

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

Weekly. Vol. 17 No. 5a

We are Westmount

May 2, 2023

Annual event at Vic Hall returns after 3 years

Art Westmount to feature work of some 35 local artists May 6-7

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Art Westmount returns this weekend, May 6 and 7, at Victoria Hall after the three-year pandemic hiatus that cancelled the two-day event last held in 2020.

This time, scheduled to be on hand to exhibit and/or sell their work are more than 35 artists from related disciplines living in or working from studios in Westmount. These include painters, photographers, sculptors, miniaturists, and textile/mosaic artists as well as mixed media, according to Mélissa Denis-Daigneault, the city's Community Events organizer.

Most of the exhibitors are expected to be on site at some point throughout the two days. The exhibit is open from 10:30 am to 5 pm.

The event will be free and open to the

public with activities for all ages, according to Donna Lach, assistant director for the library and Community Events.

It includes refreshments as well as workshops in the Gallery and an opportunity to interact with the artists. The workshops take place May 6, 10:30 am to 12:30 pm and May 7, 1 pm to 4:30 pm.

'Small garden' workshops

The workshops both days are themed "Small world – dream gardens" in which participants will be able to "create their own diorama" with gallery curator Ève-Catherine Champoux.

Along with showcasing their work, Lach said many of the participants will also have prints, cards and bags for sale. "With Mothers' Day around the corner, (May 14) this pres-

continued on p. 3

Federal Liberals to choose nominee



The two known candidates for the federal Liberal nomination are Fred Headon, seen at left April 22 near Westmount Park, and Anna Gainey, seen April 28 in front of Westmount Florist on Victoria Ave. See p. 14 for stories.

PHOTOS: JENNIFER BALL

Cannon to be fired May 7 at WAG

Coronation tree planting, tea to take place May 6

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

City events to mark the coronation May 6 of King Charles III will take place that day, a Saturday, to include a tree planting at King George (Murray) Park and a coronation tea at the Gallery of Victoria Hall.

These will be followed the next day by the firing of the city's two historic cannon

at the Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG).

The planting of an English oak is to take place at 2 pm at the northwest side of the park by the tennis courts, according to Public Works director Robert Talarico.

It will join the 18 other oaks, he said. The park's official name commemorates the 1939

continued on p. 23

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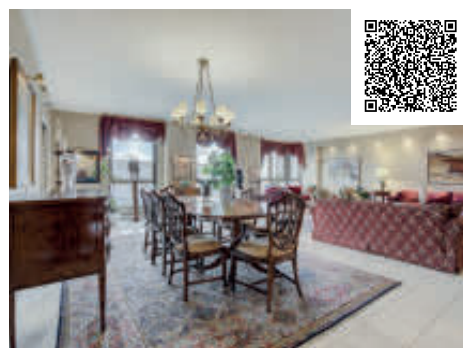
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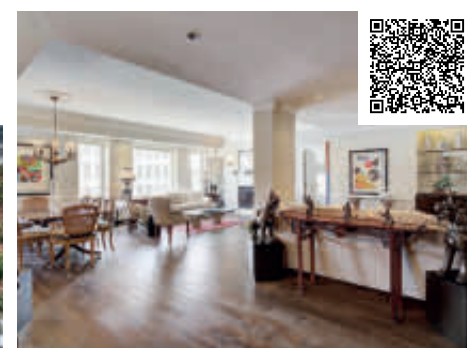
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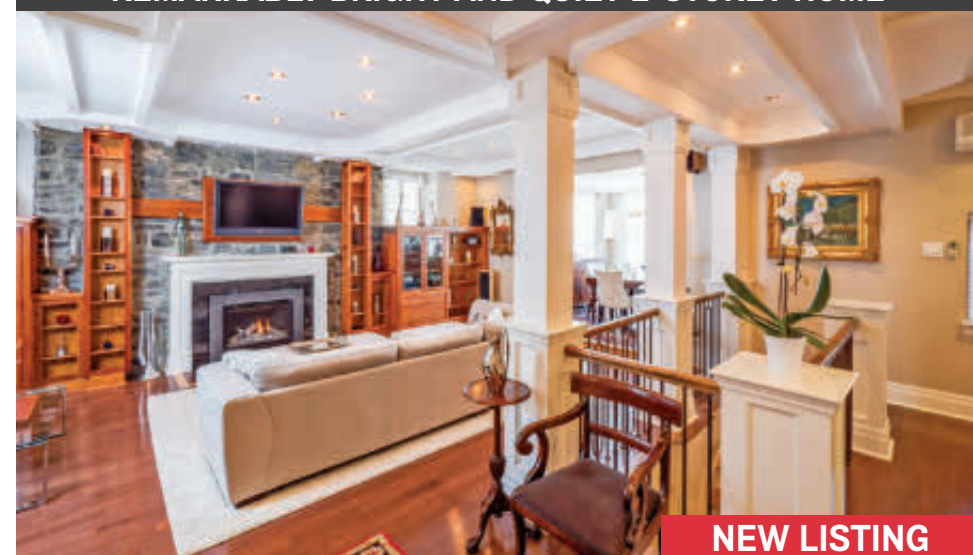


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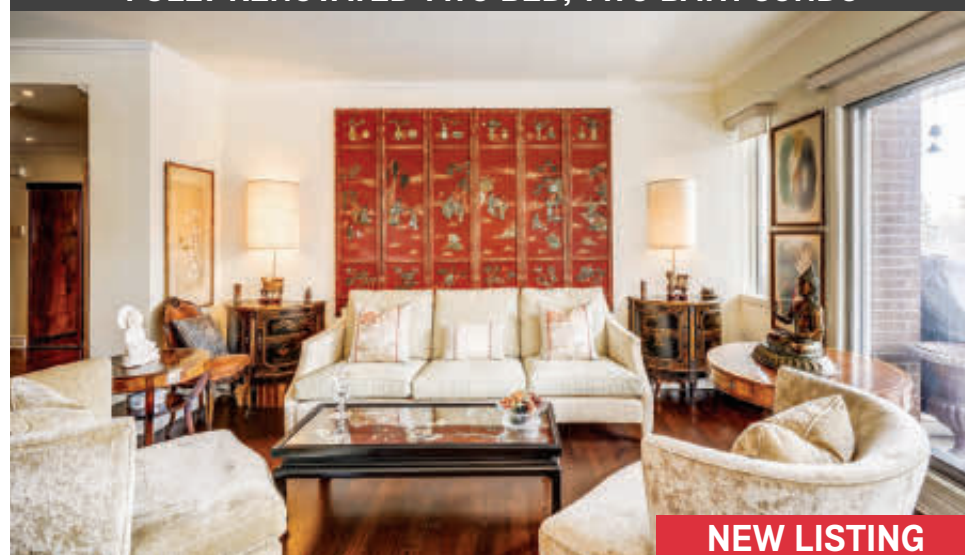
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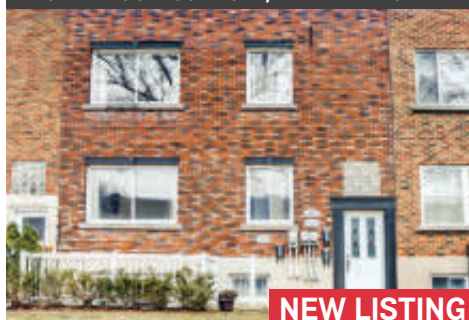
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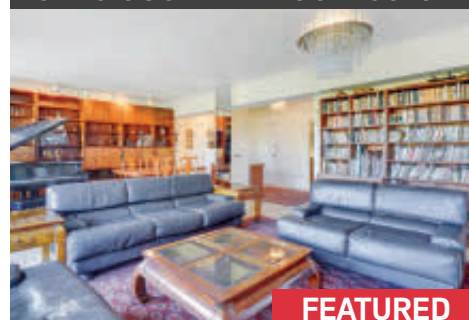
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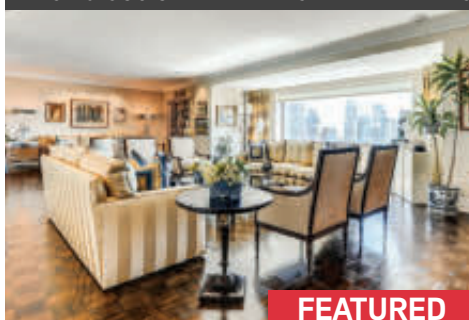
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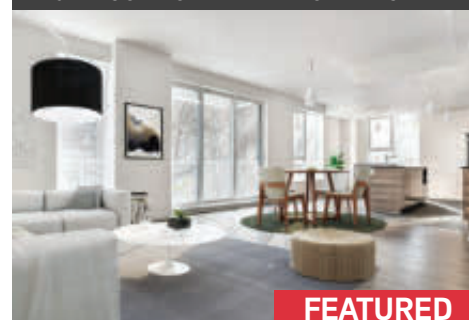
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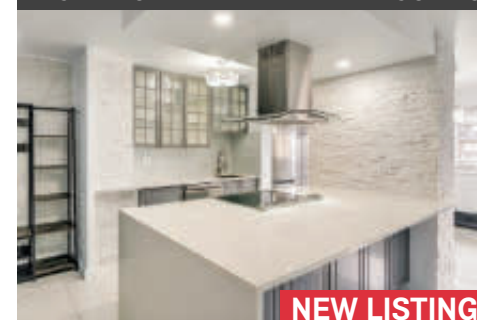
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Public Security lauds value of bringing people together

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

While the ice storm April 5 reduced anticipated attendance to about 20 at Public Security's Easter bingo event at Victoria Hall, it was reported to have been a positive experience for at least one senior in particular.

"He came to see us afterward to say he was relatively new to Westmount and had just made a friend," said Kimberley Colquhoun, Public Security's assistant director. "The two had spent the event together. He didn't know anyone in Westmount and had felt somewhat lost. It shows the value of getting people together," she added.

While Public Security has been partnering with the Contactivity seniors' centre and had been holding summertime outdoor information sessions in Westmount Park, the effort to create additional events such as the bingo is a new idea the department has begun introducing to get people together.

Q: Is there a doctor nearby? A: Two, victim & passer-by

Westmount, which counts a number of doctors who live or work here, often seems to have a doctor or nurse passing by when an injured person or accident takes place on the street, Public Security's assistant director Kimberley Colquhoun commented last week.

"There always seems to be a doctor nearby" she said.

On April 22, she reported, a fall actually involved two doctors: the victim and a passer-by. This occurred around 11:55 am when the department received a call for an injured person near Sherbrooke and Victoria.

"When patrollers arrived, they were directed to where a man was lying on the ground. He was reported to have fallen

while jogging and appeared to be in considerable pain but didn't want an ambulance." Just in time, however, a doctor from the MUHC happened to pass by and confirmed that the man, a resident of Westmount, had sustained an ankle injury but did not require an ambulance.

Dog walkers alerted to leash rules in Summit Park

Dog walkers are being warned that the city's regulations require all dogs to be leashed at all times in Summit Woods during the period from April 16 to June 15. This is the bird-migration season as well as the time for nesting birds and understory plant growth in the entire bird and fauna sanctuary. The area is closed to everyone overnight between midnight and 5 am. Dogs are also to be kept on leashes no longer than six feet.

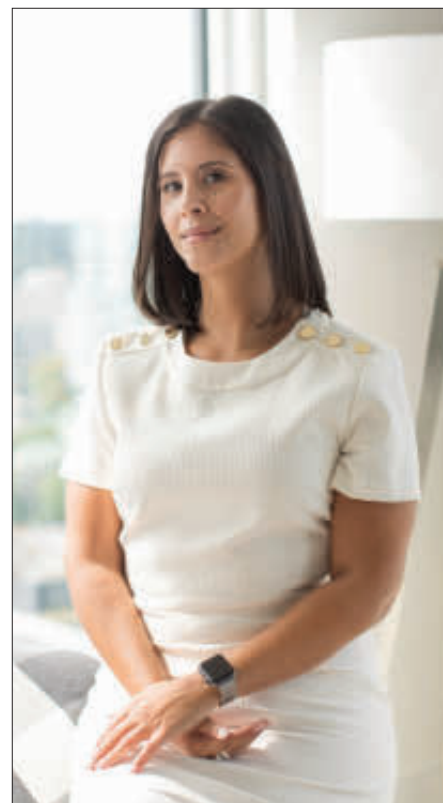
On April 23, patrollers in the woods stopped and warned a dog walker using a retractable leash. They are also checking that all dogs have Westmount licences, regardless whether or not they live in Westmount – just as they are also required to do in fenced dog runs.

Art Westmount, cont'd from p. 1

ents a wonderful opportunity to support local creation and find a truly unique gift for mom," she explained.

Since 2006, the mission of Art Westmount has been to recognize and celebrate local artists by providing them with an opportunity to exhibit, commission free. The event usually draws hundreds of visitors.

On the Saturday, May 6, a tea at 3 pm to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III will take place in the Gallery following the Art Westmount workshop (see separate story p. 1).




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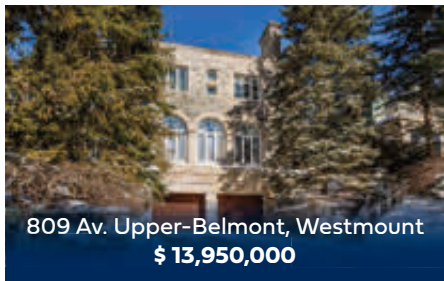


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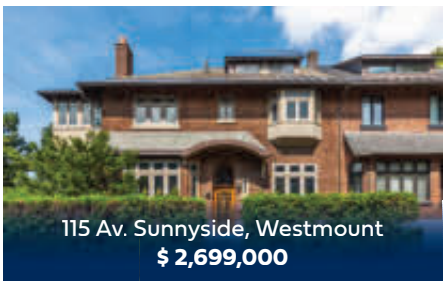
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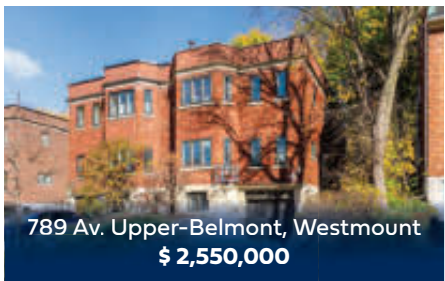
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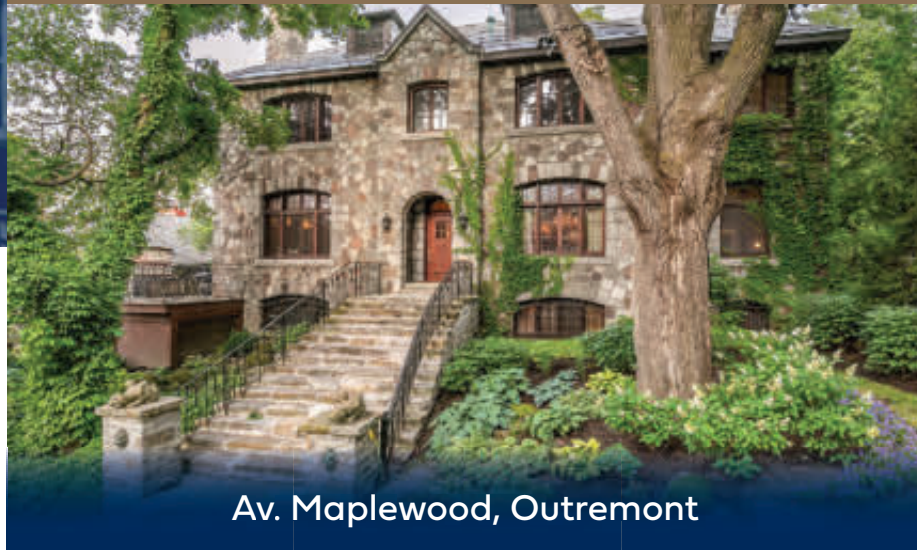
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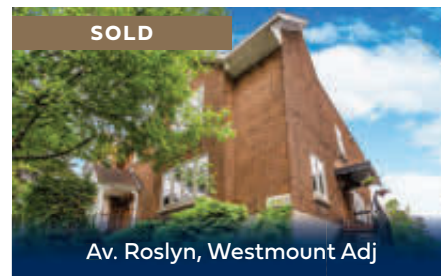
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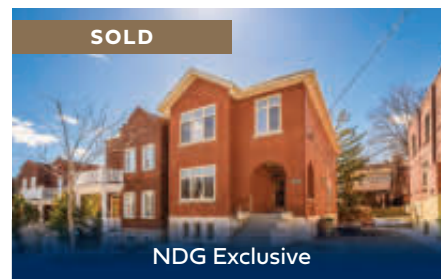
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To be re-built in same position

Minor exemption given for new front staircase at 324 Victoria

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

A minor exemption from current zoning under By-law 1303 was granted by city council April 17 concerning reconstruction of the front staircase at 324 Victoria Ave. This is occupied by the Animal Hospital of Montreal on the west side of the street. In explaining the resolution, Councillor Conrad Peart as commissioner of infra-

structure, urban planning and architecture, said that allowing the exemption would enable a new staircase to encroach into the building line in the same position as the existing one. A minor exemption can be granted only if the application of the zoning or subdivision by-law would cause “serious prejudice to the person requesting” it and does not “exacer- continued on p. 23

Intercity Junior A arriving this fall

City introduces 3 new hockey programs for next season

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

Looking ahead after the end of this winter’s hockey season, Westmount’s Minor Hockey Association will be launching teams in three new categories for next winter’s season, according to Andrew Maislin, operations manager for the Westmount recreation centre (WRC). These are an inter-city adult league for M21 (Junior A level for ages 18-20) as well as a first-ever all-girls’ M13-A team and an M7 girls’ team. These were announced last week “to adapt to the needs of the community,” he explained. “Previously, we have run the M7 pro-

gram together for boys and girls but we will now separate them as the girls’ program is growing and we want to start the all-girls teams earlier,” he added. A pilot M7 all-girls team was recently put together to showcase girls’ hockey in the Eastern Hockey League (see story November 1, 2022, p. 4). At the adult level, with the start of an M21 (Junior A) league, these players will have an opportunity to play inter-city competitive hockey level. Previously, they had been able to play in the city’s in-house (non-competitive level) program at Senior level for age 18+. The city will continue to offer an in-house Senior program.

Aimed at revitalizing Vic village

Public consultation for medical office rezoning set for May 9

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

A public consultation meeting has been set for May 9 at 7 pm regarding a city proposal to allow more medical and doctors’ offices in six commercial zones in Victoria village, but not at ground level. The intent to loosen the zoning located roughly along Sherbrooke, between Claremont and Grosvenor, and south along Victoria is described as “to encourage the occupation of certain vacant premises on the second storey.” A freeze on medical clinics and doctors’ offices had initially been imposed in By-law 1456 some nine years ago to pre-empt anticipated parking and traffic congestion in the district. This had been with an anticipated influx of these offices that

might be set up near the super-hospital (see story February 11, 2014, p. 1). Since this did not materialize, the draft by-law (1601) now under consideration was presented at the council meeting March 20 (see story March 28, p. 1). It was adopted April 3 pending the public consultation May 9. At this meeting, the by-law is to be explained and the person presiding will hear those wishing to express an opinion. The by-law is aimed at revitalizing Victoria village by repealing the previous quota and maximum area standards for medical clinics and doctors’ offices imposed in 2014 in the following zones now under consideration. They are C5-20-01, C5-20-02, C5-20-03, C5-20-04, C5-20-05 and C17-20-96.



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Editor's note

Thank you, Richard Dufour



PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Letter writer Richard Dufour sent me a very classy note last week to apologize if he had offended me with certain remarks in his April 25, p. 9 letter. In the spirit of me offering to buy beers for his neighbours if certain things happened (April 18, p. 9), he also sent me six beers, pictured at

our offices May 1. (If only all my interlocutors sent me beer!) He has not offended me, but I thank him for his very civilized gesture.

We can be opponents, but not enemies, and Dufour has shown us how. Thank you again. – DP.



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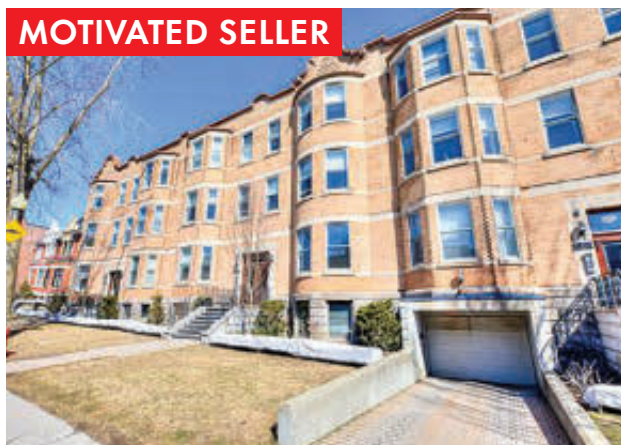
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EDITORIAL

Zoning proposal bad for Vic village, especially Château residents

I read councillor and city urban planning commissioner Conrad Peart's column in last week's issue (April 25, p. 7). It is nice to now know so much more about the history of Westmount's zoning laws (and other facts) regarding the Château Maisonneuve! Wouldn't it have been nice to have had all of this information *before* the March 22 public meeting at city hall?

Along with Anwoth resident Richard Dufour ("with that freedom [of the press] comes a responsibility to provide fair and unbiased coverage that is not self-serving"), Councillor Peart would appear to wish that I cease editorializing: "I must admit, it's curious to see the considerable attention that the editor of this paper has given to an issue in his immediate backyard."

Should an editor – who has disclosed the pertinent facts of his situation – be barred from *opining* (which is different from news *coverage*) on things in his immediate purview? Councillors – who are government officials – are not. Indeed, one of the heralded benefits of a small city is that council members know the community. The same goes for newspaper editors.

It is an obvious argument to criticize my engagement because of my address. But Albert Square was also very close to my house. Maybe it is the undemocratic,

developer-driven origin of this Château proposal and its massive size (102 units vs. eight for Albert Square) that got me interested?

The city may like its residents to be uninformed (or slowly informed). But don't I owe it to my neighbours and readers to speak up if I see something bad?

We see how the city sometimes operates with its March 22 meeting. The developer and city staff worked for months, without telling the press or public, on their presentations (and maybe a draft by-law), "invited" residents to a meeting/sales job at city hall and may end up saying: "Here's the new by-law. Stop us if you can."

Most residents in these cases learn very slowly about the city's approach, the province's petition/registry/referendum process, and the facts and possible consequences of the proposed change.

In my case, I have been here since the predecessors of the current city employees and politicians were in the job (and in some case the predecessors' predecessors, or predecessors' predecessors' predecessors). It doesn't take any great intelligence on my part to quickly comprehend the city's approach, unlike residents who spend most of their time on non-municipal matters – plus I can react every week,

unlike residents.

I can see why the proponents may not like this kind of opponent. But how do residents see it?

One neighbour told me that she had been against the proposal, but had given up until reading my first mega-editorial. It was a rare uplifting moment in this business. I will try not to let her down.

If I'm wrong, and my arguments are refuted, I will be ignored and life will go on, including for the proposal. But – locally anyway – it doesn't look like that is going to happen. Residents seem grateful for what light I can shine on this issue.

Regardless of how this bunfight ends, aren't you glad we now know so much more about our politicians' plans for Westmount? None of this came out in the election!

Vic village is good, as is

Back to substance. Even as he shares information and adds facts to the debate, Councillor Peart sets up many straw arguments to knock down and continues to ignore the real concerns of the people who actually live in Victoria village.

Straw argument #1. No one, to the best of my knowledge, has said that Westmount is too dense. What many are saying, including me, is that Victoria village is dense *enough*. In a rational world, without a quasi-religious passion for density, there has to be a limit on density. Why not pick one articulated by residents of the area?

It is all very nice for Councillor Peart to try to sideline the fact that Westmount is the *fifth densest city in Canada* by pointing out that hand-picked boroughs of Montreal are denser, but most residents are not interested in winning a race to highest density. What would the prize even be?

Also, as I have written before, Westmount-below-Sherbrooke is about 36 per cent of Westmount's territory but half its population, making it much denser than Westmount as a whole. This area gets even denser if we exclude the land used by CP and the 136/720, and include the contiguous, north side of Sherbrooke (where there are many apartment buildings).

If Councillor Peart can gerrymander the Montreal statistics to create denser areas, we can do the same for Westmount!

More importantly, though, residents of Vic village know it is dense enough *from our own experience*. We don't need statisticians to tell us anything about our own neighbourhood, or to try to convince us with comparisons. When you, your friends or your suppliers can't park, it makes the area a less pleasant place to live. When traf-

fic makes life as a pedestrian unpleasant, the quality of life starts to suffer. We are already at that point.

I found it interesting to read Philippe Lord's letter (April 18, p. 25) where he wrote: "It is clear to residents and Public Security that the parking woes are getting more and more frequent, tense and sometimes even aggressive." I, too, have seen such an incident and wrote about it (August 31, 2021, p. 24).

The same is true of construction. We know there has been too much. When an area has been under construction for 15 years, you become un-interested in changing longstanding laws to accommodate a developer. We want our representatives to represent us and say "No."

Council members, just listen to the residents. It's that easy.

Does size matter?

Councillor Peart similarly shows an interest in numbers, and not residents' actual thoughts, when it comes to the population size of Westmount. Westmount used to be bigger. So? Westmount is older than some communities. So?

If the municipal government of Westmount taxed income (which tends to decline with age) and/or provided services that become more expensive with residents' age (which the federal and provincial governments do with health care and retirement programs), then the city's "age pyramid" might be a relevant concern of municipal bureaucrats and politicians.

But the city taxes property (and will *always* get paid, by cheque or forfeiture/auction) and fixes roads, neither of which are affected by an aging population. Why go looking for problems, or take on the burdens of other levels of governments?

What keeps the exterior lot unbuilt?

I am also happy to learn more about the impediments to a building going up on the Château's outdoor parking lot. It is good that so many barriers to an added building exist, including the need to subdivide the lot before erecting a new building and the existence of indoor parking underneath the outdoor lot. But why give up a requirement – the required parking ratio – when it may provide *another barrier*?

More deeply, if parking becomes devalued as an urban-planning goal (which this proposal would do), the outdoor lot becomes superfluous. Future councillors, and bureaucrats, and owners or their representatives, could make arguments for even lower levels of required parking and

Addendum: Taxes, taxes, taxes

Regarding tax revenue, I am – again – happy to have more facts from Councillor Peart. It is difficult to talk about the effect of the proposed Château zoning change on taxes because, even if it goes through, it will not happen in a vacuum or be the focus of the next budget. Lots of other things will be changing too. As a result, we have to make small, hypothetical, changes to the current budget to guess about the effect.

At present, Westmount taxes residential properties of more than five units at \$0.6162 per \$100 of valuation and commercial at \$2.6731 (January 17, p. 20). As a result, if the whole year were "re-taxed" with only the status of the targeted floors converted from commercial to residential, there would be less revenue to the city.

But the city would still try to raise the same aggregate amount of tax money. How would it make up this (notional) shortfall? There are two main options:

1. The assessed valuation of the converted floors could go up,
2. One or more tax rates could go up.

For the city to get the same amount of tax money out of any floors converted from commercial to residential use (Councillor

Peart's preferred option), the floors would have to increase in municipal evaluation by 4.3 times (2.6731/0.6162).

Will this happen? Councillor Peart seems optimistic on this point but reminds us that the Montreal agglomeration determines municipal property values. It is, I think, the first time in 16 years at this job that I have heard a Westmount politician express optimism that the agglomeration of Montreal will help out the municipal government of Westmount.

The other solution is to increase one or more of the tax rates, i.e. move some of the Château's current tax burden from it to all the other taxpayers. In my opinion, this is the more likely scenario, at least in part. Do you want to pay more tax because of this proposed conversion?

But why put the city in a position to need a major increase in the evaluation of the Château's converted floors, or have to increase rates on other taxpayers, in order to stay flat financially when we can simply decline the proposal and keep the status quo? A bird in hand is worth two in the bush ... or three in the hands of the agglomeration of Montreal. – DP.

other rule changes. Why not draw a line in the sand now? As my neighbour Michele Hayden said (April 18, p. 24), “Enough is enough.”

Councillor Peart’s list of obstacles might look like a “to do” list for the current owner or a future one. And the city has tipped its hand by showing that zoning law is ... *mal-leable? porous? flexible?* I have heard less polite descriptions.

I do not know why major changes to zoning by-laws were made in 1986 and 2001, but the *effects* seem pretty clear. The net result has not been to exclude any group of people, but to shape the architectural character and density of the area. And who knows? Maybe those lawmakers had this exact situation in mind.

Regardless, we like our neighbourhood at this density. Let’s keep it the way it is.

Château residents

Councillor Peart makes the extraordinary insinuation that the opponents of this proposal are “exclusionary.” I challenge him to substantiate this claim with what he has read in this newspaper. (I have no idea what he hears elsewhere.)

Speaking for myself, I knew and was friendly with several people at the Château before all this and would be very happy to have more neighbours like them. As with my non-Château ones, I have met more Château neighbours as a result of this brouhaha and they seem great, too. (This episode may end up being an exercise in community building, although not in the way intended by most municipal actors.)

No one is saying anything about the people who live at the Château or about future tenants. We are saying that there are enough of all of us living here – *enough of ourselves* – already. If a restaurant you’re at is full and service is slowing down, don’t you advise your friends to stay away?

Indeed, I think some of the most likely, and most severe, potential victims of this proposal are current Château residents. How would this zoning change help them? There will be fewer legally required parking spaces. Are parking prices and availability likely to get better or worse as a result? There will be more tenants in their building using the common services. Will access improve or worsen? There will be the major construction needed to turn commercial units into residential ones. Who will be closest to the resulting noise, dust and traffic? It won’t be in their backyards. It will be under their roof.

But Councillor Peart does not seem interested in current voters. Why worry about them, and their actual experiences and first-person evidence, when sunny uplands exist full of potential, hypothetically happy, residents?

The future of central planners is always great. If only we could actually live there.

Freedom

Then we get personal. Councillor Peart writes, “In the past, the editor has championed the principles of free markets, self-determination and private property rights.”

I am proud to be known as a supporter of free markets and property rights. Thank you, Councillor Peart, for reminding people!

What I oppose is one set of rules, or property rights, for developers with multi-unit properties below Sherbrooke and another set for residents with one Westmount property. Developers have an effective back door to change rules/rights that they don’t like. Residents don’t.

Look no further than last week’s *Independent* for evidence. Resident John Van Toch wrote a satirical letter (p. 9) endorsing valet parking in Vic village, but he also relayed the very real story of his unsuccessful quest for a parking pad. What did resident Van Toch do? Suffer. What do developers do? Ask for a zoning change and set the city’s bureaucracy in motion for their own purposes. And they succeed, unless residents mobilize to stop them.

I am a friendly acquaintance of Van Toch, but I was unaware of his issue and have never been to his house. Regardless, let us do a simple thought exercise. Whose proposed change has more potential to be disruptive to neighbours, his or the Château’s? Who was treated better by the city?

The mayor chipped in with a similar *bon mot* on property rights in an email to me April 25 about my March 12, 2019, p. 8 editorial (see above right). (I have twice told the mayor that we are never off the record.) The distinction is obvious. In the current case, a company, Creccal Investments, is asking for a change to longstanding laws for its benefit – an amendment process not open to most Westmount residents. Creccal has never articulated a position against zoning laws in principle (or against this law until it became inconvenient) and zoning is an unremarkable part of municipal life. (If we want to get rid of all zoning laws, that is another discussion and, again, their abolition should be for everyone, not the select few. See more on this below.)

In the case of Cromwell, people (not the city) were calling for laws to constrain its right to price, and sometimes not to rent, its commercial space. There was no zoning issue, and the proposals were a novel assault on economic freedom. As that debate evolved, it turned out that even the Quebec government – hardly a bastion of free enterprise – would not allow municipalities to do what was proposed. As in the case of Cromwell, I will defend Creccal’s right to use its economic freedom to set its prices for commercial space, or leave them empty.

And isn’t Vic village, where Cromwell owns so buildings, in my backyard too?

The mayor’s final sentence is a textbook case of an *ad hominem* attack. Even if I am

Editorial

1 message

Smith, Christina <csmith@westmount.org>

To: Editor Westmount Independent <editor@westmountindependent.com>

Tue, Apr 25, 2023 at 3:46

David,

I thought I would refresh your memory with an editorial that you wrote just a few years ago. What a difference of opinion when the project literally in your own backyard.

There is a term for that

<https://www.westmountindependent.com/Wlv13.3b.pdf>

CS

Christina M. Smith

Mairesse-Mayor

Ville de Westmount-City of Westmount



a hypocrite, it does not make me wrong about the Château proposal.

And remember I am not a public official. I do not tax you or make laws. I don’t think anyone much cares about my (alleged!) inconsistency from four years ago.

Property rights

But back to property rights, one of my favourite topics. I am happy to accept Councillor Peart’s implicit challenge. Let’s get deeply libertarian and get rid of *all* the urban planning rules – a nice even playing field of unlimited property rights. Residents of Victoria village (and all of Westmount) would be free to sell out to developers keen to build Château Somerville, and Château Winchester, and Château Burton, and Château Victoria.

Central planners in love with density would be happy too. If Density is an insatiable god, let’s give the owners of land next to the Château Maisonneuve the right to lay sacrifices on His altar too.

The area would quickly look like Griffintown or the area near the new forum or *The Jetsons*, but at least the city would be intellectually consistent and even handed between types of property owners, and current residents could sell out at a nice price. For statistics chasers, Westmount’s density and total population would skyrocket! An ironic *hurray*!

I would rather stay with our inherited patchwork of current laws, all the while *applying them evenly* and changing them *when people want them changed*. These laws have – by design or chance – created a visually appealing, dense-but-not-too-dense, walkable neighbourhood. A real *hurray*!

And let’s talk about free markets, another great topic. What is a market response when you have difficulties in selling your product or service (in this case, commercial real estate space)? For starters, a business could lower its price, invest in its offering, market it differently or some combination of all three. What is NOT a market response? Asking the government

to re-write the rules just for you. That would be interest-group politics.

Once again: I am not implying that the Creccal representatives or the city’s unelected employees have done anything against current law or practice. *I am asking*: should this be the practice?

Fireworks and funniness

As a parting shot, Councillor Peart misinterprets my comment about “fireworks.” I did not “pledge” them as some sort of threat. I *predicted* them, given my experience of debates, and that neutral readers could enjoy them: “People who are indifferent sit back and watch the fireworks” (April 4, p. 9). There is a big difference.

He then accuses me of detracting “from the seriousness of the issue.” I don’t write six pages (and counting) of editorials on something that I do not take seriously.

But we should always keep our sense of humour. If soldiers can make jokes in war zones (and we are told they do), we can laugh at our issues – *all of which* are picayune in comparison.

More deeply, all debate participants should remember that many Westmounters (and non-Westmounters) look at *all Westmount municipal politics* (and news coverage!) as one big joke. In a very interesting mayoral election in 2017, 57.8 percent of Westmounters did not bother to vote (November 14, 2017, p. 2). This Westmount majority saw no difference between the proposed mayoralities of Christina Smith, Patrick Martin and Beryl Wajzman! Without endorsing (or not endorsing) them, I can’t see how anyone could view these three options identically – but that was the majority opinion. So let’s argue hard and show up, but – yes – see the humour, laugh and enjoy the show.

David Price is the editor of the Independent. He lives in a zone contiguous to 4998 de Maisonneuve Blvd. and across from the building’s exterior York St. parking lot. The city is welcome to submit a reply column of equal length.

Westmount Square Medical Centre closes – No one informs patients

By JENNIFER BALL

Westmount Square Medical Centre (WSMC) has gone from super-clinic to group family clinic to closure, all in the span of five years.

In 2018, then provincial minister of health and social services Gaétan Barrette announced that the WSMC was to become a walk-in and medical super-clinic. In 2022, it lost its super-clinic status and became a family medicine group clinic and now in 2023, it has closed entirely.

As recently as October 2022, three family doctors, six general practitioners, 11 specialists as well as nine wellness centre workers were listed as working at the WSMC.

Amir Chouyoukhi is a property manager with the group Creccal, who manages the commercial portion of Westmount Square. He told the *Independent* on April 27 that the WSMC has closed.

“We have no information,” was his reply when he was asked about the situation, but confirmed that “they definitely closed overnight and they are definitely closed.”

The only evidence this was ever medical services on the fifth floor is signage listing the Montreal Retina Institute and directing patients to the onsite ophthalmologist. The medical secretaries at the institute were reticent to comment on what went on with their previous neighbours when asked by the *Independent*.

A clinic patient found out about the closure by showing up for a scheduled appointment, only to be turned away.

“...exactly a week ago [April 19],” she said, “patients with appointments turned up to find the Groupe Santé Westmount



The fifth floor and concourse clinic areas on April 26.

Square clinic closed, the floor in which the clinic was located inaccessible by elevator and the phone disconnected...

“There was no sign, notice or other communication explaining the closure... Patients have not been contacted. On the day of my appointment, the first day of the closure, a person in a suit, who did not identify himself, got on the elevator to explain that the fifth floor was inaccessible and that we should talk to security...”

“Security told us to call 811 – who knew nothing about the situation...”

Barry Morgan, media relations specialist, CIUSSS du Centre-Ouest-de-l’Île-de-Montréal, Integrated Health & Social Services University Network for West-Central Montreal, notified the *Independent* that WSMC had become a Family Medicine Group on November 4, 2022.

On April 28, Morgan said “the Westmount Square Medical Centre no longer

has its Groupe de médecine de famille (GMF) designation since April 1. Please contact Dr. Yvan Philippe Fortin, in charge of appointments for the clinic.”

Requests for the best coordinates for Dr. Fortin, answers to how patients can access their clinic medical records or even why April appointments were not cancelled, went unanswered.

Attempts to reach both the medical director Dr. Yvan Fortin and the clinic’s co-owner Luc Provost through LinkedIn on April 26 were also unsuccessful. The phone number for the clinic (514.934.2334) is no longer in service.

Back in November 2022, two healthcare professionals who had worked at WSMC offered their observations anonymously and they were direct about troubles brewing there.

The first healthcare source had seen a shift in the past three years: “...physicians

are fed up and they’re just opting out, in record numbers, of the public sector...”

“A large number just retired, just felt that it’s not worth it. Not worth the time, not worth the effort, not with the small reimbursement and the dwindling resources.”

The second source described the situation as a perfect storm.

“...I know from other clinics that I work at, it’s really hard to recruit doctors in Montreal because there’s only a few new doctors allowed in Montreal every year.”

The WSMC patient worried that “this closure, and the disappearance of both family doctors and specialists, together with patients’ medical records, will affect quite a number of Westmount residents...”

It is a wider issue. The clinic was meant to serve not just the immediate area but almost all of the downtown Montreal area and into the suburbs.

Police Report

Suspects target jewellery in upper Westmount burglaries

By MARTIN C. BARRY

A Montreal police department spokesperson is advising Westmounters – especially those living near the summit – to switch on alarms, report suspicious activity and call 9-1-1 if necessary following yet another burglary at an upper Westmount home.

In March, officers at Station 12 on Stanton St. launched investigations after homes near Sunnyside, Lexington and Shorncliffe avenues near the summit were broken into and robbed.

The thieves appeared to be after jewellery, and in one case the value of the property stolen exceeded \$40,000, qualifying it as a “major crime” as defined by police.

In the latest burglary incident, a home around Forden Ave. was broken into and robbed around 7 pm on the evening of

April 22. According to the police report, the suspects approached the house through the back yard (the same *modus operandi* used in the earlier cases).

However, as they were entering through a window, at least one of the suspects sustained a cut, which left behind a trail of blood, according to Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit. The perpetrators managed nonetheless to search through the dwelling before fleeing.

Blood samples were sent for DNA analysis to the police department’s forensics division, and “hopefully we’re going to get a match and we’ll be able to identify the suspect,” said Yigit, adding that “if this person has a prior record, then he’ll be identified.”

He said the blood evidence “will stay in the system until in the future he gets ar-

rested, at which point his DNA will come up.” Again in this case, the suspects got away with an important quantity of jewellery, said Yigit.

He suggested that before going out, home owners should always remember to switch on their alarm systems, “because I know of a couple of break-in instances where people said they had an alarm but they forgot to turn it on.”

With the summer vacation period looming, he suggested that home owners take precautions while planning to be away, such as advising neighbours.

“Also, if they see anything suspicious, anybody walking around who does not seem to belong in the area, they can always call 9-1-1 to report things like suspicious vehicles.”

Toyota SUV stolen

A tourist from France who had parked a rented Toyota Highlander SUV on Sherbrooke St. near Atwater Ave. on April 21 realized it had been stolen on the morning of April 22 when the vehicle was missing.

“He had rented the Highlander at the airport,” said Yigit. “And in the morning after he woke up, he went looking for it and couldn’t find it.”

According to the Canadian insurance industry fraud investigation service Équité Association, the Toyota Highlander ranked fifth on a list of most stolen vehicles in Canada in 2022.

They said one reason the vehicles listed are vulnerable is that they don’t have an ignition immobilizer, which is an advanced anti-theft device that can prevent thieves from hot-wiring a vehicle.

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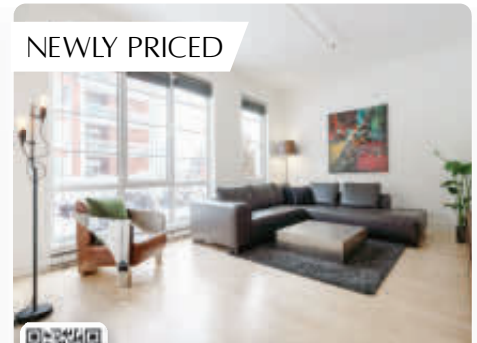

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Homme Men Femme Women Enfants Children

Raising the flag
Would it kill you to discuss organ donation?
No, according to Transplant Quebec



By JENNIFER BALL

Having a discussion with your family about becoming a possible organ donor does not foretell your immediate demise. That seems obvious enough but it is surprising how many individuals are rattled by the thought of it, according to Martine Bouchard, the CEO of Transplant Quebec. “... for some reason, people have this myth that if you have these discussions, you are then going to walk out onto the street and you are going to die. That is just ridiculous, but it is a perception.”

Bouchard was at city hall on April 20 to raise the flag for organ and tissue donation week, which ran from April 23 to 29 this year. She was advocating for the 913 people, as of the end of last year, registered on the waiting list managed by Transplant Quebec.

“While there is a need for all organs, I’d say the most ‘popular’ organ that’s transplanted – if you allow me that expression – are kidneys. There are lots of people on the waiting list for kidney-organ transplants, but every organ is important and every person that’s on the waiting list is also important.”

In terms of organs, the kidney is the easiest organ to donate, in that an individual can live with one kidney. “You can be a living donor and you can help somebody that you know or somebody that you do not know. Of course, there’s a whole bunch of required criteria so that you are a great fit.”

The *Independent* queried Bouchard if it wouldn’t benefit patients on waiting lists,

◀ From left, Martine Bouchard, CEO of Transplant Quebec, and Mayor Christina Smith in front of city hall on April 20.

for Quebec residents to have to opt out of becoming organ donors – as opposed to having to opt in, as you currently need to do via the back of Régie de l’assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ) card, or the RAMQ registry.


“There are various opinions on that subject and there are various provinces that are doing a whole bunch of stuff in Canada. My first instinct would be it’s a fantastic option, but that’s not the only thing that’s going to make it easier for us or whoever is on the receiving list. That is, for the simple reason, that you need to talk to your family first.”

Family asked in opt-out cases

Bouchard said that when potential donors get to the hospital, even if it is an opt-out patient, the medical team will ask the family what they would have wanted. “We need to have lots of teaching amongst staff, among the population. We need to have a societal movement and we need a discussion on what the Quebec population needs and wants. Then we can move forward with the best practice.”

Mayor Christina Smith facilitated Bouchard’s hoisting of green ribbon flag in support of national organ and tissue donation awareness week by giving her control of the flag-pole handle.


“Today, Westmount will raise the green-ribbon flag in support of national organ and tissue donation awareness week. Westmount is proud to be a supporter of this national organ and tissue donation awareness week. And this event is an opportunity to draw attention to the critical need for donors across the country and to encourage Canadians to formalize their decision to become donors and discuss it with their loved ones,” Smith said on the day.



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The Study hosts 17 schools at all-girls leadership conference

By JENNIFER BALL

After three years of pandemic – with last year’s conference an on-line only event – girls from 17 different schools convened at an all-girls leadership conference and there were bearhugs, air kisses, networking and also much cogitation on future career paths.

The event took place at The Study school at 3233 The Boulevard at the corner of Braeside Place, on April 21.

Kim McInnes is the head of The Study and she said “...I hope that this conference fills you with the curiosity and the confidence needed to seize opportunities and make a positive difference in the world...”

Beatrice Bousser is a teacher at the school and event co-organizer, along with Erica Szwimer, Chantale Lewis and grade 11 student co-chairs Yian (Olivia) Wu and Geneva Pham.

“[Wu and Pham] are the ones that are coordinating all of these students,” Bousser said.



Three girls in conference tee-shirts.

The conference is an opportunity for teenagers to meet community leaders like Jason Joseph, a recreational specialist and special education technician who has spent many years working with the English Montreal School Board and Montreal’s youth communities.

The all-girls leadership conference had 350 attending last year and 386 registered for this year. Grade 11 students develop workshops where the delegates will gain tactics to win them the hearts and minds of future adversaries and comrades. “Be it listening, co-operation, problem solving, team collaboration. All of that is being discussed during these workshops,” Bousser said.

So, what established world leaders seem to resonate with young, future ones? “Leaders that are young leaders and female and people who talk about problems that really affect the youth,” Bousser replied.

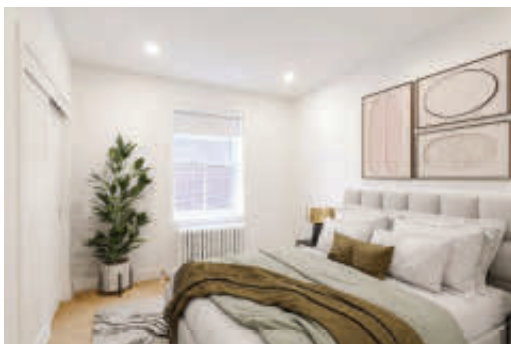
With the hot-button issues be- *continued on p. 26*

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FEDERAL LIBERAL NOMINATION

Gainey looks to build on party, foundation work

By JENIFER BALL

Anna Gainey is listening carefully to what constituents in the NDG–Westmount riding have to say. A source, who has experience with past Liberal campaigns, said that while the date has not yet been set, it could be just a matter of weeks before the Liberal candidate is chosen to run in the by-election and potentially retain the seat for the Liberals.

According to Elections Canada, “the date of the by-election must be announced between March 20 and September 5, 2023. This announcement signals the start of the by-election period. The by-election must be held on a Monday, at least 36 days but not more than 50 days after the day the by-election is announced. Therefore, the earliest date that the NDG–Westmount by-election can be held is Monday, May 1, 2023.”

The latest date the election could be held is Monday, October 23, 2023, according to Geneviève Nickel, communications officer, Media Relations and Environmental Monitoring, Elections Canada.

Gainey is the former federal Liberal Party president, serving in the role from 2014 to 2018. Her decision to run came after receiving encouragement from family, friends and colleagues. “After a great deal of reflection and many encouraging conversations, I’m excited to share that I will be putting my name forward to be our next Liberal candidate for NDG–Westmount in the upcoming federal by-election – and I’m hoping I can count on your ideas, guidance, and support...”

“...I firmly believe that our community needs a strong, dedicated voice in Ottawa, and I am ready to be that voice...”

“Through my work, I’ve seen firsthand the critical role that organizations like Chez Doris and the NDG Food Depot have in our city. There is much more to do, and I want to work with all orders of government and community leaders to support the most vulnerable in our neighbourhoods, and create a better future for every family who calls NDG–Westmount their home.”

Marc Garneau’s sudden departure triggered some reflection as to who could fill those big shoes, she said. “I have a clear track record in the party. I’ve been engaged for probably 20 years at this point in some capacity, and I’ve also just been really present here in our community...”

“It’s a unique opportunity to use my skills and my experience and my passion for our community to serve and to be a really strong voice for our neighborhood, in Ottawa.”

Past grant recipients of her family’s philanthropic endeavour, the Gainey Foundation, have worked in the milieu of the arts and in resuscitating the environment. It won’t come as a shock therefore that climate change, environmental issues and sustainability will be a priority, were she to win the nomination and go on to win the seat in parliament.

From the get-go she would “... start with the importance of climate change and reaching our commitments to get to net-zero...”

“...Climate is a great example where we all have to pull all levels of government, all regions of the country to get to net-zero, and we owe that, as a minimum, to our kids and grandkids to be really focused on those objectives.”

On a more micro scale, Gainey is of opinion that politics is about people and relationships. “I think that I have the capacity here to draw on my relationships and to build out, from the ones that I have to get, to know more people in our riding and to really listen to the issues and the concerns that they have.”

The objective at each step of the way, is reaching as many people as she can, she said. “Returning phone calls, taking phone calls and really committing my time to listening and meeting people. That priority will remain, throughout my service, in whatever role I’m serving in.”

She lives in Westmount.
See photo on p. 1.

Headon looks to rejuvenate riding association, be part of 4th mandate

By JENNIFER BALL

The first order of business, should Fred Headon win the Liberal Party nomination, in the federal electoral district of NDG–Westmount, is to ensure the riding association is refreshed and on point for the upcoming by-election.

Headon is seeking the nomination of the Liberal Party for the seat vacated by Marc Garneau

“None of us were excited at the prospect that Garneau was going to retire, though we all knew that some day he would.”

So, when Garneau did announce on March 8 that he had resigned, Headon went into high gear. It does appear that this will be a very short campaign and so rather than spending a lot of time on formalities, he said he will just put his shoulder to the wheel.

Headon is currently vice president and general counsel, labour & employment, at Air Canada. He is also past president of the Canadian bar association. Since 2018, he has also been a course lecturer at the faculty of law at McGill University.

With the by-election imminent, Headon is aware that securing a fourth mandate is not exactly a slam-dunk for the incumbent party.

“We know from history that a fourth consecutive mandate is always a challenge, as is a by-election for the governing party. And so having a strong candidate who can contribute to that renewal with some new perspectives, some new energy, some new ideas, will be helpful in developing our next platform.”

He was prompted to run, he said, because he and his family have lived in the riding for 20 years. “Our family is very

engaged in activities ranging from the hockey association to the daycare to the schools. The riding is very dear to our hearts.

“...it’s a chance for me to give back to a community that we care deeply about.”

Headon feels that he has had the good fortune to acquire many skills in his career that he feels would benefit constituents. “Certainly, in my work at Air Canada. We have in the time I’ve been there, gone through very difficult, challenging times...”

“Certainly, the pandemic in the last few years, which has given me an interesting perspective on how important government can be in helping to ensure that the economy functions well and for everyone’s benefit. We can see where there are limits to what business and the economy can do, and where we need governments to come in to support...”

Headon has different priorities in the two distinct phases of winning the Liberal nomination and then winning the election for the parliamentary seat.

Should he win the nomination, “I will be looking to bring together the riding association...”

“So, certainly after the nomination, if I am successful, the first priority will be that and making sure the riding association – which of course has been through a number of elections in short order – is refreshed to take on the by-election...”

Should he win the parliamentary seat, he would be “turning my mind very quickly to the work that can be done when the house is not sitting. Files like housing and the environment, cost of living, will be issues that I’ll be also engaged in.”

He lives in NDG.
See photo on p. 1.


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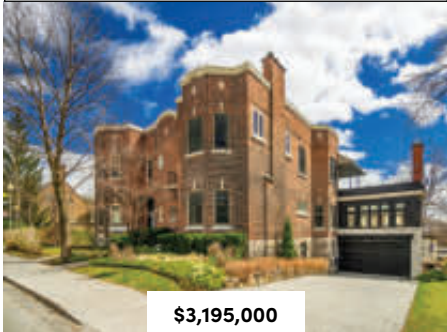
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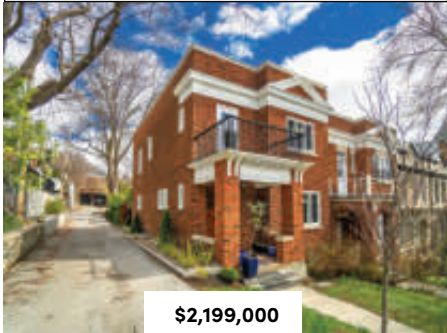
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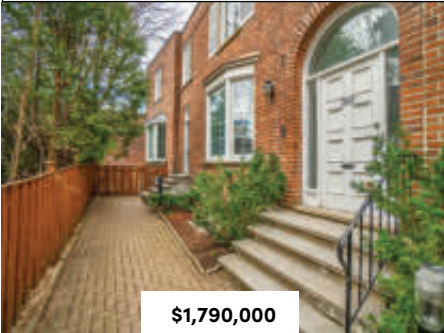
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Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

Note: The following article relates to the registration of deeds of sale for Westmount property in November 2022, gleaned from non-city sources. A list of sales can be found on p. 17.

Seven Westmount house sales were registered in November last year, a record low for the month (by our statistics) and the third of the previous four months to tally less than 10 sales. So far, we have listed 127 transfers for the year 2022, higher by three than in 2020 as the pandemic raged in Quebec, higher by two than in 1976 while owners were possibly involved in the Olympics and not ready to sell their houses.

The November sales also reduced the value of the “typical” Westmount house to \$2,473,973, while it had been as high as \$3,079,684 in July, down some 20 percent

November transfers: Volume still slow

from its peak only four months earlier.

In November, some \$23,055,000 was paid out for houses with a 2020 valuation of \$20,943,600, thus a mark-up of only 10 percent from the previous evaluation, the lowest mark-up against the 2020 roll since July of 2020. (For statistical purposes, the 2023 valuations will only be used for sales registered in 2023 and beyond.)

The highest price in the November sales list was \$7,250,000 for 29 Ramezay Rd., only 3.2 percent above its 2020 valuation, while 122 Sunnyside Ave. sold for less than one percent above its municipal tax value. The lowest price of the month was \$1,500,000 for 7 Winchester Ave., which represented a mark-up of 44.8 percent, the highest of the month and the only one over 20 percent.

Only one condominium sold in November, a flat in a former triplex at 4210 de Maisonneuve Blvd., which went for \$971,000 or 37 percent above its tax value. That was the highest mark-up so far in the fourth quarter of 2022, which included six sales



122 Sunnyside, the month's lowest mark-up, at 0.5 percent.

in October. The seven condo sales represent an average mark-up of 16.3 percent, higher than for one- and two-family dwellings.



7 Winchester, the month's lowest price at \$1,500,000 and its highest mark-up, 44.8 percent.



29 Ramezay, the month's highest price, \$7,250,000. All photos taken April 26.

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Bought & Sold – real estate transfers in November 2022

ADDRESS	VENDOR	PRICE	2020 VAL	RATIO (%)
50 Belvedere Place	Fiducie BMS	\$5,300,000	\$4,778,000	10.9%
605 Lansdowne	Peter Arvanitis	\$2,480,000	\$2,159,600	14.8%
29 Ramezay	9406-6701 Québec Inc.	\$7,250,000	\$7,025,000	3.2%
122 Sunnyside	Richard Benzakein & Karen Lutterman	\$2,000,000	\$1,990,500	0.5%
7 Winchester	Mary Catherine Moore	\$1,500,000	\$1,035,900	44.8%
61 Windsor	estate Edith Home Paton	\$1,625,000	\$1,449,200	12.1%
484 Wood	Isabelle Vena	\$2,900,000	\$2,505,400	15.7%
CONDOMINIUMS				
4210 de Maisonneuve # 2	Jennifer Brockhouse	\$971,000	\$709,000	37.0%

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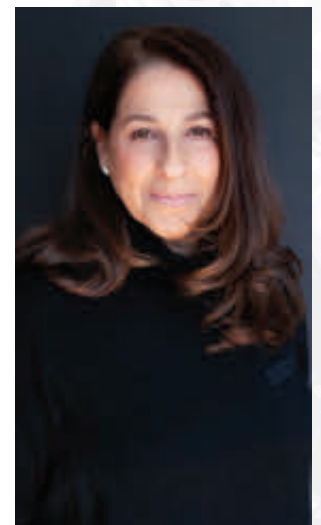
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LYSANNE FOWLER

A happy Chubby is three years of age, and in need of a family to cuddle with and room to grow into a mature puppy routine. This big handsome brindled fellow is at the Montreal SPCA kennel, and he needs to be adopted into an active adult home where he can catch up on the bonding and socializing that he should have moved towards earlier for his age. Chubby is very healthy, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and micro-chipped. With a regular walking schedule, Chubby will be a little trimmer and more muscular, yet his bonding from these outings



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Isn't she just gorgeous? Stunning with her long fluffy black-and-white coat, contrasted by her beautiful green eyes and unique pink nose covered in a black heart shape! Miss Mimi is a darling, affectionate and interactive. She is presently at the Montreal SPCA cattery, in need of a loving family as soon as possible. She is a very healthy seven-year-old, up to date with her inoculations, spayed and microchipped. Mimi was taken in the shelter as declawed on her front and back feet, which makes her an indoor-only cat. Please search the www.sPCA.com website, head to Mimi's information page by her identification number, 52168144, then choose the day you will come to visit the

Chubby at play

will help him with anxiety towards other dogs on leash. Being in a kennel is less than ideal, yet he has taken to the staff and looks forward to joining in on walks. If you would like more information on adorable Chubby, please refer to the www.sPCA.com website, scroll to Chubby's information page from his identification number, 52023933, then click on the daily schedule on the upper right side of the page to choose the day you will come by the shelter as of 10 am. The SPCA is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West, Montreal H4P 1X4. Please go and visit Chubby, he is so friendly and he is a great companion. Your neighbour,
Lysanne



Miss Mimi



adoption coordinators, as they are open every day from 10 am. The shelter is

located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West, Montreal H4P 1X4. Please bring your carrier for Mimi or, if you need one, you can choose a model at the SPCA boutique that is open for adopters. Your neighbour,
Lysanne

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'Future Committee' dissolved**Offer to lease/buy Villa Sainte-Marcelline site refused by Congrégation**

BY JENNIFER BALL

The latest communications from the board of directors of the Villa Sainte-Marcelline school for girls indicated that another serious offer to buy the school has been refused by the Congrégation des Soeurs de la Villa Sainte-Marcelline.

The school is separate from the Congrégation, which announced last fall its intention not to renew the school's lease for the 2023-24 school year, citing the cost of maintaining the building (see "Villa Sainte-Marcelline may close given \$12-16M cost of renovations," October 18, p. 12).

The lease was subsequently extended until June 2024 (February 7, p. 1).

On April 27, Michael Gentile and John

Marcovecchio, who are the co-chairs of the Villa Sainte-Marcelline board of directors, provided a statement that they had "presented the Congrégation with a second offer for a three-year lease with an option to purchase the buildings. This final offer followed numerous exchanges over the past few months between members of the Future Committee and the Congrégation.

"Unfortunately, the final offer made by the Future Committee and adopted by the board was not accepted by the Congrégation..."

"Since the Future Committee was created to define the parameters of the next three years and to find the necessary funding to support a three-year lease with an option to purchase the buildings, and this

solution was rejected by the Congrégation, the board accepted the request to dissolve the Future Committee. The responsibility for finding other solutions to maintain the school's sustainability is now entirely in the hands of the school's board..."

Sale of school?

"However, on Tuesday evening [April 25], the school's board of directors met to discuss possible solutions. One of the avenues that the board will study in depth and with urgency is the purchase of the school and its educational project by another institution..."

The board also went on to reiterate that the school will be open for the 2023-2024 school year.

"In addition, the director general informed us that the school is successfully continuing the deployment of its retention plan for teachers. The operation should be completed within the next two weeks. Currently, 78 percent of the teachers at the primary and secondary levels have already accepted the job offer submitted to them, 16 percent of the teaching positions are still being processed and will be filled by teachers already working at the Villa.

"Only one position will be open to external recruitment to fill the need."

Parents have been invited to come to the school gymnasium for an information session on May 1 and/or May 2 when more information will be shared with them.

Pandemic politics waning?

The same truck was photographed March 22, left, and April 11 (shown at right), as well as April 17 and 21 (not shown). The recent absence of decals has been noticed by pedestrians in the area.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GREAT CLEAN-UP JOB AT PARKS

This is Wednesday [April 19] and I have just spent an hour parading around our beautiful park and am truly amazed at what the clean-up groups have achieved – over and above the heavy damage done to trees by the ice storm. I ask myself: Will the same citizens who bespoiled our park with litter and garbage recognize the change and perhaps find one of the many disposal cans into which their garbage can easily be placed?

I guess I am dreaming because in truth the most likely result will be (within two weeks) the beautiful walkways and stretches of greenery will be restored to their “normal” state. I desperately hope I am wrong!

What’s the problem here – is it entirely human nature or some failure at the home/school experience as our kids mature?

I did find one plastic spoon to re-route!!

BOYD WHITTALL, ST. CATHERINE ST.

WESTMOUNT NEEDS ...
ROAD MAGIC

“‘Complete demolition’ of Mt. Pleasant approved for \$3.4M,” April 18, p. 5

Oh, Westmount. I know that I am considered an absolute crank, as I always complain about things that in my logic appear absolutely stupefying. Now, as per the *Montreal Gazette* of April 12, roads in the province of Quebec have been baptised as the worst in North America.

But of course that is obviously because of our severe climate. Oddly enough, as per the internet, I have found places that, climate-wise, appeared worse than what we have in Quebec. When I managed to discover what the longevity of their roads were, I generally found it to be around 30 years.

I still remember driving in the Appalachian Mountains south of the border, in the Rocky Mountains in Canada and the USA, crossing the Alps from Italy into Switzerland and their roads were smooth – no potholes or blemishes. But obviously they must use a magic formula in preparing the materials and a magic spell on its construction!

So I was wondering, why doesn’t city hall add to the Westmount standards for road construction that contractors use a magic formula in preparing the materials and a magic spell on its construction?

ALFRED EDEL, VICTORIA AVE.

RESIDENTS COLLABORATED
WITH CITY ON LAWS

Open letter to Mayor Christina Smith and councillors Anitra Bostock and Conrad Peart

I would like to point out to Richard Dufour (April 11, p. 6) that over the years the residents of Victoria village have always worked collaboratively with the city of Westmount council and, in fact, because of this collaboration we have, in large part, succeeded in making our community a

desirable place to live. We have never been against thoughtful development in our area – we have just been against thoughtless development.

It is a cheap shot for Mr. Dufour to start name calling and accuse David Price – or any of us who might agree with him – of being a NIMBY. The reason we have been able to successfully work together with city hall is because we are ALL (mayor and council included) collectively interested in maintaining the fragile quality of this small neighbourhood.

Am I to believe that Creccal Investments Ltd. became interested in changing the present zoning regulation simply because they care so much about the housing crisis and the “greening” of the environment? What is stopping them from putting in more bicycle racks, or an electric charging station right now? Why can’t they fix up their parking lot immediately – for example, they could remove the ugly concrete wall surrounding the lot with a green hedge as a start. Does Mr. Dufour honestly think that the residents in this area would oppose changes like that?

Let’s be honest – the primary motivation for wanting to change the zoning regulation is because Creccal Investments Ltd. feels it can get more revenue from apartments than from business offices – and I am not faulting them for that.

What I really resent is the fact that they (as well as Mr. Dufour) are trying to convince us that their rationale for wanting a zoning change is to better our society as a whole.

Are they concerned about how much this zoning change could negatively affect our daily life? I doubt it. The impact of a zoning change would have a dire effect on Victoria village as a whole simply because the density of this small community is already overwhelming.

It is my sincere hope that Mr. Dufour, will now understand that this is NOT a NIMBY issue – this is an issue about caring about the future of Victoria village. We have spent a lot of time, over many years, making sure that the development in our area is beneficial for all of the residents of Victoria village.

Mr. Dufour stated that he “voted for our officials to make intelligent decisions that would benefit our society – and not merely cater to a select few with the loudest or most powerful voices.”

Well, we voted for them for *exactly* the same reason, and I don’t think anyone would disagree that, in this case, the loudest and most powerful voice is Creccal Investments Ltd.

MICHELE HAYDEN,
PRINCE ALBERT AVE.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH
ON CHÂTEAU

The *Westmount Independent* is a wonderful paper and, as a Westmount resident, it is required reading every week. I am also a resident of Château Maisonneuve, where I enjoy living and respect the management as the building is well run.

One of the joys of living at Château Maisonneuve is that one does not need a car. We have the Metro in a three-minute walk. I have also observed new tenants and many of them do not have cars. Arriving in Montreal three years ago, I had a beautiful Jaguar, which I loved. But when I totaled up the parking costs and insurance costs, with the Metro close at hand, it made no sense to keep it. Easier to rent a car as needed. How many of the new tenants will even want a car?

In my view, you are making much about nothing because you live in the area. I feel you should put a stop to this grievance, which has now become quite boring. It is destroying the integrity of your paper. Having your wife write a letter is too much.

GRAHAM WRIGHT, DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

Editor’s reply: (1) I have disclosed my interest, offered equal space to the major participants and published every critical letter received so far. My conscience is clean. (2) I am sorry you find the opinion items on this issue boring. In every edition, there has been and will be other material, which I hope you enjoy. (3) I did not “have my wife” write. She chose to write in and, again, I disclosed our link. Should she have less access to her local paper than others? DP.

NO BENEFIT FOR AREA, CITY
FROM PROPOSED CHÂTEAU
ZONING CHANGE

Open letter to city council

Thank you for your editorial of April 4 (“Proposed Château Maisonneuve zoning change bad for residents, undemocratic,” p. 8). I am of the same opinion.

I have been closely following the discussion on the proposed changes to zoning for Château Maisonneuve and have yet to identify any advantages to the immediate neighbourhood or to Westmount that would follow from these zoning changes. I fail to understand why any proposed changes to zoning should be presented that do not meet this low bar.

Nevertheless, if conversion to residential goes forward, as current zoning permits, a smaller number of family-sized units is preferable as it would better fit in with the current character of the neighbourhood.

Any increase in density would put further pressure on parking resources,

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

which are already overstretched. Currently, there are already not enough resident parking spots for permitted residents. I would like to see an increase in parking spots reserved for permit holders independent of any proposed zoning changes.

Re: Richard Dufour's letter of April 11 (p. 6) – rather than launching attacks against residents of Victoria village, I would suggest that Mr. Dufour makes a positive contribution by canvassing his neighbours on changes to zoning in his own neighbourhood to increase density in the name of the public good as he sees it. If he gets agreement from his neighborhood and Westmount as a whole, I am sure developers would soon follow to take advantage of the changes.

ALBERT SALTIEL, PRINCE ALBERT AVE.

DON'T FORGET EFFECTS OF LIZ, MEDICAL CLINICS, ONE-WAYS

Open letter to Mayor Christina Smith and District 5 councillor Anitra Bostock

Having just read certain “hot button” sections of the April 18 *Westmount Independent*, I felt the strong urge to again pick up my pen and add to the debate, hopefully in a constructive manner.

I refer to the following sections:

(i) Mr. David Price's editorial “City Council: Please listen to actual residents of Vic village” (p. 8 and 9);

(ii) Letters – Château Maisonneuve/Vic village, including our own (p. 24 and 25).

First, congratulations, David, you once again hit the nail on the head. Your argumentation justifiably takes the city administration to task in a polite, constructive, but clearly very critical manner that is completely logical, factual, warranted and appropriate.

This also applies to the letters on p. 24 and 25, which all basically carry the same message: This area, the extreme southwest corner of Westmount (aka “Vic village”), one of Quebec's/Canada's *most densely populated* residential areas, is now greatly endangered. Its so far wonderful quality of life is now severely threatened by a simultaneously converging mix of circumstances, many of which are clearly identified and even repeated by the various authors.

A vast majority of said circumstances are under Westmount's direct control, the important exception being Montreal territory to the west of Claremont Ave. The circumstances include:

1) It is virtually assured that the gigantic “Liz” seniors' residence complex [at Claremont and de Maisonneuve], now nearing completion, will have major impact on parking, traffic, noise, environment, etc. Somehow, this *huge* issue took the back seat on pages 8, 9, 24 and 25, although

there was some mention.

2) Another issue, one that has apparently been completely overlooked by the various authors, is that of permitting doctors' offices and clinics into Vic village: This has been a very deliberate “no-no”, for obvious reasons, since By-law 1456 was adopted in 2014 to “pre-empt anticipated parking and traffic congestion” (see article on p. 1 and 10, *Westmount Independent* of March 28, 2023). Now, however, it appears that we are witnessing an almost “carbon-copy” situation to 4998, namely that Ms. C. Lulham (former councillor) and present council members are doing their utmost to bid for the interests of commercial real estate owners and promoters, rather than for the residents who elected them. The article quotes Ms. Lulham as stating “.. to revitalize the Vic village, for example, and fill some of the second-floor vacancies” (!)

Please inform us just WHY Vic village needs to be “revitalized.”

The article finishes as follows: “While no date has been announced for a public consultation meeting, this usually follows at the first or second reading of the draft by-law.”

Here's my next question: do we, Vic village residents, want to even CONSIDER changing the existing by-law?? My personal answer is this: Let's keep the status quo on this matter, too, just like for the current zoning law regarding 4998. Any changes to these can have only negative consequences to the quality of life of all Vic village residents!

3) Yet another looming danger, another one for which the directly affected residents are not being adequately informed and consulted, is proposed change from current two-way to one-way traffic on Winchester and Burton, although Philippe Lord does address this issue (and its virtually certain harmful consequences for Somerville) in his letter on p. 24 and 25.

Marielle and I, on Somerville, can speak to all the above from our own experience, because we purchased our home many years ago, and raised two daughters here. The area was a bit scruffy then, but rapidly gentrified as more and more young professional households moved in and greatly improved the qualities of their properties.

We are by nature not pessimists, but in the current debate cannot be other than pessimistic when considering the combined synergistic effects of problems 1), 2) and 3) above, taken together, on the future of residing in Vic village. I have deliberately not addressed the (negative) effect on future property values: I leave this to the reader's imagination.

MICHAEL R. WERTHEIMER & MARIELLE AUDET-WERTHEIMER, SOMERVILLE AVE.

CONCERNS ABOUT REGARDING CHÂTEAU ZONING

Open letter to Mayor Christina Smith and councillors Anitra Bostock and Conrad Peart

Mr. Peart noted in his councillor's column of April 25 (p. 7) that there were two issues of concern with the 4998 de Maisonneuve zoning proposal: the number of parking spaces and the size of the apartments. I disagree. There are many more concerns for our neighbourhood.

Firstly, again and again... the citizens of Prince Albert must put on our gear and fight again for the status quo. I have only lived on Prince Albert since 1995, so I have no idea, besides lack of zoning, why my corner of Victoria village looks as it does. The townhouses built in the 1980s on Prince Albert, Somerville and de Maisonneuve, as well as the office building that was at “Albert Square” and the office buildings on de Maisonneuve, and Château Maisonneuve, are clear reminders of why we needed by-laws to preserve the charm that remains in our neighbourhood.

That is why homeowners comply with onerous regulations concerning renovations of our heritage homes, and we live with the demands to submit plans for any changes we make to our exteriors and the footprints of not only our building but also fences etc. Although we generally comply, developers think that they don't have to.

We have had to fight for years to get a reasonable solution to the Albert Square project. Then the developer practically demolished the entire office building, disregarding the limits it agreed to in order not to comply with the by-laws regarding setbacks from the street and the size of a building on a lot. We and the city were played.

Issue. Workers, trucks, and equipment have taken over our street (see photo at bottom). Parking on the permit side and the

hourly restricted side. Hanging a fluorescent vest on their cars and not getting tickets leaves the residents with few spaces for themselves, friends, or family. The noise and dirt will keep us from our front porches for at least one more summer.

Issue. In the last few years, we have had to deal with the noise from the Glen [super-hospital] building (successfully receiving compensation for the excessive noise even after the building was completed), the construction of the tunnel between the Glen and Vendôme Metro, and the [under-construction] senior residence on St. Catherine and de Maisonneuve.

Issue. Then we can get to the issues that Mr. Peart has mentioned. Yes, the building complied concerning the percentage of small apartments when it was built. Still, time and experience have led the city to adopt a by-law requiring a more significant portion of larger apartments. This is a good thing, providing housing for families with a demonstrable need. Why does Creccal want smaller residences? My guess is not to benefit Westmount but rather to increase its revenue.

This overlaps with the second problem, the shortage of parking. We already have very little parking in our area, as both the residents and the retailers in Victoria village will attest. If Creccal built 550 sq. ft. dwellings, each single [unit] would create a more significant parking problem. If the city allows the re-purposing of floors 2 to 5, they must build larger family apartments responding to a real need of our population and a lesser demand for parking. This time, let's be extremely skeptical of the developer's promises of what they will do in return for any concessions made by the city.

Fool me once; shame on me...You all know the rest.

SUSAN SCHNEIR,
PRINCE ALBERT AVE.



Looking south from de Maisonneuve and Prince Albert at the Albert Square townhouse development on April 21.



The two sections of the summit lookout's damaged balustrade, as seen April 28.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

Restoration, part 2

Balustrade for summit lookout okayed at \$311k

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

Restoration of the summit lookout is to continue this summer with work on the balustrade that protects the observation deck and the flights of steps. This follows damage from a Bombardier plow during snow removal operations over the winter 2020-2021 that continued to close the lookout area for most of last summer.

This year's work, described in the council's award resolution as "restoration of the Summit Circle balustrade" was approved by city council April 17 at a cost of \$311,340 including tax credits. The contract, awarded to Camvi Construction, was lowest of four quotes ranging up to the highest at \$674,903 submitted by Consultants NCP,

last year's contractor.

The work for this summer was described by Councillor Conrad Peart as including the work and re-painting of the balustrade to bring it up to previous levels including improvements.

The work last year at a cost of \$297,782, including taxes for "structural reinforcement," resulted from an analysis of the damage by an engineering firm (see story August 31, 2021, p. 12).

This inspection indicated that "some aspects of the lookout had reached a critical point of deterioration and required a replacement or restoration program. These elements are the foundation walls, the structural slab, and the interior structural elements."

**Anna
Gainey**
NDG-Westmount



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Anna Gainey is a dedicated NDG-Westmount community leader who knows what it takes to fight for our priorities in Ottawa. She understands the unique needs and vibrant character of

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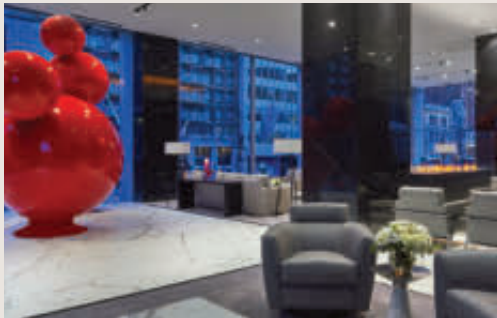
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Indie art



This art piece was constructed using copies of the *Independent* by Liliane Aberman. "We are flattered by the choice of material," said editor David Price.

PHOTO COURTESY OF L. ABERMAN.

Exemption cont'd from p. 6

bate" the safety or public health and general well-being of the neighbourhood. The minor exemption by-law was adopted September 20, 2021 (see public consultation August 17, 2021, p. 1).

In this case, the similar replacement staircase will be in the same position as the existing one and the difference will not be "noticeable to the passer-by," Mayor Christina Smith added.

Coronation, cont'd from p. 1

visit to Westmount by King George VI, grandfather of King Charles.

This is to be followed by the coronation tea at 3 pm in the Gallery of Victoria Hall, "so wear your pearls and a fascinator for an afternoon of elegant tea sipping and nibbling of shortbread," said Donna Lach, assistant library director in charge of Community Events. Reservations are not required.

The next day, the city's 1810 cannon are to fire a royal salute at 11 am at the WAG. The Westmount Battery, a re-enactment group, will do the honours dressed in uniform from the era.

Mayor Christina Smith is expected to be on hand.

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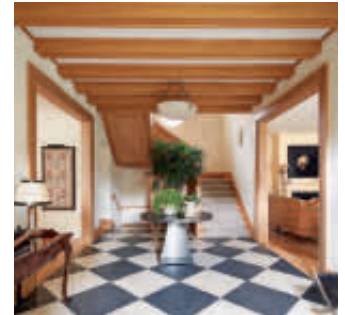
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Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Galerie Blanche on Greene makes it official

other gallery opening.)

Guests were greeted by owner **Lyne Parent**, whose fuchsia jacket signalled spring. Caterer Les Enfants Terribles served bite-size delights, much appreciated on a chilly-but-sunny eve.

Galerie Blanche is Lyne's second space. Her Old Montreal site launched in 2007. The new Greene Ave. gallery offers art for

all, from local artist **Kai McCall's** punchy portraits to **Bruno Capolongo's** gorgeous *kintsugi* works. *Kintsugi* ("golden joins") is the Japanese method of repairing broken pottery with lacquer mixed with powdered gold.

Basquiat-style pieces by **Jazzu** were admired by selfie-shooting guests loving his street style. Among the stars of the

show were the bronzes by **Rose-Aimée Boulanger**. The artist, almost 100 years old, was represented by her son **Jean Boulanger**. He told me that one of his mother's sculptures, *Les Chuchoteuses*, sits in Old Montreal.

Artist **Benoît Genest Rouillier** showed me his charming "petits dessins" as well as his *continued on p. 26*



Lyne Parent.



Sharon Galbraith.



Pascale Pratte, Elle Belz and Ramona Nortal.



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Manon Lemire, Lyne St-Amant and Brigit Bujnowski.



Jean Boulanger.



Glenn Neven and Robyn Yanofsky.



Artist Benoît Genest Rouillier.

Social notes, cont'd from p. 25

larger works. Noted in the crowd of art lovers were Galerie Blanche director **Sharon Galbraith**, **Elle Belz**, **Pascale Pratte**, **Manon Lemire**, **Brigit Bujnowski**, **Lyne St-Amant**, **Gonzalo Salinas** and **Alejandro Ramirez** (“we bought a Boulanger sculpture!”), **Glenn Neven** (local Birkenstock store manager) and **Robyn Yanofsky**.

Although most attending art lovers wore elegant city-style neutrals – black outfits mingled with whites and greys – Lyne St-Amant’s pink was a happy harbinger of hyacinth to come.

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Beatrice Bousser is a teacher at the school and event co-organizer. The event took place at The Study school at 3233 the Blvd., at the corner of Braeside Pl. Photo on April 21.

The Study, cont'd from p. 13

ing the environment, climate change, native rights and LGBTQ discrimination.

Bousser has taught for 23 years and believes we all have the capacity to be change agents. “That is what this conference is about. It’s about realizing that we all have opportunities and we all have responsibilities. We get to choose how we affect our goals around us and this is an opportunity to really be launched into a leadership journey,” Bousser said.

Justine Monette is a delegate from the Sacred Heart School of Montreal on Atwater Ave. and Dr. Penfield Ave. “I really like sports,” she said. “I play a lot of basketball so I would like to learn how to lead my team.”

Meagan Maselli is a delegate from the same school, who also plays a lot of sports and who wants to be “an effective leader, to have more of a voice on my team, so I can lead them to victory.”

The motto of the conference host is “The world needs great women” and it has imprinted on The Study student Catherine Dongier. “I really hope that I can find a place in society where I can lead and inspire people. I hope that I can have a good future and be a leader.”

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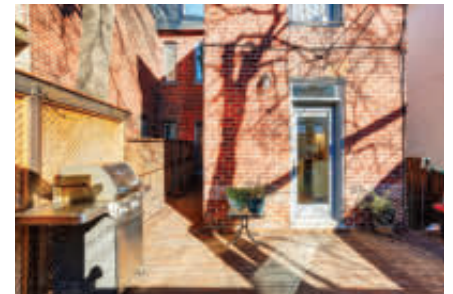
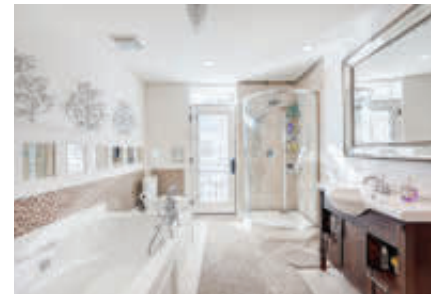
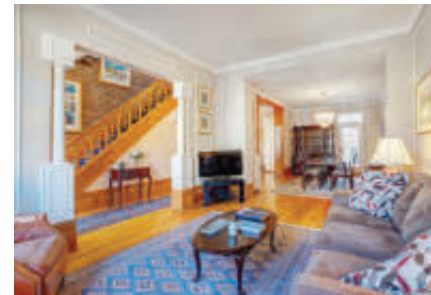
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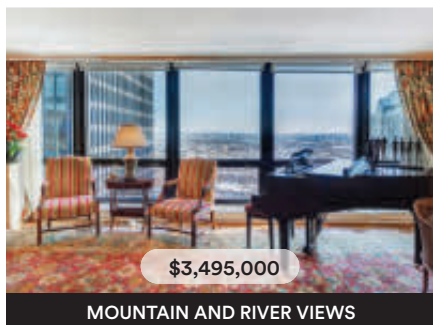
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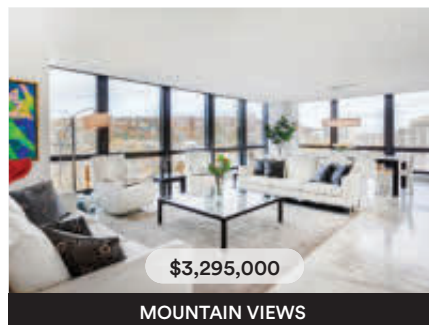
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