

Clothing Swap coming to Vic Hall for Earth Day, April 22

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A new idea with an old twist is being introduced by the city for this year's Earth Day on Saturday, April 22 at 1 pm. It's a Clothing Swap, modelled in part after the city's former perennial plant exchange and timed for Earth Day, which is already at a time of year when people begin cleaning out the closet for spring.

"Bring a few pre-loved items of clothing, clean and in good condition, that you're no longer wearing and swap them with friends and neighbours this Earth Day," said Donna Lach, assistant director of the library and community events. "Upscale your wardrobe and get something for free," she added.

The exchange is being introduced by Community Events "to provide a sustainable way to re-use, recycle and re-purpose those items that get hidden away at the

back of a closet – or no longer fit – without throwing them out as garbage."

Using a similar system to the plant exchange, anyone with clean clothes in good condition can take them in to Victoria Hall on the Thursday and Friday, April 20 and 21, as well as up to 11 am on the day of the swap.

Once the doors open at 1 pm, people will be able to choose up to 10 items and later can take back any of their own donated clothes that have not been chosen by other shoppers.

"Any of the donated clothes that are not chosen by anyone else will be donated to a shelter, so this is also a good way of helping others."

People can choose clothes even if they did not donate any, Lach said. "We're trying to have an exchange but the spirit is about sharing." Included in the swap are shoes, handbags and scarves.

Officer Pimentel retires this week



Seen here outside Station 12 on Stanton St. March 31, community relations officer Constable Adalbert Pimentel is retiring after serving for 30 years with the Montreal police department. See story on p. 24.

PHOTO: MARTIN C. BARRY

Destruction/construction season is coming!

Demolition meeting posted for 3 summit-area homes

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A demolition hearing into applications concerning three houses on the summit is set for May 29 and announced last week. While this is almost two months away, any opposing comments must be submitted to the city's office within a 10-day period expected to mean Thursday, April 6.

Signs were to have been posted outside

the concerned properties. These include at 10 Roxborough, where it is proposed to demolish the entire split-level house to build a two-storey one, and at 21 Oakland and 94 Sunnyside, where the requests call for some 60-percent demolition, including roof areas, to make way for additions.

Details of the plans have been posted on the city's website accessed from Resident *continued on p. 14*



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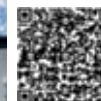


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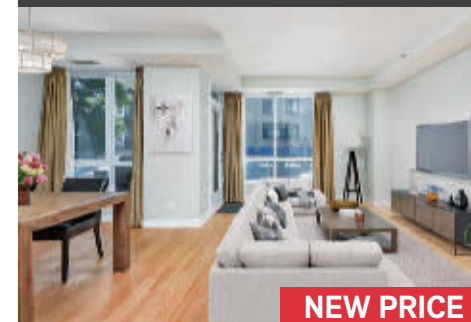
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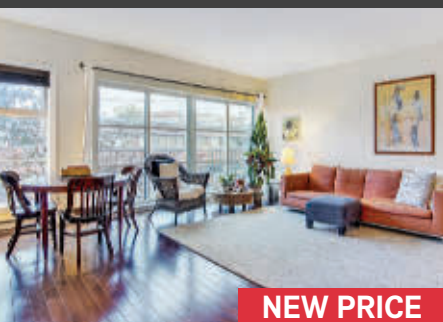
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apt. D-21 | \$965,000

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Neiges, apt. 16 | \$950,000

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FEATURED

Golden Square Mile | 1321 Rue Sherbrooke
O. Apt E30-31 | \$5,250,000

Council approves use of French doors

Resident gets permit benefit of ‘administrative error’

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

City council approved a resolution at its meeting March 20 authorizing a resident to proceed with the installation of French doors for a rear façade.

The resolution states that at its meetings November 15-17, the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) had issued a “favourable recommendation for an option of French doors without small wood on the rear façade.” (This “small wood” refers to what is sometimes known as “simulated divided lites” (SDL), intended to imitate historical window muntins.)

While the applicant had submitted two options – with and without the SDLs, Councillor Conrad Peart later told the *Independent* as commissioner of urban planning, “the applicant was led to believe that

both options had been approved and had ordered the one with the SDLs.”

This was explained in the resolution as, “an administrative error was made in the communication to the applicant regarding the favourable approval.”

As a result, the applicant placed an order “in good faith” from the manufacturer leading to the production of the doors (with SDLs) being initiated.

In moving the resolution, Peart, explained that rescinding the recommended approval “would cause financial prejudice to the applicant by requiring modifications.”

As a result, and “whereas the difference between the two options” and the location at the rear of the property would make the difference “negligible,” the motion was adopted by the council.

Large fallen branch restricts access to greened space

City of Westmount tree crews were called March 26 at 8:45 am to look after a large tree branch that was discovered to have fallen in the green space between Prospect Park and the railway tracks, Public Security officials said.

The branch was pointed out to a public safety officer, who identified where the branch had fallen from and called to have it removed. It was described as blocking access to the area.

Public Security returns found purse with passport to owner

A resident of Elm Ave. handed over a purse containing personal papers and a passport to a public safety officer March 27, Public Security officials said. The man stated it had not been in his parking apron when he had left but found it on his return home.

The purse was reported to have been returned to the owner. She was subsequently identified as someone having an address in downtown Montreal. No other details were available.

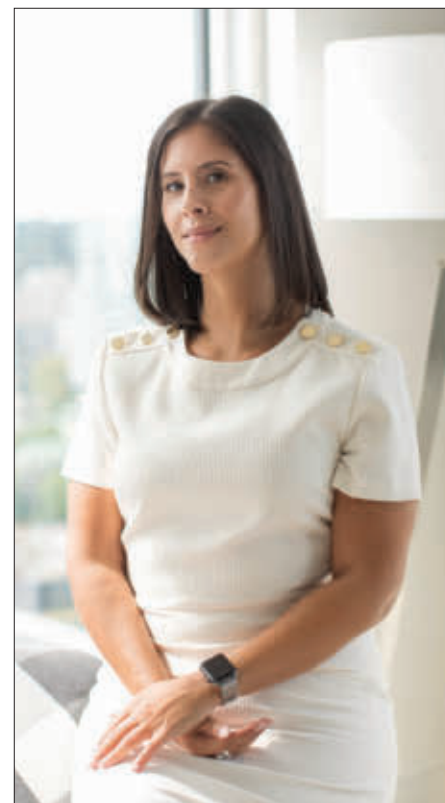
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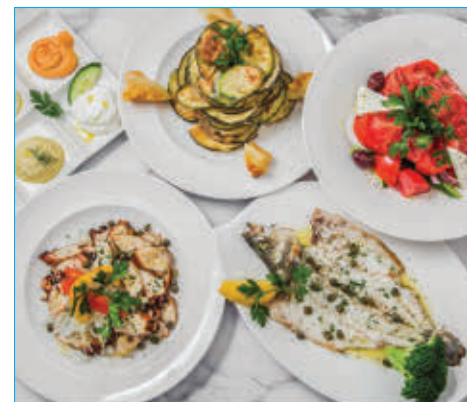
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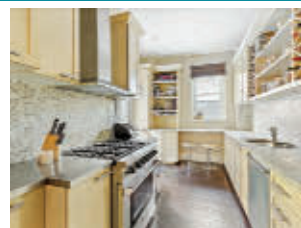
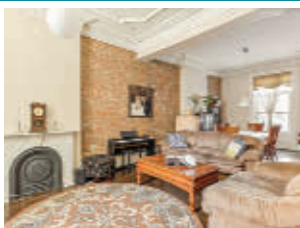


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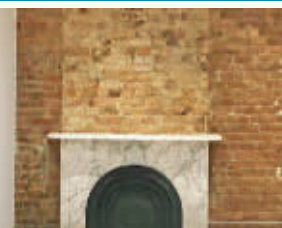
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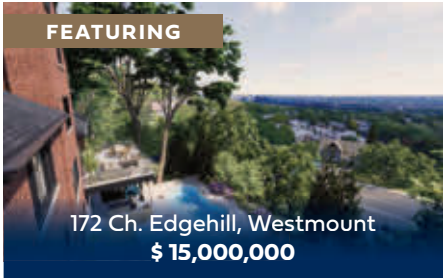
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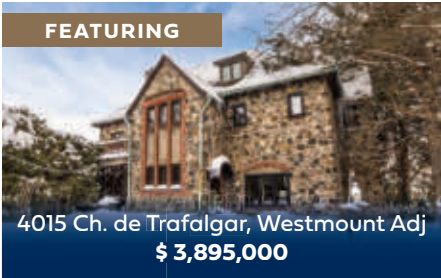
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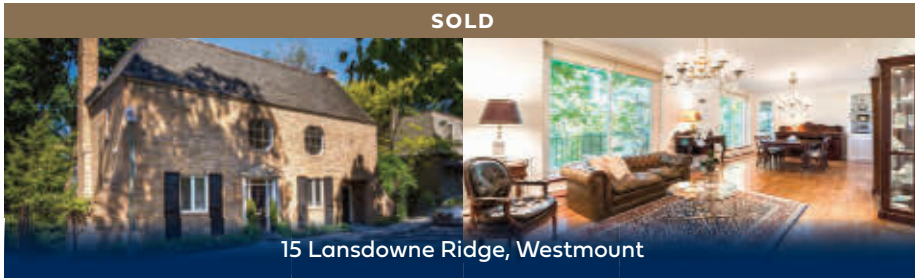
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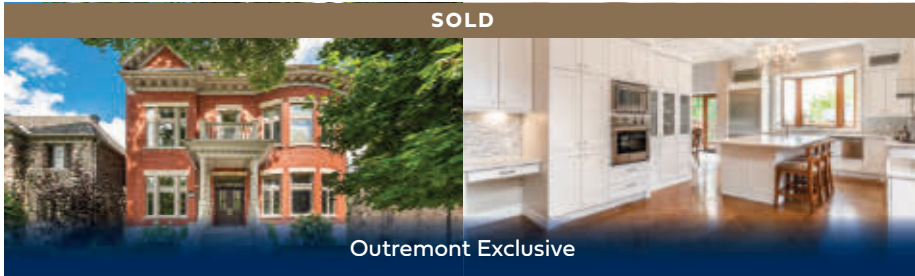
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NO TO DRAG FOR KIDS,
YES TO AUTHORS

Open letter to Mayor Christina Smith and
Councillor Jeff Shamie

The *Westmount Independent* (March 28,
p. 14) reported on the Drag Storytime at
the Westmount Public Library, subse-
quently moved to Victoria Hall.

Sexualizing young children is wrong
and unacceptable, both in the library and
in municipal buildings. This woke junk
[should not take place at the library.]

And if you want storytime, try getting
some authors, many of whom are strug-
gling to make a living.

ALEX SIMONELIS, SHERBROOKE ST.

DRAG OKAY, BUT NOT FOR
ELEMENTARY AUDIENCES

The performance of drag queens is not
a problem in terms of entertainment but

only insofar as it pertains to an educational
agenda that has no place in elementary
schools.

The current gender activists have no
respect for natural growth or the process
of maturity. Yet they argue as if only they
have the moral high ground since they can
provide social justice to 10-year-olds. At
that age, children don't care about the
defence of rights; they care about the explo-
ration of innocence. Sexual autonomy
implies the stability of mind to compre-
hend that one's biological destiny is not a
choice of costume.

Should we not care whether that sort of
juvenile freedom can lead to serious mis-
takes ending in mental derangement and
suicide?

L. S. CATTARINI, NDG

IS WESTMOUNT THE
SMOKING SECTION OF
THE ISLAND OF MONTREAL?

We now look back with a combination
of amusement, shame and disgust at a
time when smoking was permitted in cer-
tain sections of an airplane – with all pas-
sengers, in reality, sharing the same pol-
luted air.

When it comes to our unrestricted use

of wood-burning stoves and fireplaces, the
city of Westmount is now that smoking
section on the island of Montreal. The
hazards of the toxic smoke emanating
from these appliances are well docu-
mented and cannot be disputed. Provincial
and federal studies have clearly proven the
noxious effects of such emissions on the
health of residents. As a result, the city of
Montreal and the responsible city councils
representing the vast majority of our
island's population have imposed restric-
tions on the use of wood-burning
appliances.

Where does Westmount place itself in
this context? Again, when it comes to envi-
ronmental matters, we shamefully lag far
behind. The issue has been brought up
before in our community with former
mayor Peter Trent and former councillor
Cynthia Lulham defending our right to
continue with the use of these fireplaces
and stoves. (See *Westmount Independent*,
August 30-31, 2011, p. 1 and September 8,
2015, p. 1).

At a recent city council meeting our cur-
rent mayor and city council seem to have
made a meagre and laughable attempt in
addressing the issue by introducing the
“Notice of Motion By-law 1600: Concerning

solid fuel heating and cooking devices and
fireplaces.” The intent of this by-law
appears to restrict the use of wood-burning
appliances – but only in the COMMER-
CIAL sector.

Are there any businesses in Westmount
that use such appliances? Why are we
limiting this by-law to such an insignificant
– even non-existent – population?

Why have we not followed in the foot-
steps of most other responsible commu-
nities to restrict their use in the residential
sector as well?

Our Westmount community is edu-
cated, affluent and privileged. I am embar-
rassed that our privilege appears disre-
spectful and contemptuous to other
citizens breathing the same air on our
island of Montreal.

RICHARD DUFOUR, ANWOTH RD.

We welcome your letters

We welcome your letters but reserve the
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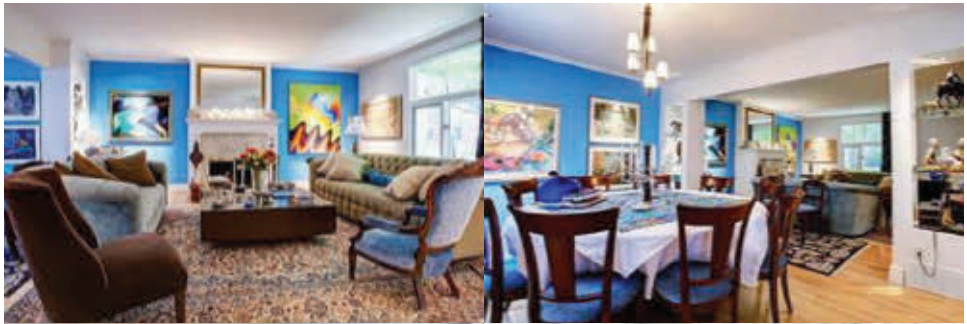
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Under-11 girls win!



Westmount's M11 BF team wear their medals April 2 after winning the girls regional championship for Lac St. Louis. They defeated the Storm Gris team from the Sud-Ouest Hockey Association at the Pierrefonds area. From left, top row: coach Edward Harvey and Chloe Ho, Eloise Rodriguez, Elizabeth San Gregorio, Cecilia Chadwick, Reagan Piccioni, Audrey Pitfield, Keiran Martin, coaches Caroline Parent-Harvey and Stephanie Parent-Harvey; bottom: Emma Veronneau, Cassidy Landrigan, Sophie Mantha, Stella West, Abigail Waters, Eva Clark, Stella Morganstein, Chloe Veronneau. Absent from the photo was Romy Garshagen. See page 12 for more hockey.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT SPORTS AND RECREATION.



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FÊTE DE PÂQUES : Fermetures et modifications aux services

Les bureaux administratifs de la Ville seront fermés le vendredi 7 avril et le lundi 10 avril 2023 pour la fête de Pâques.

La Bibliothèque publique et le Conservatoire de Westmount seront fermés le vendredi, le dimanche et le lundi et ouverts le samedi de 10 h à 17 h. Le centre Victoria Hall sera fermé du vendredi au lundi inclusivement.

Les collectes d'ordures et de résidus alimentaires auront lieu selon l'horaire habituel.

EASTER HOLIDAY: Closures and changes to services

The City's administrative offices will be closed Friday, April 7th and Monday, April 10th, 2023 for the Easter holiday.

Westmount's Public Library and Conservatory will be closed Friday, Sunday, and Monday, and open Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Victoria Hall will be closed Friday through Monday inclusively.

The garbage and kitchen waste collections will take place according to the usual schedule.

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EDITORIAL

Proposed Château Maisonneuve zoning change bad for residents, undemocratic

Editor David Price lives in a zone contiguous to 4998 de Maisonneuve Blvd. and across from the building's exterior York St. parking lot. He invites the building's owner, the city's politicians and the city's unelected employees to reply at equal length (one column per group) if they so choose. This column is about 3,000 words long. As with all letters and columns, submissions will be edited.

Please tell us of your intention to write by Wednesday at 11 am and submit by Friday at noon for publication the next week.

The time stamps (e.g. 6:59) in this editorial refer to the city's video of its March 22 public meeting at city hall, available here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=C92Cp0D34T0

Well, this is awkward.

I live in a planning zone next to the Château Maisonneuve apartment/office building at 4998 de Maisonneuve. Its owner, Creccal Investments Ltd., is proposing major changes to its municipal zoning (see March 28, p. 10), namely that:

- only 40 percent of residential units in its building be required to be greater than 700 sq. ft. (implied by discussion at 21:00) – as opposed to the current requirement that 60 percent be greater than 700 sq. ft. (6:59), and
- the required ratio of parking spots to residential units be 0.66:1 or greater, instead of 1:1 (24:31).

These changes will make its proposed conversion of floors 2 to 5 of its building from office space to residential possible from a regulatory point of view.

I congratulate the Creccal representatives on a clear and upfront, 25-minute presentation regarding the facts of their building and their desires for it. I also thank them for answering some questions of mine last week by email.

Do I keep mum and let people speculate about my views? Or do I lay it all out for everyone to know, support and/or criticize?

Let's not pussyfoot around. In the spirit of being clear and upfront, in just two pages, let me say this: I oppose the proposed changes.

Zoning law

Municipal zoning law is a bizarre beast. Over and over again, I have seen developers – unbuttressed by public opinion – propose changes to zoning rules so that

they can build what they want.

Oddly, developers – usually a single, for-profit, company – go to the city to ask for a change (which is often well received), but it is then on residents to organize to defend a law that their elected representatives have already voted in.

Shouldn't changes to laws be the other way around? (I.e. many people asking for a change, not one profit-maximizing entity.)

At times, developers even end up effectively enlisting elements of the city into their development teams. Nowhere was this more evident than at the March 22 public meeting on this proposal, at which a city employee kicked off the proceedings by helpfully dispelling rumours about the proposed change (5:26).

Then representatives of Creccal said: "Thank you to the planning committee for all your assistance on this application process" (10:38), that they had received "positive feedback from the planning committee" (12:37) and "the urban planning committee is supportive of our plans" (19:19). None of this was contradicted by the Urban Planning staff present.

More awkwardness! Councillor Conrad Peart felt obliged to clarify "For the benefit of everybody here: you used the term 'planning committee,' [but] it kind of has a special meaning here... That refers to our PAC [the city's Planning Advisory Committee] and it is not the Urban Planning department. The Urban Planning is the administrative side of things. I believe that is who you were referring to" (33:51).

What would Westmounters prefer? Developers getting "positive feedback" from city employees, whose salaries are funded, directly or indirectly, by residents? Or (hypothetically) that the external advisors on the PAC be "supportive" of developers' requests to change democratically created law? Is "neither" an option?

Shouldn't unelected city employees be charged with enforcing the existing rules, not be champions for non-voting companies that want to change democratically enacted laws? To the best of my knowledge, not one area resident is asking for this zoning change.

For clarity, I am not implying that the representatives of Creccal or the city's employees have done anything against cur-

rent law or practice. Rather, I am asking the question: should this way of working be the practice?

Municipal zoning law is the only law that I know of that works in this way. The clear, established law ends up being more of a suggestion or an opening bargaining position than fixed law.

To protect and serve residents, law should be known and fixed – unless a large group of voters wants to change it and then elected representatives do so.

What are residents saying?

So how does it look to voters?

Firstly, residents don't wander around thinking, or even knowing, about zoning law. It is not a topic of daily conversation (until someone proposes changes like here) and indeed is quite mysterious.

What they do know is that they like their neighbourhoods (which is why they moved there). What becomes evident as they learn about an area's zoning by-laws (again, when someone proposes a change) is that their neighbourhood's character has been created and preserved by a tapestry of laws passed by previous city councils, often going back decades. They rely on the existing by-laws for the enjoyment of their properties and neighbourhood, *even if they do not know what they are*.

Nowhere is this more apparent than near 4998 de Maisonneuve. The massive building itself does not fit the neighbourhood and would likely not be permitted today, but the city councils of yesteryear did impose zoning requirements on the building, including requiring a mix of unit sizes tilted in favour of larger ones and a unit-to-parking-space ratio of 1 to 1.

This tapestry of laws (a pre-construction compromise perhaps?) shaped the neighbourhood. Why are there already not more units in the Château? Because of these laws. Why is there an abundance of parking, and a price for parking that reflects that relative abundance? Because of these laws. Why is a prime piece of urban real estate used only as an exterior parking lot? Because of these laws (although not directly the ones at issue here).

What happens if two strands – the mix of unit sizes allowed and the parking ratio required – are pulled out of the tapestry?

Who knows? But it is hard to see how it benefits residents.

So what is on residents' minds?

Construction! Nearby in NDG, three major projects have gone up in the last 10 years: the super-hospital, the new de Maisonneuve entrance to the Vendôme Metro

station and the still-under-construction Groupe Maurice seniors' home at Claremont and de Maisonneuve, across the street from the Château. All led to some combination of noise, dust and traffic issues.

In Westmount, one or one-and-a-half blocks from the Château, there has been the conversion of an office building on York St. and there is the still-under-construction Albert Square project at Prince Albert and de Maisonneuve – both office-to-residential conversions – and there has been major street work on various blocks.

Development and pro-development politicians are quick to point out that construction is temporary. True, but why should voters change an already agreed-on law so that they can put up with *any nuisance*? Leave things as they are, obey the law and we will all get along fine.

So, if residents, who (unlike companies) elect councillors, are not asking for these changes to *their* laws, and if they are preoccupied with something that this project might noticeably create (i.e. construction), why should council consider it?

And let's remember that council members did not run on this change, nor – to the best of my memory – with a declared orientation in favour of changes like it. They have no mandate in this matter.

Looking at the arguments for

Developers are adept at presenting their desires in vogue-ish language and this tendency was on full display March 22 in my opinion.

"Montreal and Canada-wide is experiencing a shortage of housing," (16:24) said one of Creccal's representatives at the March 22 presentation, while another said "We have a housing crisis" (32:40).

Maybe. But who should be addressing this issue? Who is "we"? Westmount? Or the province? Or the country? And why should already population-dense Westmount and even denser Westmount-below-Sherbrooke become even denser to alleviate it? Why not pick a less-dense area of the island of Montreal and put up some buildings there? According to Statistics Canada (www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220209/t004a-eng.htm), Westmount is already the fifth-most dense municipality in Canada and the second-most dense in Quebec!

Also, Westmount below Sherbrooke comprises about half of Westmount's population, but only about 36 percent of its land, making it very, very dense already.

Is Density a god with an unsatiable appetite? When can residents say: "We're

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good. We will stay at this density”?

Please remember that the developers are proposing adding 102 households to the current 243 in the building – a 42-per-cent increase! To compare, the Albert Square project at Prince Albert and de Maisonneuve is only adding *eight households*.

While these 102 households will replace offices, it is possible (likely?) that the net effect will be more traffic (vehicles and otherwise) to the neighbourhood. Offices can be filled with workers, or empty of people, or somewhere in between. On the other hand, *residences get used* – and the peak hours are all in sync with each other (unlike in a mixed office/residence building).

The same vogue-ish type of statement was made by a Creccal representative about attracting younger residents or “population regeneration” (31:20), including: “we really need to start attracting those young professionals, these young couples, to balance out that age pyramid,” (31:32).

Why should a profit-focussed private company, or a property-taxing municipal council, have a view on whether Westmount is filled with old people? What’s wrong with old people? And why should residents pay with density for the desired population pyramid of Westmount central planners or a for-profit company?

Even if you want companies and municipal councils centrally planning populations, who is to say that young people will flock to these units?

Also, remember that Westmount is not an island or a fort or a prison. If young people whom we like (e.g. children, grandchildren, friends) live in NDG or down-

town or St. Henri, they are not lost to us.

Similarly, vogue-ish remarks were made about sustainable transportation (27:34) – including mentions of two Communauto vehicles on site, planned electric vehicle charging stations, bicycle parking, (some) free Opus cards and (some) free Bixi passes. These things might drive down residents’ desire for their own cars, but it is not a guarantee. On the other hand, a law that requires space to accommodate vehicles does guarantee that those spaces exist and a law that requires certain unit sizes limits the number of households.

The representatives for Creccal also told the audience that they were not renting most of their office space. But how are we to know why? Perhaps it is asking too much money in rent. Or perhaps its other rental terms are too tough in some specific way. Or perhaps, if the money that it is hoping to spend on these residences were spent on the existing offices, they would rent in a flash. Or perhaps the whole office-rental market is about to turn around and office space will be hot in a year or two.

More profoundly, it is not the residents’ issue. While everyone wishes this long-standing Westmount-based business well, it bought the building 40 years ago (11:43) and has been running it under the current zoning regime for some time. We all operate under government rules that we don’t always like.

Unlike developers, though, if a resident faces financial headwinds on Montrose Ave. or Westmount Ave. or The Boulevard in mid-Westmount, he or she cannot go to the city and propose a bunch of major zoning

changes to maximize his or her earnings – or at least not with any prospect of success.

Why is it different for owners of multi-unit buildings? Or different on the flat, below Sherbrooke?

Why parking and unit size matter

The two targeted strands of the south-west’s regulatory tapestry are worth keeping.

Firstly, a mix that favours larger units restricts the amount of activity in an already dense area. Fewer people means less traffic from them, guests, moving vans and deliveries.

Secondly, the parking ratio likely had intended and unintended effects. On the intended side, it makes sure that building users have parking. This is convenient to them, and convenient to the neighbourhood. A building with lots of parking does not send as many parkers to the surrounding streets and can even provide parking to the neighbours, as is the case here.

By the way, don’t count on cars becoming less popular. The number of cars has been increasing for some time. Indeed, if all cars go electric, there won’t even be a perceived environmental cost or guilt factor to them. And they might become small, light and inexpensive (or just inexpensive) – ideal for renters.

Also, more parking is likely cheaper parking. It is Microeconomics 101. If there is more of a resource, the price will be less.

It is also important to remember that parking is separate from a residential lease and is a price-unregulated service. As a result, we don’t know how much interest there is in parking spots *in general*. We only know how much interest there is at the current price point. This observation is important because that parking may only be there because past planners required it to be. We are now considering how much to require. Should we require a lot – for Château residents and their neighbours’ use and tranquility (the status quo) – or a little, with possible spillover effects?

It is my concern that the parking ratio also makes the Château’s outdoor lot necessary from a regulatory point of view. (See addendum at left.) Yes, the owner is currently precluded from building on the exterior parking lots because the footprint is maximized (42:53), but if the owner *also* needs the exterior lot for parking-regulation reasons, then there are two safeguards for nearby residents. Why should nearby residents give up a safeguard?

If Creccal is determined to never build on the exterior parking lot (as its representative implied in answer to a question from my wife, Catherine McKenzie (42:53)), why not execute a private-law easement (i.e. an agreement between properties, not a municipal law) in favour of the neighbouring houses (*disclosure*: including mine) giving them iron-clad assurances?

We the people have something that this developer wants. The time to get what we want – in enforceable writing – is now.

Taxes

The precise issue at hand does not seem to be the conversion of offices to dwellings, but two changes that will facilitate that change. Nevertheless, the city will lose a bit of office space as a result. Isn’t office space taxed at a higher rate than residences? So: is Westmount actually losing some yearly tax amount as a result of this change? Why should unelected employees, politicians and residents facilitate that?

Summary

People who should care about this debate as it evolves and more becomes known include:

1. Residents of 4998 de Maisonneuve. If this change goes through, the amount of required parking will be less than now. Actual parking spots could disappear for any number of reasons, without regulatory recourse. Will you always have the option to rent one? Do you think the (unregulated) price of parking will go up or down if there are fewer required spaces? Do you want major construction and many more tenants/services-users in your building?
2. Residents of southwest Westmount from York St. all the way up to Sherbrooke. If traffic goes up, including on de Maisonneuve (where parking is not an issue), it affects everyone.
3. Residents of southwest Westmount from York St. all the way up to Sherbrooke. If actual parking spots eventually disappear (because they are no longer required by law), where might parkers, legal or not, go? York and Prince Albert first, but then Burton, Somerville, Winchester, Claremont... Where might visiting parkers go, legally or not, all at similar times (e.g. Friday and Saturday night)? York and Prince Albert first, but then Burton, Somerville, Winchester, Claremont...
4. Residents of the area, especially close-by ones, who think there are enough buildings on the Château’s block and don’t want to facilitate any more.
5. Residents of the area who don’t want another construction project.
6. Residents worried about a loss of tax revenue to the city.

People who are with me: please write to us, to your city councillor, to the mayor. They have not yet officially opined on this proposal (1:22:00) and could nix it *before* the petition/registry/referendum process.

People who are against me: do the same. Your views are welcome here.

People who are indifferent: sit back and watch the fireworks. I am sure everyone will do their best to put on a good show.

4998 de Maisonneuve by the numbers

How much parking does the Château have now?

Conforming interior parking	196**
Conforming exterior parking	48*
	244*
Non-conforming interior parking	78**
Non-conforming exterior parking	28**
	106*
Grand total	350

How much (conforming) parking does the Château need from a regulatory point of view now?

For 243 residences (1:1 ratio)	243*
For commercial space	85*
Total required	328**

How many residential units does the Château have and want?

Current number of units	243
Proposed number of units	102
Total	345

At present, the building needs – from a regulatory point of view – 328 parking spots, but has only 244 conforming ones. It seems to be in a grandfathered situation (i.e. the law came after the building). Even

with all the (conforming and non-conforming) inside spots (274, i.e. 196 + 78), it is below the 328 required. For this reason, I guess that the building cannot eliminate the outdoor parking lot – from a parking-regulatory point of view – because to do so would bring it even further below the required amount.

If the proposed conversion takes place, the building will need only 228 parking spots (345 new total of units x 0.66 parking ratio).

Key questions: Could the building merge some/all of its non-conforming inside spots to achieve 228 inside conforming spots, thus making the outdoor parking lot unnecessary from a parking-regulatory point of view? Or even keep a few outdoor parking spots between a new building and the existing one, and so make most of the outdoor spots unnecessary from a parking-regulatory point of view? And could the definition of “conforming” be changed to create more spaces?

* Source: email from the city March 30.

** Inferred from available data.

Tree discovery tour, new StoryWalk set for Earth Day in park

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

A discovery event featuring the trees in Westmount Park will take place on Earth Day, April 22 at 11 am, billed as “A Westmount Park Tree Walk.”

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The aim of the hour-long guided tour by city arborist Alberto Dias-Meideros is to provide participants “with an opportunity to learn about the fascinating history and unique characteristics of the park,” according to Sebastian Samuel, head of the city’s Communications division.

“This one-of-a-kind journey through Westmount Park will leave participants with a newfound appreciation and knowledge of the park’s natural beauty.” It will be bilingual, he said.

Also planned is a new StoryWalk along the path in Westmount Park featuring a series of fun, intriguing and educational information on trees, animals and the environment. This display will continue until June 3.

Sign up

To participate in the Earth Day tree tour, those interested should either sign up at the Community Events office in Victoria Hall during regular business hours or register online at westmount.org/promenade. The deadline for registration is by the end of day April 21.

The event starts in front of the conservatory and provides an opportunity to identify trees by their bark since the leaves have not yet opened.

It will be followed by the Earth Day Clothing Swap at Victoria Hall at 1 pm (see separate story, p. 1).

Taking place as well on Earth Day is a collection of Household Hazardous Waste in the library parking lot.

Park clean-ups are being planned for King George (Murray) Park on April 20 and Westmount Park April 21.



An unscientific walk through Westmount’s second- and third-largest parks March 31 to find garbage to photograph did not find much, especially when compared to city streets like St. Catherine. It did, however, uncover these ducks in the Westmount Park lagoon, above, who seemed very content foraging in a very small amount of water, and a lower King George (Murray) Park still hiding any winter detritus. “The ducks are back!” said reader C. Samuel the same day, whose photos have earlier time stamps than the *Independent’s*, making them the earliest ones we know of this year.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.



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WESTMOUNT



IMPORTANT NOTICE

Minor Exemption Application

1. The City of Westmount has received an application for a minor exemption for the immovable located at **324 Victoria Avenue**;
2. The application will be reviewed at the regular sitting of the Municipal Council that will be held on **April 17, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.** in the Council Chamber of City Hall, located at 4333 Sherbrooke Street West, in Westmount and will be broadcast live on the City’s website. The link for the sitting will be available at the following address: www.westmount.org/seance-du-conseil-en-direct.

The legal notice relating to the foregoing is available at: <https://westmount.org/en/resident-zone/legal-services-city-clerks-office/public-notice/>

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M15-A team wins finalist ‘silver’ banner

Hockey season winds up with ‘good show of support’

By O SWEENEY

Westmount’s minor hockey teams wrapped up last weekend when the 12 teams had their final end-of-season get-togethers, said Andrew Maislin, operations manager for the Westmount recreation centre.

“It’s been what can be called an award-winning year for all the teams coming out of COVID restrictions, regardless of their league standings,” he explained. “It was a good show in terms of bonding in the locker room, and building parental support.” In a few cases when teams were without a goalie, he said, one of the other players stepped up to put on the pads.

Highlights of the year included two recent playoff successes: the M11-BF (all-girls) team winning regional championships April 2 to represent Lac St. Louis in provincial finals April 6-9 (see photo, p. 7); and the M15-A Wings team winning a finalist banner in the Eastern Hockey League despite “a tough 3-1 loss to the LaSalle Lions March 31,” Maislin said (see photo at right).

The city’s two all-girl teams participated in a showcase for girls’ hockey in Pierrefonds last Sunday and the M7 mixed group played in the Jeux de Montréal last week-



Members of the banner-winning Westmount Wings’ U15-A finalist team shown after the evening game March 31 at the Peter Morin Arena in Lachine, from left, back row: coaches Marcel Bélanger and Pierre-Olivier Perras along with players Avery Hannon, Brody Wesetvik, Peter Barbarosie-Tsang, Liam Martin, Nicolas Bélanger, Shia Maislin, and coaches Matthew Mazzarelo and Aiden Mizrahi; and front row: Spencer Kaplan, Scott Coleman, Tom Azeff, Taryn Mizrahi, Max Zelermyer and Edouard Perras.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT SPORTS AND RECREATION.

end in St. Leonard. Looking forward to next year, and to be announced April 18 at

the annual general meeting of the Westmount Minor Hockey Association, are

additional new hockey teams being planned for Westmount, Maislin said.

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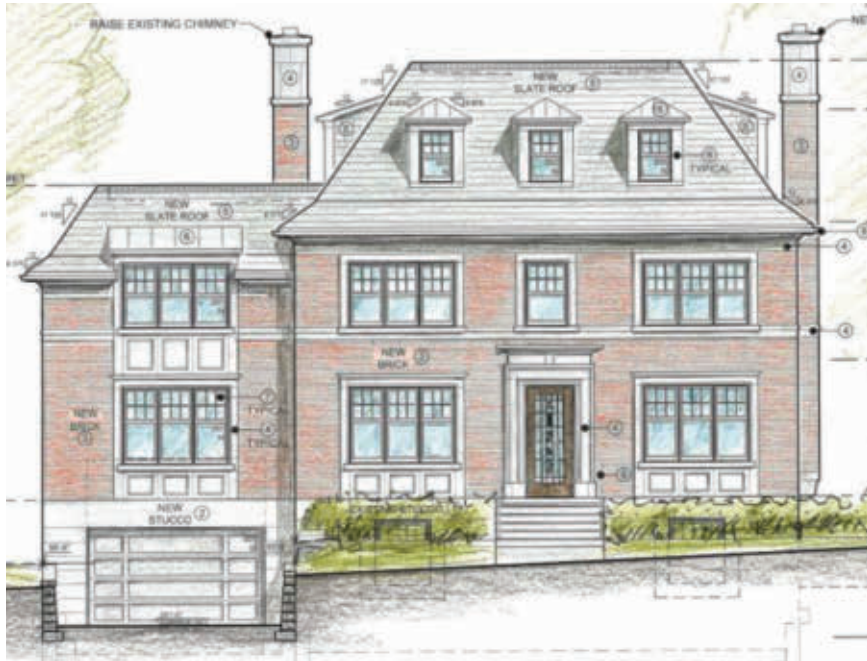
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Plan for 10 Roxborough.



Plan for 21 Oakland.

Demolitions, cont'd from p. 1
zone/legal/public notices and the respective addresses.

10 Roxborough, south of Shorncliffe – whole new house

This split-level house of red brick built in 1959 is of Category III heritage value

(the lowest), according to the city, and located in an area where one finds mostly detached single-family buildings of one to two floors.

Over the years, few alterations have occurred, and the authenticity and integrity of the original building is considered “high.”

The building is reported to require

extensive “remediation,” showing signs of water infiltration and requiring “a high percentage of demolition.”

This includes the complete demolition of the roof structure to bring it up to building-code standards.

As a result, the request consists of the complete demolition of the existing building to allow for the construction of a new

two-storey house.

21 Oakland at Shorncliffe

This two-storey Category III-rated house is described as built of brick in 1952 in the same “eclectic” style as the neighbouring ones on either side. It has undergone only minor alterations. A 63-per- cent demolition includes *continued on p. 15*

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Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

Note: (1) The following article relates to the registration of deeds of sale for Westmount property in October 2022, gleaned from non-city sources. A list of sales can be found on p. 17. Note that the prices are being compared to the 2020 valuations of the sold properties, since these were in force until December 2022.

(2) The city STILL has not published any more lists of transfer tax bills that might reveal private sales and non-residential real estate transfers that have taken place SINCE LAST JUNE. The city is not publishing or issuing the list of transfers for which taxes are issued, though the lists are reportedly “tabled” every month at regular council meetings. The last full list of transfer duties was included in the council minutes of November 7.

Sales registered in October last year must naturally pay homage to the \$23-million sale of 9 Gordon Crescent (see article and photos, December 13, 2022, p. 1), but that wasn’t the only excitement in the October list.

The month also saw the sale of one more of Westmount’s larger houses, as 4294 Montrose Ave. sold for \$6,200,000. The news isn’t the fact that the house sold for a princely sum, but that this price didn’t even make the top 10 for 2022.

The most important fact is that of eight registered sales for October, none – zero – were for prices under \$2 million. The lowest price involved a semi-detached house at 476 Strathcona Ave., at \$2,275,000, and in fact the median price was \$3,042,500, with four of the eight sales clearing the \$3-million mark.

The average price, of course, was much higher, at \$5,751,250, thanks mainly to the \$23-million top price. The total cash outlay for single-family houses in October was \$46,010,000, so half of that involved 9 Gor-

October transfers: Nothing under \$2 million!



4294 Montrose Ave. More photos on p. 18.

don Crescent; it had a 2020 valuation of only \$14,035,000, thus a mark-up of 63.9 percent, but actually that was topped by the 65.2 percent mark-up at 604 Belmont Ave., which sold for \$2,425,000.

The lowest mark-up in October involved 555-555A Grosvenor Ave., the large house at the corner of Côte St. Antoine Rd., and involves an extra garage and coach house as part of the property.

Condo popularity up

Another surprise in October appears to be the rising popularity of condominiums,

which had drawn the interest of only six buyers in the entire third quarter (July-September) last year. Six more were sold in five transactions in October only, with November and December still to come.

One deed involved a house designed as a duplex at 309-11 Prince Albert Ave. just north of de Maisonneuve Blvd. that had been subdivided into condominiums, both of which were purchased by George Milonopoulos and Constantina Sofios in 1982 and have been rented by them for a number of years. They sold the two condos in one deed for a total \$1,900,000, which

they broke down for transfer tax purposes as \$1,020,000 for 309 Prince Albert (lower unit) and \$880,000 for 311 Prince Albert (upper unit).

The lowest-priced condo was a second-storey unit at 4855 de Maisonneuve Blvd. (corner Victoria Ave.), \$669,000, while the highest-priced unit was a second-storey apartment at 4160 Sherbrooke St., between Greene and Elm Ave. That condo brought a price 35.6 percent above valuation, highest mark-up for October condos, while a fifth-floor unit at 1 Wood Ave. sold out of an estate

continued on p. 19



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Bought & Sold – real estate transfers in October 2022

ADDRESS	VENDOR	PRICE	2020 VAL	RATIO (%)
604 Belmont	David Lipes & Julie Fainer	\$2,425,000	\$1,467,900	65.2%
339 Côte St. Antoine	Jonathan Cutler & Jean François Monette	\$2,400,000	\$1,547,000	55.1%
9 Gordon Crescent	Silcho Holdings Ltd.	\$23,000,000	\$14,035,000	63.9%
555-555A Grosvenor	Khek Muk Andrew Wong & Hartati Ibrahim Wong	\$2,750,000	\$2,600,000	5.8%
655 Lansdowne	Dino Ionescu	\$3,625,000	\$2,297,500	57.8%
4294 Montrose	<i>See paper archive</i>	\$6,200,000	\$5,617,600	10.4%
344 Redfern	Sébastien Kaine & Alexandra-Marie Massad-Gosselin	\$3,335,000	\$2,650,000	25.8%
476 Strathcona	Sophie Dow Donelson & Gregory Thomas Lindsay	\$2,275,000	\$1,896,800	19.9%
CONDOMINIUMS				
4855 de Maisonneuve #201	Miriam Kramer & Ralph Weiner	\$669,000	\$496,300	34.8%
4476 St. Catherine #503	Yingyan Li	\$725,000	\$601,900	20.5%
4160 Sherbrooke #202	Elizabeth Ramsay	\$1,275,000	\$940,100	35.6%
1 Wood #510	estate Aaron Blauer	\$900,000	\$986,300	-8.7%
309 Prince Albert	George Milonopoulos & Constantina Sofios	\$1,020,000	\$880,700	15.8%
311 Prince Albert	George Milonopoulos & Constantina Sofios	\$880,000	\$925,200	-4.9%
PREVIOUS SALES				
3488 Holton (April)	Judy Litvack	\$2,600,000	\$1,634,300 ¹	59.1%
4827 St. Catherine (May)	Diane Raineault	\$325,000	\$364,600	-10.9%
636 Belmont (June)	Dany Meloul & Marc Weinstein	\$2,450,000	\$1,720,000	42.4%

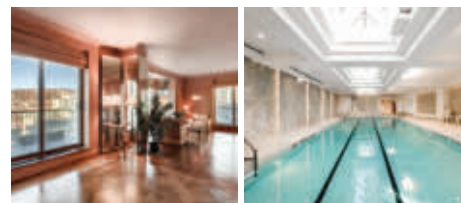
¹Valuation is a combination of \$1,242,100 in Montreal, \$392,200 in Westmount.

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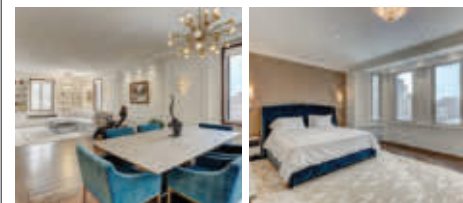
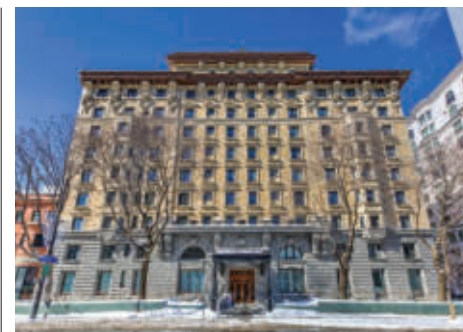
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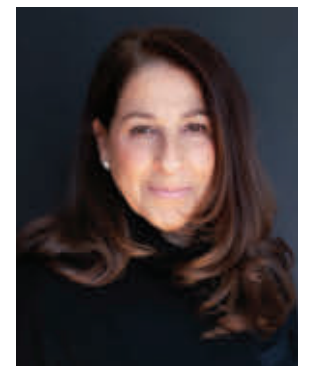
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1 Av. Wood, apt. 1003 | Westmount
\$ 3,195,000 2+1 bedrooms | 2+1 bathrooms



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604 Belmont Ave. All photos taken March 29.



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9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Best Buddy



Getting a chin scratch and an ear rub is very important in Buddy's daily routine. An affectionate and cuddly fellow, this stunning pearl-grey shorthair is waiting at the Montreal SPCA cattery to go home to share companionship and fun-filled days.

Buddy is nine years young, very healthy, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped.

Please do not hesitate to open the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, search for Buddy's information page by his identification number, 52326960, and check the opening hours schedule of the shelter as of 10 am daily to plan your visit with Buddy and the adoption coordinators.

The SPCA is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West, Montreal, H4P 1X4. Please come as a family and bring a carrier if you have one.

If you need a carrier, you can select one from the accessories boutique on site.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne

Dodge, cont'd from p. 16

for 8.7 percent below valuation, one of two mark-downs in the month.

Other transfers that have come to the attention of the *Independent* include 3488 Holton Ave., one of the houses that straddles the Westmount-Montreal eastern border, which sold in April for \$2,600,000; according to the valuation roll, 24 percent of the property is considered to be in Westmount.

In May, a small condominium in a group of multi-family dwellings at 4827 St. Catherine St. sold for only \$325,000, which made it by far the lowest price for a condominium in the second quarter of 2022.

Finally, 636 Belmont Ave. sold in June for \$2,450,000.

Handsome Ace, handsome face



Westmount
A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

Ace is such a regal fellow, tall and statuesque, with an amazing sleek black coat. Yet he still has such puppyishness in his eyes and cutest ears!

He is at the Montreal SPCA kennel, ready to go home as soon as possible.

Ace is a very healthy eight-year-old, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped.

He loves people, all people, yet he was probably an only-dog previously and is not used to being with another, so maybe an only-dog family environment would be good for him.



Please refer to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, and scroll to Ace's information page from his identification number, 49054922, to find out more about him.

The shelter now has daily visiting hours as of 10 am. Please check the daily schedule for the day you would like to drop by to visit Ace and meet with the adoption coordinators. Their address is 5215 Jean Talon St. West, Montreal H4P 1X4.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne

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Police Report

Police report two burglaries and a suspected break-in

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

There were two household burglaries around Westmount's summit over the last two weeks, as well as a suspected illegal entry at an apartment south of Sherbrooke St.

Just after 8 pm on March 26, a home

near the corner of Sunnyside and Lexington avenues near the summit was broken into and robbed.

According to Station 12 community relations officer Constable Adalbert Pimentel, a relative of the home's owner called the police to report he had responded to a burglar alarm, following which he found a back door that had been forced open.

Officers who arrived on the scene entered and searched the house, while the relative waited outside. Because the owners were not immediately available, the relative was unable to determine whether anything had been stolen.

However, the owners, who were contacted through the FaceTime phone conferencing app, were given a video tour of the premises, after which they were able to confirm certain objects were missing. Among these were a storage box containing jewellery.

The Montreal police department's identification unit was called in to locate fingerprints and footprints. Security cameras recorded images of two male suspects as well as the vehicle they were using.

Pimentel said that in order to minimize theft risk in situations like this, the police

recommend storing expensive property like jewellery in a safety deposit box at a bank, rather than in a home safe.

Second summit break-in

A second home around Westmount's summit was broken into recently. The house, on Shorncliffe Ave., was burglarized sometime between March 17 and 27.

One or two suspects gained entry from the rear yard, leaving behind footprints in the snow. According to Pimentel, they shattered a 6' x 9' picture window, entered and proceeded towards the kitchen.

The tell-tale signs of a home robbery were found later: objects were moved, cupboards, drawers and closets were thrown open and their contents strewn about, and several rooms on two floors had been searched.

The investigators found footprints on the floor of the house, which they hope will provide clues as to the identity of the suspects through a massive footwear information database.

The police are classifying this and the previously-mentioned burglary as "major crimes," as they involve the theft of property worth more than \$40,000 in each case.

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Hard out there for a bollard



This Greene and de Maisonneuve bollard was not feeling very spring-like March 31.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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Westmount youth group profile

Chabad creates a home, sends out ‘Hebrew school in boxes’

By JENNIFER BALL

The *Independent* attended a youth luncheon for Dawson College students at Chabad of Westmount, Westmount Square, Suite 110, corner of Wood Ave., where students considered the importance of benevolence and the richness of Jewish life.

Dawson College student Benjamin Glazer was on hand on March 23 and he said, “I love coming here because I get to see all my friends.

“I love the Jewish community and I love our sanctuary here. I come at least twice a week for lunch and I get to meet with everyone. I think it’s really special.”

Glazer is studying social sciences at Dawson College and he is actively involved with the Chabad’s philanthropic community outreach. “Every once in a while, around the [Jewish] holidays, we’ll come here and there will be food in boxes and we all come and take two to three boxes and deliver them to families. It’s really helping the community and I think it’s beautiful.”

Arielle Bouhadana and Yaël Bohbot are also Dawson students. Bouhadana is studying commerce while Bohbot is studying general social sciences.

Bohbot said that the luncheons are “a way to connect to our Judaism. We come from a small Jewish bubble. So, when we come from big and scary Dawson – where there is a bunch of strangers – it’s nice to come back and find Jewish people to hang out with. We have a nice treat for lunch and we get to hear from the rabbi also.”

“On Tuesdays, we come here also,” Bouhadana said “on Thursdays, it is a little but like a party, but on Tuesdays it is smaller, and we split it up and discuss Judaism and it is really inspiring.”

On the topic of philanthropy, Bouhadana said “My family supports a whole bunch! We support MADA, Chai Lifeline



From left, Dawson College students Yaël Bohbot and Arielle Bouhadana on March 23 at Chabad of Westmount.

and Friendship Circle.”

The youth and outreach director at the Chabad is Rabbi Ariel Stern. He said that it is their goal to provide activities for every age in a youth category.

“There’s a program called Westmont Hebrew School: it’s an after-school program for kids who don’t go the Jewish schools and we have over 150 kids in that

school.”

They offer “Westmount Hebrew school in the box.”

“So, we have 30 to 40 kids receive the school in the box with all items and they have a hands-on experience. The idea of this school is using the five senses, and teaching through a fun and approachable way.”

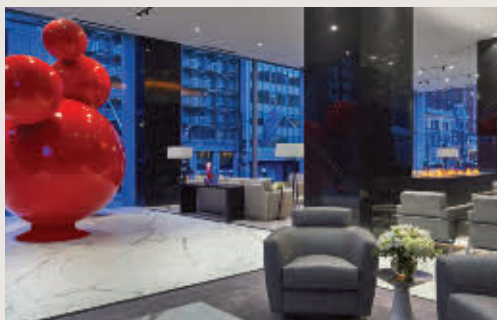


Rabbi Ariel Stern, youth and outreach director at the Chabad of Westmount Square on March 23.

They also have J-teens. “We actually facilitate their community service hours, so we do different types of humanitarian work for the community.

“It could be making soup for a women’s shelter; it could be going to deliver food at the Old Brewery Mission. It can be cleaning up the parks.”

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The mixed blessings of spring



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Station 12’s Cst. Adalbert Pimentel retires from Montreal police

By MARTIN C. BARRY

More than three decades ago when Station 12 community relations officer Adalbert Pimentel was deliberating over the type of work he hoped to get into, engineering and policing were his choices because both involved problem solving.

“I like to figure out how things work and I like solutions,” said Pimentel, who is retiring from the Montreal police department this week with 30 years of service.

Although he got good grades in school and engineering appealed to his technical side, he came to realize that police work increasingly wasn’t just about enforcement, but also about finding solutions to problematic human situations before they get out of hand and lead to conflicts with the law.

Joining the Montreal police in 1993 after completing the John Abbott College police technology program as well as three months of training at the Quebec police academy near Three Rivers, Pimentel spent his first 10 years as a patrol officer attached to a precinct in western downtown Montreal.

While he admits there is a significant downside, he describes police work as one of the most gratifying professions for someone interested in assisting people. Recalling one particular incident, when he managed to re-unite a distraught mother with her pre-school son who had wandered off inside a busy shopping mall, he said, “Those moments are worth more than a paycheck. Finding a child may not seem so big, but the impact on a person’s life – that’s why you do it.”

Negative & positive

As for the negative side, he said police work is “emotionally draining in some cases. You’re dealing with people’s problems. You are underappreciated.

“Sometimes you go in to help people and these people actually get aggressive towards you when you’re there to solve a conflict – sometimes conjugal violence, for example. And then sometimes some police officers get assaulted and some have been killed in these situations.”

While police community relations might sometimes be perceived as a public relations job, it is actually much more, ac-

cording to Pimentel.

Besides briefing the media on criminal incidents and giving presentations on prevention to community groups and at local schools, Pimentel was busy a good deal of the time investigating a range of situations involving inter-neighbour disputes, domestic violence allegations and financial abuse against seniors – some of which required him to make arrests.

He said that over the course of his career, there wasn’t a single occasion when he discharged his handgun, although there were a few when he had to draw the weapon from its holster but ended up not having to fire.

“On one occasion I came close,” he said regarding an incident during his years as a patrol officer. “He was charging at me. And just before I was about to fire, he stopped and ran off.”

Pimentel acknowledged that these kinds of incidents are probably the most stressful for police officers – especially afterwards. “It’s after the fact that it affects you more, when you’re trying to put things into place,” he said.

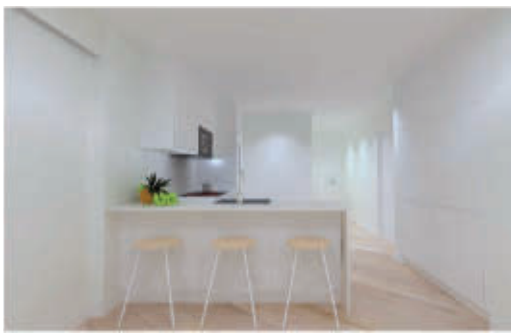
See photo on p. 1.

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City Views

VERONICA REDGRAVE

The many ways and passageways of the Medici



The Vasari ceiling.

would not miss her home, the walls bear images of Austrian cities.

Secret, and elevated, passageways

Now some fun begins. There are secrets: hidden doors leading to furtive passageways.

Although married, Francisco had a much-loved mistress, whom he housed in a secluded apartment reached via a barely-discernible door at the Palazzo Vecchio. (And, yes, his wife lived at the Palazzo at the same time.)

Another little door was a surprise discovery. When Cosimo again moved the family – this time to the other side of Florence's Arno River to an even larger palace – he needed a way to get around in privacy.

He did so thanks to the brilliance of architect/artist Vasari, who created an above-ground walkway from the Palazzo Vecchio, through the Uffizi (offices), over the Ponte Vecchio to the Palazzo Pitti, his new palatial home.

At the Palazzo Vecchio, the omnipresent art speaks volumes. Remember: the illiteracy rate was very high. Pictures told a story, whether religious or political. Frescoes were often cycles re-
.....
lating a series of events. *continued on p. 26*

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City views cont'd from p. 25

A marketing maestro, Cosimo reinforced his image of power by often using the zodiac symbol of the Capricorn. Although not his own astrological sign, it referenced Augustus Caesar.

The not-so-subtle link between the first Roman emperor and Florence's ruling dynasty was meant to evoke the emotion of Florence as the new Rome – under the Medici of course.

Works such as the *Adoration of the Magi* signal the family's power: The faces are those of the Medici.

Also at the Palazzo Vecchio, along with

these carefully curated messages, there was a rivalry starring Renaissance giants. Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, not too fond of each other at the best of times, were each asked to paint a wall. They both made sketches.

Then Michelangelo was called away to create a certain chapel ceiling.

Leonardo stayed. Ever the scientist, he experimented, mixing his pigments with types of wax. Then, to accelerate the drying process, he added heat to the wall. The rest is history: His painting dripped to the floor.

Luckily Vasari was around. He not only then painted all the walls, but created 39 separate panels for the ceiling of the same room, known as the Room of the 500.

A fascinating stanza (room) is the Hall of Geographical Maps. As Italians were not permitted to visit the New World without permission from Spain or Portugal, the Medici lived it vicariously through illustrations, objects and artifacts.

Maps of the then-known world, created by a lone monk under candle light, cover the walls of Francisco's studiolo. The ceiling carries on the theme of more is more. Every inch is decorated.

There are also two little cells in the tall bell tower. Savonarola was held in one of them. With fortune's flip of the florin, Cosimo I was also briefly imprisoned there by those jealous of his power.

However, using his influence (aka

bribes) he fled to Venice, but not before closing the Medici banks in Florence.

It didn't take long for the Florentines to arrive in Venice to change that situation. Very shortly Cosimo returned to rule once again.

Begun in 1249 by Arnolfo di Cambio, the architect of the Duomo and Santa Croce, the Palazzo Vecchio rose on the ruins of other palazzi.

Today, it is one of the iconic symbols of Florence. Michelangelo's "David" once stood outside.

(Best not to show that statue to just anybody. A teacher in Florida was just forced to resign because she showed "David" to her grade 6 class. Some parents complained. They felt that the 16th century masterpiece was inappropriate for their children. One called it "pornographic.")

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The Palazzo Vecchio. More is more, including Austrian cities on the walls.



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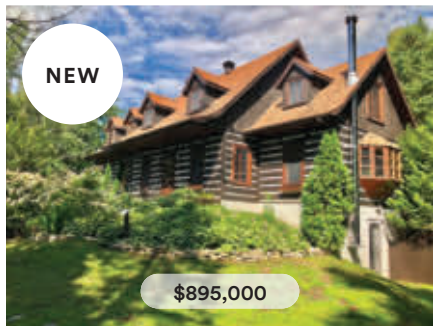




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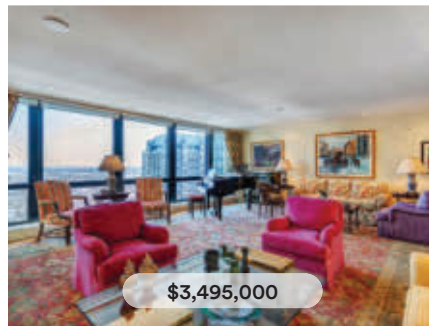
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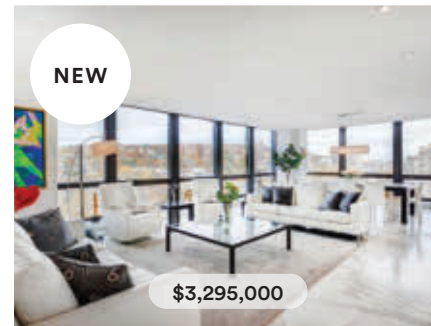
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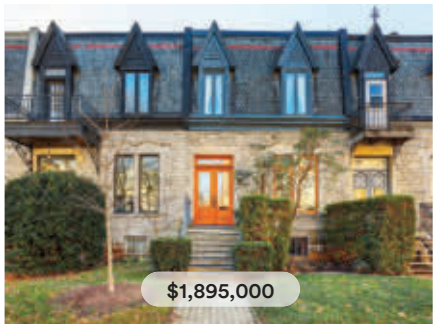
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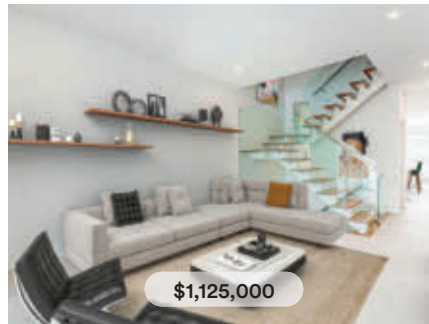
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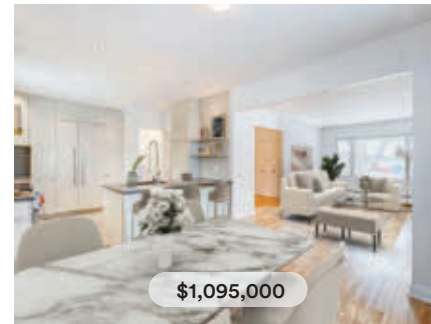
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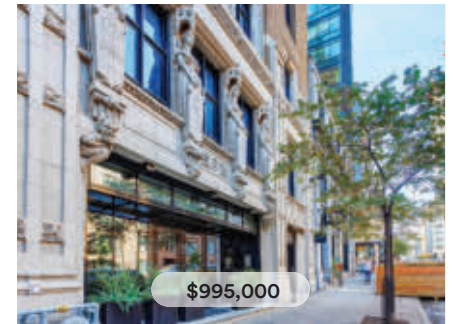
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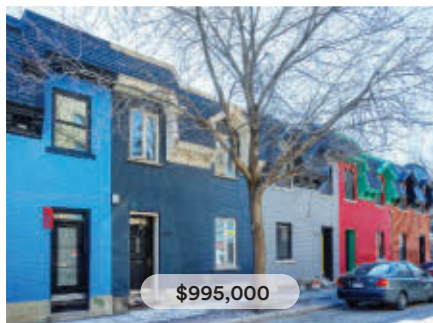
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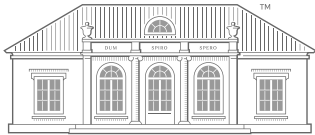
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