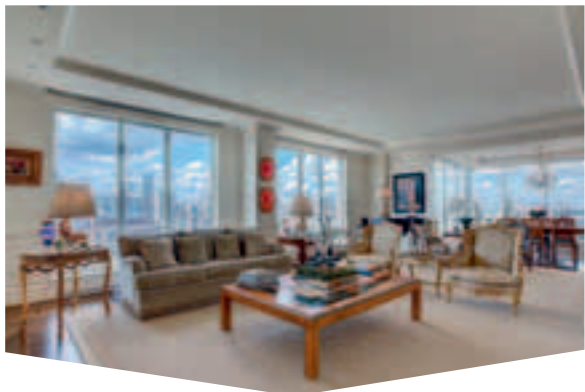
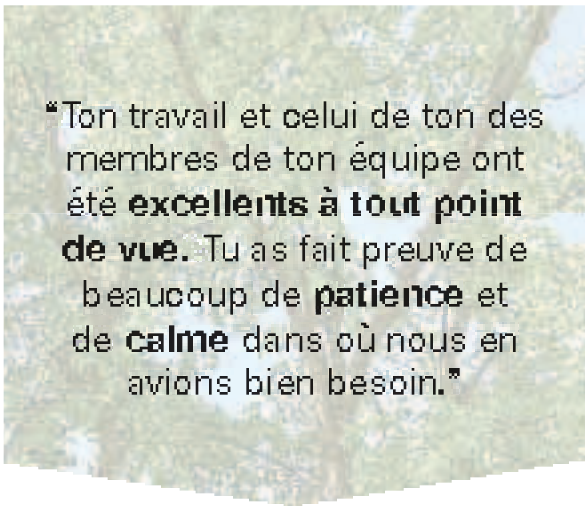
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