

# WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

Weekly. Vol. 17 No. 6b

We are Westmount

June 13, 2023

Parties planned to return to negotiations June 9

## City's blue-collar fill council chamber June 5

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

As the city found itself halfway through a seven-day strike by its blue collar workers (June 1 to 7), the council meeting June 5 opened with Mayor Christina Smith attributing a "packed house here tonight" to the workers.

Jean-Pierre Lauzon, the newly elected president of the Syndicat des cols bleus regroupés de Montréal (CUPE Local 301), stated that after seven negotiating sessions, the city's offers left the Westmount workers "under the other municipalities," mentioning in particular pay and hours of work. He made special reference to Côte St. Luc.

While both he and the mayor referred

to a return to the negotiating table June 9, it was not known at press time how the situation might have evolved after that session.

In a statement by Mayor Christina Smith, however, she said the city maintained its position not to negotiate "in public or through the media." She added, however, that the city valued the work of its "blues" and that the city had made "a generous offer comparable to or maybe even better than conditions" found in other cities in the Montreal area.

"Clearly the negotiation is more difficult than thought and we have not yet reached common ground," she said. The workers have *continued on p. 11*

It's easy being Greene!



Donna Kuzmarov (left) and her husband Irwin Kuzmarov break into a spontaneous dance to the rhythm of Mike Uzan and his 12-string guitar at the Quartier Greene Festival June 10. See p. 7 for story.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

Eligible residents can petition up to June 21

## Vic village medical offices move to petition stage, before possible register

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A city council decision June 5 to proceed with opening up the number and sizes of medical offices and clinics in the Victoria village is now expected to move to the next step in the process to modify the current restrictive by-law. This move is to hold a register if enough eligible electors apply.

The petition period will take place June

14 to 21, Mayor Christina Smith told the *Independent* after the meeting with details to be published in a public notice.

Questions at the meeting from Denis Biro of Burton (online) and Michael Wertheimer of Somerville (in person) reported that merchants they had questioned did not support the idea of increasing medical offices as a means to *continued on p. 12*

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**Public Security reports****Lone dog found in woods, water rushing down Mountain Ave., leaf blower way past deadline**

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Among last week's incidents reported by Public Security is an unusual one about a dog found wandering alone in Summit Woods June 7 at 12:47 pm. The dog was discovered by a patroller and, fortunately, wore a licence tag from Hampstead. Through it, the dog's owner was contacted and the dog returned.

The incident pinpoints one of the reasons why dogs are required to wear licence tags, even though they may not come from Westmount, said department director Greg McBain.

On June 5 at 1:48 am, an overnight patroller noticed a major water leak on Mountain at Montrose.

What was described as a "pretty good-sized" amount of water was running down the hill. This resulted in closing the street and calling Public Works to shut off the water.

Repair work was started at 7 am and scheduled to last most of the day, during which water was not available to some residents.

Also on June 5 at 1:51 pm, a leaf blower

was heard in operation on Sunnyside after the permitted spring clean-up period ending May 1. A ticket for \$280 was issued to the operator for using the device.

At least one other permit for such use was known to have been given. That one was on Oakland May 30 (see story June 6, p. 3).

**First time in June****Library book sale raises \$13,745 and more books for next time**

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The library's semi-annual quality book sale June 3-4 raised a total of \$13,745 and was "a very good one," said Anne-Marie Lacombe, director of the Westmount Public Library and Community Events.

"It was so well attended that when the doors to Victoria Hall opened Saturday at 10 am, the line-up stretched all around the building up to the library's main entrance," which is currently under renovation.

"People have learned that this is the best time to get first pick," she said. "Three large tables of children's books for 50 cents each were gone by Sunday."

This was the first time the usual April book sale took place in June due to renovations "and the quality of the donations was found to be exceptional. It was very good turnout."

The sale was organized by the Friends of the Library volunteers who worked throughout the weekend with president Carolyn O'Neill. The proceeds are to go to upcoming projects that have yet to be determined.

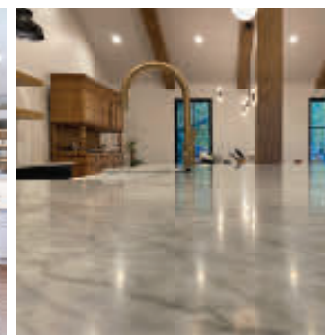
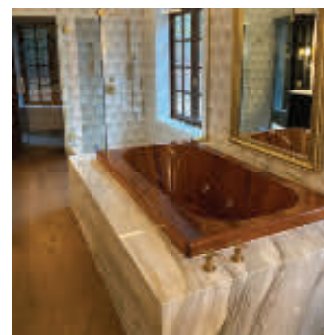
Some "shoppers" turned up with boxes of books for donations for the next sale. This takes place November 18 and 19.

**Table of Contents**

Letters, p. 8

Police Report, p. 10

Pet page, p. 23

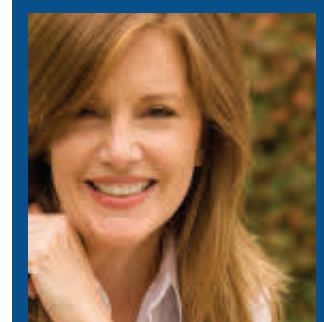
Social Notes:  
Tchaikovsky!, p. 20Social Notes:  
Au Contraire  
Film Festival, p. 29**MARBLE & LUXURY STONE PROTECTION AND POLISHING**

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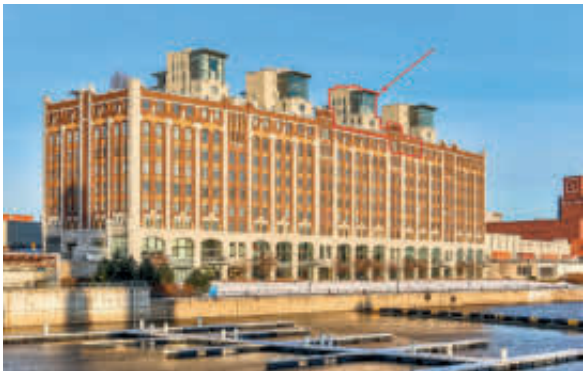
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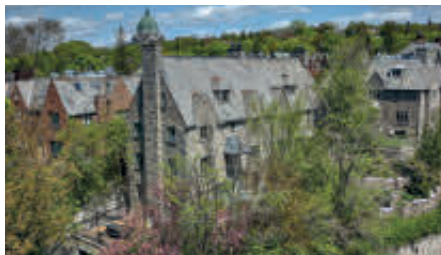
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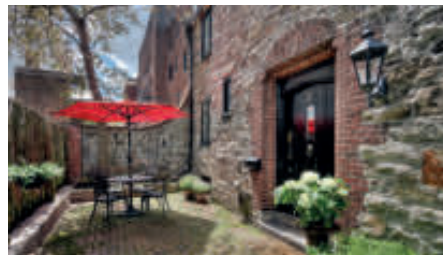
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Highlighting its traditional sidewalk sale  
**Vic village festival takes place over three days June 16 to 18**

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The Victoria Village Festival taking place this Friday, Saturday and Sunday (Fathers' Day) features its traditional sidewalk sale along with indoor promotions, a variety of music and a street magician. Several new attractions include a pet photo booth, mobile pet grooming van with free dog nail clipping and a children's "fun

lane" on the Saturday.

Prince Albert square is to be transformed into "the main stage" for several attractions on the Saturday that include morning yoga with the YMCA at 11 am and a hip-hop dance show presented by youth from the MAFA Dance Studio at 1:30 pm.

In the afternoon on Saturday, a children's "fun lane" will be created on Somerville at Victoria billed as including "face painting with Deeva" and tattoos by the city's Community Events personnel along with interactive activities and games organized by the YMCA.

Saturday will also feature an "art hive" from the Visual Arts Centre set up on Somerville. The centre will also hold two workshops for "paper insects and flowers" for children aged 5 to 10 years held inside.

"This will leave parents time to shop," said festival organizer Cynthia Lulham. Registration on the centre's website is required for these inside events.

"The big event in Vic village, however, is the sidewalk sale that takes place all three days," she added.



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**City one of 23 in Quebec joining legal fight against Bill 96**

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

"Yes, we are part of the 23-municipality lawsuit," Mayor Christina Smith stated shortly after a press conference in Côte St. Luc took place on the subject June 7. Earlier that morning, the city's website carried the headline reading: "Westmount, proud to be a bilingual city!"

"I was there," she said of the announcement that headlined the extent of the action across officially bilingual municipalities in Quebec. "I spoke about the impact on employees and how exactly will they be disciplined if they do not adhere to Bill 96. There were five of us who spoke and I will be putting out a statement on this."

This was the formal announcement of the legal action the city council had approved April 17. This was to hire constitutional lawyer Julius Grey, a local resident of the firm Grey Casgrain, to represent the city in the lawsuit contesting certain provisions of Bill 96, an Act Respecting French, the official and common language of Que-

bec (see story April 25, p 1, 3).

The scope of the action announced last week involves Baie d'Urfé, Beaconsfield, Blanc Sablon, Bonne Espérance, Chichester, Côte St. Luc, Dollard des Ormeaux, Dorval, Havelock, Hope Town, Kazabazua, Kirkland, L'Isle aux Allumettes, Montreal West, Mulgrave et Derry, New Carlisle, Pointe Claire, Senneville, Sheenboro, Shigawake, Stanbridge East, Wentworth and Westmount.

The coalition is challenging five areas: contracts and communication, the obligation to adopt a resolution to maintain bilingual status, alleged illegal searches and seizures, government grants, and the alleged obligation to discipline employees.

**Approved by council**

The city's April resolution authorized the assistant director of Legal Services to sign the letter of intent with the city of Côte St. Luc and the legal mandate. It also committed the city to share the legal fees and costs with Côte St. Luc and other co-plaintiffs. These

continued on p. 7



Hills North of Macdonald 2007 48 x 48 in.

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*City's Communications unit elevated to department status*

# Council appoints Sebastian Samuel as first director of Communications

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

At the city council meeting June 5 Sebastian Samuel, who has worked for the city for more than 14 years, was appointed the first director of communications. This comes with the elevation of the office to the level of a department in the city's structure. It had previously been listed as a "division" of the director general's office.

In congratulating Samuel, Mayor Christina Smith spoke of having worked with him through recent crises that included COVID closures and, more recently, the cyberattack.

When Samuel joined the city, he was the sole communications agent working with then-director general Duncan Campbell. The staff has since expanded to five including Samuel. During that time, he became head of the Communications division (see appointment photo, June 13, 2017,



Sebastian Samuel on June 10, not far from his office at city hall.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

p. 8).

"Today, I am thrilled to assume the position of the director," he said. "Our team has expanded throughout this journey, and we have encountered numerous challenges, projects and innovative opportunities that await our continued attention."

Asked for his professional background, he said it "encompasses various disciplines, including graphic design, web design, social media management, branding, writing and strategy. I have acquired valuable experience working in the print, fashion and advertising industries, and have had the privilege of successfully managing my own design agency and publishing company."

"I am honoured to embark on this new chapter and utilize my creative skills to serve the residents of Westmount and make a meaningful contribution to the city's continued progress."

## Quartier Greene brings music, art to the 'ave.'

The Quartier Greene Festival took place from June 9 to June 11 to promote the commercial activities on Greene Ave. The mix-

ed weather June 10 did not discourage people from examining the stores and dancing to the music of the many live

musicians, who were playing everything from funk to opera.

Several visual artists were displaying their work at multiple stands along the ave., Little Bear was trimming dog nails, and Studio D was painting little faces generating large smiles.

"It's working very well," said festival organizer and former city councillor Cynthia Lulham, who was taking a break to listen to Gerda Findeisen sing opera extracts outside Les 5 Saisons. She added that "All the performers are very good."

Findeisen is a coloratura soprano, which means she specializes in elaborate ornamentation and agile runs. She was demonstrating this to the full, to the delight of a

large crowd outside Les 5 Saisons.

Resident Kathi Sherwood was singing along to the golden oldies played by a very talented Mike Uzan with his 12-string guitar on the corner of St. Catherine St. while Donna and Irwin Kuzmarov held hands and did a little jiving on the street (see photo, p. 1).

Others were taking it easy, like Paul Vinet who is in a wheelchair and was very pleased to be able to access the covered picnic tables. "The colourful painted street is lovely and these tables are very good," said Vinet but added that "unfortunately, there are only two on the street." The picnic tables have a ramp and a cut-out designed for wheelchairs.



Quartier Greene event organizer and former city councillor Cynthia Lulham (left), keyboard accompanist Katanha Mikhaylova and coloratura soprano Gerda Findeisen.



Paul Vinet (left) and Jean-Louis Côté enjoy the shade of the covered picnic table on Greene. Vinet who is a Westmouter and who is confined to a wheelchair loves the furniture on Greene and the wheelchair access. But would like to see more than two accessible tables.

PHOTOS: RALPH THOMPSON.

### Bill 96, cont'd from p. 6

are to be on a *pro rata* basis, according to the relative size of their populations. This was mentioned at the council meeting of around \$20,000.

The action contends that the contested provisions of Bill 96 not only compromise municipalities' bilingual status, which is "intrinsically part of our cultural identity," but also "extend beyond language rights and undermine the constitutionally protected and inalienable rights that belong to all Quebec citizens."

The action is described as affecting "the rights and obligations of bilingual municipalities."

It was two years ago, on May 20, 2021, a week after the Quebec government tabled Bill 96, that the city's website carried an initial statement from Mayor Smith. In this, she predicted the bill's far-reaching proposals would "dominate our public discourse for the remainder of the year as it touches almost every aspect of our lives, from education to health and social services, our courts, our businesses and of course, our municipalities."

EDITORIAL

Rest in peace, Egbert Gaye

I did not know him, but I would like to express my condolences on the passing of my newspaper industry colleague Egbert Gaye, the publisher and founder of *Montreal Community Contact*, a free newspaper focused on Montreal's black community that he founded in 1992.

I also salute his achievement. Unlike newspapers with a territorial focus (like us), I am sure that he faced many significant geographic challenges with news coverage and newspaper distribution given that his target audience was and is spread out across our metropolis.

Nevertheless, he persevered and thrived, as attested to by the many tributes to him and to his newspaper that I have seen online and on television. The geographic diversity of his audience likely made his paper all the more precious to its readers and advertisers as a focal point and meeting place.

My condolences to his family and friends, and best wishes to his team members as they work to continue his endeavour and legacy.

David Price is the editor of the Independent.

INDEPENDENT IS A GIFT

After hearing that journalists working for Gannett, the largest newspaper chain in the US, were on strike against cuts and lay-offs, I'm reminded once again that our local newspaper, the *Westmount Independent*, is a gift we all share and should be grateful for, because it helps to bring cohesiveness to our community, and contributes to our culture, safety and well-being.

RICHARD ORLANDO, SHERBROOKE ST.

*Editor's reply:* Thank you for your kind words! – DP.

ONE-SIDED ISRAELI COVERAGE DOES NOT INFORM

I was quite surprised that in your report on a rally ("Protestors target Israeli PM Netanyahu's proposed judicial reforms," May 30, p. 18), your reporter would then wade into what is a very complicated issue regarding the appointment of judges to the Israeli supreme court. Mention is made only of opposition demonstrations, while there were many demonstrations in Israel in favour of changes. Many prominent civil rights experts are in favour of some changes; lawyers, both in Israel and other countries, are suggesting compromise. The eminent civil rights lawyer Allan Der-showrz, among others, has agreed that changes are necessary.

The argument could well be made that

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

these peaceful demonstrations, and the ongoing negotiations, are a sign of the strength of Israel's democracy.

This one-sided reporting does nothing to inform people of the true issue. There are many Westmount residents who could submit an article showing both sides of the issue. I strongly suggest you reach out to them, or hopefully they will reach out to you. It would have been much better to just report on what was a very small rally, rather than take sides. Hopefully, we can expect more balanced treatment of complex international issues by people who are experts in the field.

BERNARD SHUSTER, WOOD AVE.

*Editor's reply:* Yes, our report was one sided, because we were covering one side's demonstration – not Israeli politics generally, which (as you suggest) is way beyond our mandate. If the protest had not happened here, we would not have covered it. But we can't cover a demonstration without explaining what the demonstrators are saying. Such an approach would be incoherent: "Some people with some Israeli flags were in the street last week"? If the pro-Netanyahu side ever stages an event in Westmount, they should let us know in advance. We will cover it in the same way. – DP.

A DISGRACE AT THE CENOTAPH

This federal election candidate's sign is



EDITOR'S NOTE

Thank you, Lina

I would like to thank the mayor's executive assistant, Lina Baldun, for her help last week finding some information at city hall. For those on the outside, navigating governmental labyrinths is not always a self-evident activity, but Lina makes it seem easy. Thank you. – DP.

on Westmount property in front of the cenotaph. As the granddaughter of two wonderful men who fought in the war(s) – Dr. Colin Sutherland in World War I and Air Vice Marshall Frank McGill in both world wars – I am shocked and disgusted.

This is no way to honour our veterans.

A.E. SUTHERLAND, METCALFE AVE.

GREENE CHANGES POPULAR WITH MERCHANTS, SHOPPERS

In response to the "Greene Ave. breakdown" letter by Steve Myro (June 6, p. 8)

This "Debbie Downer" writes in to single-handedly rant about the new structures and lane configuration on Greene for the summer season. While entitled to his opinion, the letter is wrought with conjecture taking the reader down a rabbit hole that does not exist.

While it is true some merchants were not happy with the lane closures in the past, the new updated configuration addresses those concerns and now allows for better flow in areas that were proving to be congested (namely Greene south of de Maisonneuve).

While the author believes "most" merchants do not like the street design in the summer, the opposite seems to prevail with the feedback I have received to date. In addition to that, we have restructured our merchants' association and paid memberships are at their highest in more than three decades by a large margin. We send out regular newsletters via email to all the participating and non-participating merchants and they are encouraged to reach out to me or our association director with concerns and feedback. Our merchant meet-and-greet earlier this spring was extremely well attended.

At the end of the day, we are all doing our best to bring life back to the street. The new parklets and seating areas on Greene are there to enhance the pedestrian and shopping experience. Contrary to what the author believes, I have witnessed steady use of the structures since their installation last month. The myopic view of the author is sad and unfortunate.

While the author believes city council is out of touch with reality, I must stand up and say that in all my years on Greene (40+), I am overjoyed at the openness and collaboration of the city in helping our two merchant areas flourish. Our two merchant associations work closely with the city and they are keenly aware of our desire to create a safe and inviting environment for all to enjoy. It's a win-win for the businesses, shoppers, residents and office workers who come into our sector every day. One only has to take a stroll in any

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

given commercial area in greater Montreal to realize the Greene and Victoria sectors are to be admired.

ROB CALLARD – PRESIDENT, QUARTIER GREENE MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION

### PLAYGROUNDS NEED ATTENTION

As an almost daily user of the parks and outdoor amenities around Westmount, I have some suggestions for the city when considering their safety and usability:

1. The playground sandboxes are all very low in sand and would benefit from new sand soon, as summer is already under way;
2. The woodchips under the slides and swings have worn away and it is hard for young children to reach the ground with their feet (even I cannot reach in some cases!), making it an access and safety issue, so these should be replenished;
3. The Murray Hill Park playground (and to a lesser extent the Westmount Park playground) is now in full sun most of the day given the lack of trees. We know the risks of sun exposure well, especially for our young children. My suggestions are to plant trees now (while trees were cut last year, none were planted for the play area), but also consider non-tree forms of shade (i.e.: canopies, etc.). I avoid this playground due to the lack of shade, but would prefer to be able to use these areas safely;
4. The delayed opening of the outdoor pool is very disappointing. I urge the city to consider keeping it open an extra two weeks into September, similar to other municipal pools, as our season is short and pools have significant health benefits. Not to mention a way to keep cool during heat waves!

It would be great to have a suggestions outlet for the parks and outdoor amenities, so that we can maintain a continuous improvement system. Valuable input from users ensures safety and usability are sustained year-round. These outdoor spaces are an essential part of our urban fabric and provide numerous mental, social, physical, and cognitive health benefits.

DIANA ANDERSON, VICTORIA AVE.

### NO MORE FEDERAL SHEEP, PLEASE

The editorial page of the May 24 issue of *The Suburban* weekly newspaper depicts Anthony Housefather standing among a group of sheep during the house of commons' vote on Bill C-13. Mr. Housefather courageously voted against the Liberal Party line, possibly risking expulsion from caucus.

On June 19 [the by-election date], West-

mount and NDG anglophones and allophones should think carefully about sending another sheep to Ottawa.

DAVID GRAY, KENSINGTON AVE.

### NON-FRANCOPHONES SHOULD WAKE UP

Despite the ex-Liberal awakening outlined in Craig Cormack's June 6 letter (p. 9) and next Monday's golden opportunity for NDG-Westmount voters to just say no to further language-rights abuses, it seems they're only too ready to perpetuate the same benighted reflex at the polls that keeps them seated at the back of the proverbial bus.

If a poll reported by one of our fake-news outlets is correct, the winner will be the governing Liberal-NDP Party (*sic*) that locked Canadians into an effective coalition government until 2025, and which is now scheming to entrench parts of Law 101 within Canada's Official Languages Act via Bill C-13 – and which has further compromised individual free speech by stubbornly refusing to protect it in the all-important body of Act C-11, Canada's online censorship bill.

Yet despite having the luxury of a by-election whose message will be heard across the country without changing their morally-undemocratic governing coalition, many local Liberals will happily vote for the Gainey-Filion Party (*sic*) – and this despite the recent revelation from Liberal senator and former Montreal *Gazette* editor-in-chief Joan Fraser that Justin Trudeau is fiercely adamant about passing the anti-bilingual C-13 as is.

Former NDG Liberal MNA Reed Scowen wrote that French Quebecers are the shrewdest voters in Canada. I note that Quebec's non-francophones continue to be the thickest. You know, the ones who had no problem with entrenching constitutional recognition of Quebec's promoting and protecting its "distinct society," but who are now comically apoplectic over François Legault doing exactly that via Bills 96 and 21.

(Similarly, in an adjacent riding, fans of the Trudeau-Singhers heap praise upon Liberal MP Anthony Housefather for opposing C-13 – oblivious to the culpability of its chief proponent, Justin Trudeau. Go figure.)

For local Liberals, it seems having an MP with a famous dad clearly tops actually defending your own community's interests. So they'll opt for yet another Trudeau fangirl who'll silently occupy the backbenches, over a Conservative whose election alone would show Ottawa that non-francophone Quebecers refuse to be taken for granted any longer, and which would

## New rule needed – for the ducklings!



© Lise Gallant

bestow upon Mathew Kaminski and this riding a much greater intra-party clout.

Yet the call of the Gainey-Filion Party is a hard habit to break, especially as its predictable drumbeat is promoted daily via the Marxism-spake-trendy drivel of local-radio celebrities – please stop calling them “journalists” – shamelessly shilling for their like-minded political celebrities.

Quebec comedian Yvon Deschamps quipped that “what Quebec wants” is an independent Quebec within a united Canada. What too many non-francophones here want is a federal party that's in bed with their establishment fake-news media, with both whispering sweet assurances that all will be well if you'd just believe their sweet lies.

The Gainey-Filion Party acolytes continue to sleep very well. Still, as Craig Cormack's letter shows, some are indeed waking up.

PETER SAUVÉ, MONTREAL (NDG)

### LIBERALS HAPPILY IN THE MIDDLE

I did not know the *Independent* was into political discussions but after reading the slamming of the federal Liberal Party by Craig Cormack (June 6, p. 9), I could not resist.

After having been to the UK and Italy in the last month and being familiar with the killings in the United States and its

divided politics, in my opinion Canada is one of the best places to live in the world. Not everything is perfect, but the Liberals are doing everything they are able to make Canada a better place.

The politics of the leader of the Conservatives scare me. He seems to be copying the far right of the Republicans in the United States, which are far from “United.”

As for the left, I fear they would dismantle our excellent business community. The Liberals are happily in the middle

As for his discussion with Anna Gainey when he called her “very cavalier” when she told him “everyone has their own opinion” – this was the perfect thing to say, and I might add, very Canadian.

GRAHAM WRIGHT,  
DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

### Clarification

The exact, full name of the Montreal-based theatre group that we wrote about last week (p. 22) is Persephone Productions Montreal. – DP.

### We welcome your letters

We welcome your letters but reserve the right to choose and edit them. Please limit to 300 words and submit before Friday 10 am to be considered for publication the following week. Email us at: [editor@westmountindependent.com](mailto:editor@westmountindependent.com)

Police Report

# Four suspects arrested after string of upper Westmount burglaries

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Following a string of household break-ins and burglaries primarily in upper Westmount over the past few months, police at Station 12 on Stanton St. had good news last week – the arrest of several suspects.

“Concerning some of the break-ins in Westmount, four South Americans were arrested on the second of June,” Cst. Mike Yigit, the station’s community relations officer, told the *Independent*.

He said they are believed to be part of a criminal network that targets homes in high-end neighbourhoods. “They were followed by police officers and they were caught in the act,” said Yigit.

He said the four were arraigned last week in court. The charges include breaking and entering and possession of stolen material. As two of the suspects were found to be in possession of forged Canadian citizenship documents, “most likely they will be deported back to their own countries,” he said.

Although he couldn’t say how many of the burglaries and break-ins the suspects are believed to have been responsible for, the investigators estimate the value of the

property stolen (consisting largely of jewelry but also cash) at more than \$100,000, according to Yigit.

The investigation revealed that the suspects had been regularly using a ladder to get into homes through windows on upper storeys. They would also get in through ground-level patio doors. At the time of the arrests, they were found to be in possession of two vehicles.

More vehicles stolen

A recent uptick in vehicle theft in Westmount continued last week with at least two reports of stolen cars and one attempt.

All the incidents involved SUVs and all were in the middle of the night.

On June 5, an SUV was reported stolen on Mount Stephen Ave.

On the same day, according to Station 12 incident reports, a GMC Yukon was also

stolen from a parking spot near its Westmount owner’s home.

Finally on June 6, the owner of a recent model Toyota RAV4 reported the near-theft of his vehicle, which was parked on Lansdowne Ave. near Sherbrooke St.

“A witness called 9-1-1 saying that he saw two men trying to force the door open,” said Yigit, reading from the incident report. “Then after that they ran away, but it doesn’t say why.”

## Suspected arson on Victoria



According to local media, a “suspected arson” took place the early morning of June 7 at 342B Victoria Ave., as seen later that day, left, and June 8.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.

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City's third blue-collar strike: A low-pressure affair

CUPE: ‘Next time, we could go on an indefinite general strike’

By JENNIFER BALL

The third blue-collar worker strike by the city's employees was more inconspicuous than the second, which ran from March 14 to 16 (see March 21, p. 1). The first was February 7-8 (see February 14, p. 9).

Gone were the brandishing of signs, the orange reflective vests and pants, balaclavas and work boots. The protestors in Westmount Park and near city hall played backgammon, threw a football around and drank a lot of coffee.

Make no mistake, though, they still have a beef with city hall, and were miffed when a scheduled, all-day negotiation meeting was contracted to two hours. It was then restored to a full-day meeting on June 9.

Negotiations were to continue on Monday, June 12. The outcome of the exchange, if any, would come after the *Independent's* press deadline.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), which represents the workers, released a statement on June 7: “We’re on the penultimate day of a seven-day strike... Next time, we could go on an indefinite general strike if the city doesn’t show more respect for its blue-collar workers,” says Jean-Pierre Lauzon, president of SCFP 301, the Westmount local. “The main issue at the bargaining table is compensation. The city of Westmount’s wage offers are simply unacceptable.”

On June 7, Jason Wyncarczuk, who is the blue-collar delegate for Westmount, and Alexis Lamy-Labrecque, who is a lawyer and an advisor for CUPE, wound their way over to talk to the *Independent* after parading – with police escort – from Sherbrooke St. down Greene Ave. to St. Catherine St. and Metcalfe Ave. and then back up to city hall.

“I do not know how much more passive you can get than kicking around a soccer ball and playing frisbee,” Wyncarczuk queried. “We want to show that nobody wants problems. We just want to go back to work and have this end.”

The points of contention are salary increases and schedule of work.

Were they offered a four-day work week by the mayor and council, the *Independent* asked Lamy-Labrecque. (Mayor Christina Smith and the union have quarrelled over what has been offered schedule-wise. See March 21, p. 8 and March 28, p. 6)

“It was never really clear,” he responded. “They talk about a pilot project, but it is not set on the table actually and what we asked for is a four-day work week – like every other town – so it is not a pilot pro-



Striking blue-collar workers walking east Sherbrooke St. near Stanton St. on June 8.



Protestors drinking coffee and playing backgammon in Westmount Park on June 6.

ject...It is a big difference between a pilot-project – that they cancel at any time – and a real four-day work week.”

The city has stated its intent not to negotiate “in public or through the media” (see p. 1).

been without a contract since the end of December 2019.

While the situation is not ideal, she added, “we respect workers’ right to strike,” but “the council and I are also accountable

to the city’s taxpayers” with decisions that consider “current and future financial capacities.”

After a few minutes, the workers rose and filed out.

Blue-collar strike, cont'd from p. 1

# An Indie first! Greene bridge sign caught working – Crash averted



On Greene below Dorchester on May 28 at around 11 am came the *Independent's* very first documented case of the warning boom for the rail bridge working – although it almost didn't. There was a loud metallic crash as a truck hit the warning sign on its way up the hill. A passenger got out, walked under the bridge and waved the truck forward. Three pedestrians called out warnings about the bridge ahead. Still the driver continued. The passenger eventually waved his hands horizontally and the driver finally reversed down the hill. This photograph was taken as the truck hit the sign for the second time as the driver reversed down the hill.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

## Medical offices, cont'd from p. 1

area.

As a result, Wertheimer asked that a moratorium be placed on the plan until a study can take place. He explained that an anticipated increase in traffic and parking would directly affect the residents.

"I have not heard any negative feedback from any merchants," Mayor Smith replied. Four members of the council live in the "village," she added. These include the mayor herself, and councillors Mary Gallery, Conrad Peart and Anitra Bostock.

She also told the *Independent* that "a survey had been held in 2019 and found 83 percent of respondents were in favour of allowing more medical offices."

See box at right for more information on how the city's process works.

As previously stated, the *Independent's* editor lives in a contiguous urban planning zone, opposes the re-zoning and intends to sign any petition or register offered to him.

## We welcome your letters

We welcome your letters but reserve the right to choose and edit them. Please limit to 300 words and submit before Friday 10 am to be considered for publication the following week. Eemail us at: [editor@westmountindependent.com](mailto:editor@westmountindependent.com)

## Three steps to challenge zoning changes

In general, there are three steps that residents must successfully go through to defeat a zoning change in their neighbourhood.

**1** Petition for a registry via signatures, which the city then validates as those of legitimate voters. The Vic village medical offices project is at this stage. Residents of the affected zone and contiguous ones are eligible to sign at this time, but only zones that meet a certain minimum number of signers advance to the registry stage.

**2** Garner enough registrants in a registry, which is held at city hall on one scheduled day. The process for establishing the minimum number of registrants is complex.

**3** Garner a majority of votes in a referendum.

The city can pull the proposed zoning change at any time, and historically has done so rather than face a costly referendum. – WI



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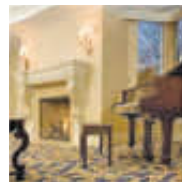
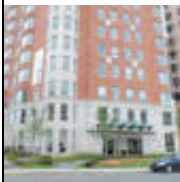
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Authorized by the official agent for Anna Gainey.

The city of Westmount's Family Day took place May 27 in Westmount Park. Clockwise from top left: Two-and-a-half-year-old Hope Sciascia found the Public Works front-loader a lot of fun to climb; five-year-old Aruceli Fleming took a ride on the wild side of a bucking bronco; and the alpaca in the petting zoo got lots of attention from Sofia (red cap) and her dad Marwan (left).

PHOTOS: RALPH THOMPSON.





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**Bridget Riley** (1931- )

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25 1/4 x 20 7/8 in (64.1 x 53 cm)  
Painted in 1980

This painting is included in the Bridget Riley Catalogue Raisonné, *Bridget Riley: The Complete Paintings*, compiled by Robert Kudielka with Alexandra Tommasini and Natalia Naish, Vol. 2, p.532-533, no. BR.208.

**Provenance**

Rowan Gallery, London, U.K.  
Karsten Schubert Ltd., London, U.K.  
Acquired from the above by private collection, Toronto,  
October 20, 1992  
By descent, private collection, Toronto

**Literature**

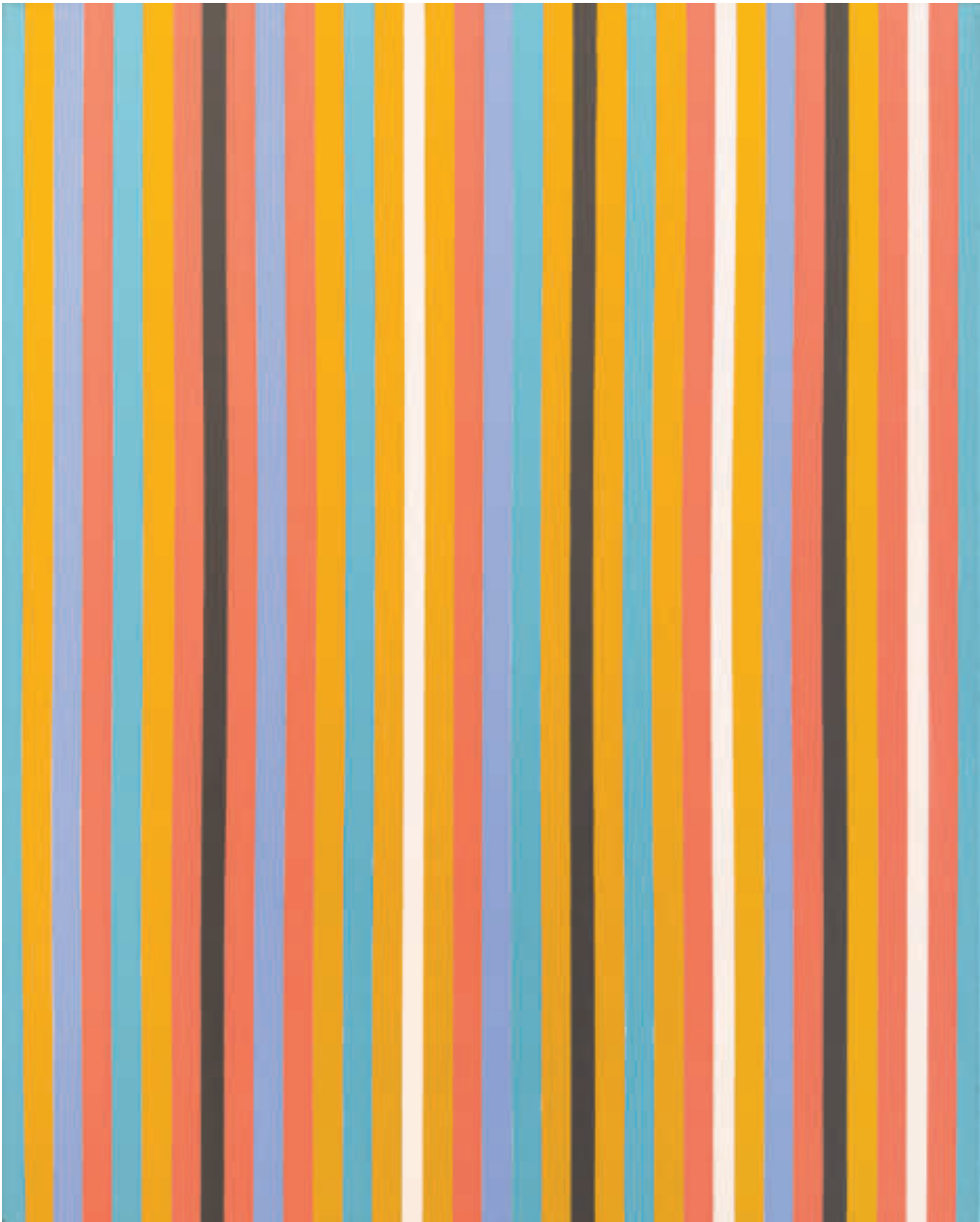
Bridget Riley: The Complete Paintings, Volume 2: 1974-1997, edited by Robert Kudielka with Alexandra Tommasini and Natalia Naish (London: The Bridget Riley Art Foundation and Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2018), 532-533 [reproduced].

Bridget Riley was profoundly influenced by a visit to Egypt during the winter of 1979-80. She recalled, ‘These basic colours were used for everything. [...] For painting the inside and outside of their buildings, for their boats and vehicles, for their furniture and pottery, for their clothes and beads. In each and every usage these colours appeared different but at the same time they united the appearance of the entire culture. Perhaps even more important, the precise shades of these colours had evolved under a brilliant North African light and consequently they seemed to embody this light and even to reflect it back from the walls of the underground chambers which no daylight ever reached’

B. Riley, ‘A Visit to Egypt and the Decoration for the Royal Liverpool Hospital’, 1984, in R. Kudielka (ed.), *The Eye’s Mind: Bridget Riley. Collected Writings 1965-1999*, London 1999, p. 110

Please inquire for pricing and availability.

*“Bridget Riley (\*1931 in London) is one of the most significant artists  
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# David Pickrell marks 50 years at Westmount Florist



David Pickrell in Westmount Florist on Victoria Ave. at Somerville Ave on May 24.

By JENNIFER BALL

“Life is what happens to you while you are busy making other plans,” is an excerpt from John Lennon’s lyrics on his track “Beautiful boy.”

It reminds one of David Pickrell’s five decades of work after only agreeing to serve for one Christmas season in his family’s florist business.

He said he was a long-haired hippie-type who was studying pre-law at Vanier College when he was called in to help in 1973. He learnt the business by going to wholesalers with his dad, George Pickrell.

“That’s what I did for the company. I’m basically a hands-on guy.”

He said he received no preferential treatment from “Pop Pickrell.”

“All my old man was paying us was chicken feed working for him, but it really was good times.”

His siblings Christine, Peter and Stephen were also recruited and worked to play to their strengths.

David handles logistics, Christine designs, Stephen “counts beans” and Peter worked in the business but retired five years ago to sell ice cream.

“The best part of it was coming in every day where I was working with my family and I could come to work with my dog. I’ve been through like five dogs in my career.”

The business can be measured in other ways, too: “We built up the business from four employees to 20, and two locations.”

### Business has changed

Pickrell says the business has changed unimaginably over five decades. When he started, he was touring the wholesalers and picking flowers by hand, but now “We’re getting direct flights from all over the world, so we can source flowers from all over. But at what price? That’s the thing. I can’t believe the cost of flowers.”

Things are working out, despite the costs, “Nowadays, we’re just lucky that we’re established and we’re lucky that a lot of our customers are at that age where they have disposable income and flowers are a part of their lives.”

Pickrell has not provided a date for his retirement party, but it was not far from his mind when recalling the extended scope of his logistical guile during COVID. “It’s tougher and tougher now! The guy who takes over my job is going to have to be a lot more organized than me! Basically, I am a dinosaur. I grew up in the 1970s. I have a cell phone, but I mean I’m not making files, and I’m not keeping this and keeping that.”

He is also quick to praise his partners/family members: “You know, I couldn’t ever do this by myself. Thank God that I had partners like my sister, my brothers, and everybody came in and put in an honest day’s work.”

It is a third-generation business, with Stephen’s son Brent taking over management duties.

He has been working at Westmount Florist for eight years.

### Never growing up

The funny thing about a family business, Pickrell says, is that you never really grow up. “You know I’m 68 years old, but I have a mind of a...25-year-old or an 18-year-old.”

For a man who, self-admittedly, may not have the best filing system, he never forgets where people are who need a pick-me-up.

He often sends flowers, free of charge, to palliative care facilities, Dans la Rue, native shelters and seniors who live alone, including Leonard Cohen’s elderly aunt Ruth.

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# Tchaikovsky! Marchand creates script from letters, Brott adds music



Remember letter writing? (Well, that dates you. And me!)

Once upon a time, this was a way of communicating. In the 19th century, there was at least one set of extremely famous letters: those of Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Madame von Meck.

The correspondence between the composer and the rich widow of the affluent railway tycoon Karl Otto Georg von Meck reveals their intimate relationship. However, it was Platonic: they never even met.

More than an avid admirer, she became his patron, offering him a salary large enough that he could leave his job at the esteemed Moscow Conservatory and simply write music.

Their poignant correspondence lasted for 12 years. In gratitude, Tchaikovsky dedicated his *Symphony No 4* – first performed in Moscow in 1878 – to Madame von Meck.

Their letters prove how she was involved in planning the composition and its pro-



gram. **Denis Brott**, founder and artistic director of the Montreal Chamber Music Festival, is presenting a unique program revealing this amazing alliance. Westmounter **Michele Marchand**, a former CBC producer, read through 1,500 letters and created a script.

The result is a collection of exchanges that highlight Tchaikovsky’s thoughts, revealing the emotional message behind the music. The texts will be read and portrayed on stage by Quebec actress **Anne-Julie Proulx** and actor/pianist **Jean Marchand**.

The program presents two masterworks. Tchaikovsky’s *Trio Op. 50* will be performed by the talented protégé of Itzhak Perlman, violinist Giora Schmidt; Van Cliburn 1st Prize winner pianist Yekwon Sunwoo, and internationally renowned cellist Brott.

The grand finale of the 28th Montreal Chamber Music Festival will be a unique concert: Tchaikovsky’s *Souvenir de Florence* (I’m going for sure!) in a transcription for string ensemble created by Brott. It will showcase 17 exceptional virtuoso musicians. *Obsession: Tchaikovsky & His Muse* premieres June 18. Festivalmontreal.org.

◀ Denis Brott.

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- Grade Two**  
1. Crescent Sun                       Selwyn House  
2. Olivia-Françoise Forest           The Study  
3. Aya Ahdab                          The Study  
HM Jonah Levi                        Akiva School

- Grade Three**  
1. Samuel Cohen                      Akiva School  
2. Harper Hubley                      ECS  
3. Olivia Sibony                       Akiva School  
HM Vivien Baer                       Akiva School  
HM Matthew Frenkiel               Akiva School

- Grade Four**  
1. Lise Cohen                          Michèle Provost  
2. Charlotte Egger                    The Study  
3. Lyla Gewurz                        JPPS  
HM Victoria De Lauri                The Study  
HM Nysa Mehta                        The Study

- Grade Five**  
1. Xiaolin Annabeth Zhou           The Study  
2. Elies Boukadoum                  Selwyn House  
3. Mila Haupt                          Akiva School  
HM Layla Goodman                  Akiva School  
HM Jackson Qiu                      Selwyn House

- Grade Six**  
1. Sofia Azana Manrique              ECS  
2. Éliane Francoeur Villa Sainte-Marcelline  
3. Emily Pearce                        The Study  
HM James Ellis                        Selwyn House



Grade 11 McEntyre writing competition winner Coco Barnes of Westmount High, centre, flanked by, from left, chief judge Rosalind Davis, her mother Annique Dufour, Mayor Christina Smith and her grandmother Lynn Dufour.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT PUBLIC LIBRARY.

- Grade Seven**  
1. Abby Iny                              Royal West Academy  
2. Rhianna Islam                       Westmount High  
3. Disha De                              The Study  
HM Luc Bisailon                       Westmount High


- Grade Eight**  
1. Iris Aitken                           Westmount High  
2. April Sang Jia                        The Study  
3. Ashley Guan                        The Study  
HM Melanie Jonasz                   Westmount High

- Grade Nine**  
1. Lara Judah                            Westmount High  
2. Anahita Bagheri                    St. George’s  
3. Aleix De Benito Prades           Westmount High  
HM Jayden Dass                       Westmount High


- Grade Ten**  
1. Penny Benoit                        Westmount High  
1. Luca Shapiro                        St. George’s  
2. Alia Zaalouk                        Westmount High

- Grade Eleven**  
1. Coco Barnes                        Westmount High  
2. Nina Mitnick                        Westmount High  
3. Kiara Miliga                        Westmount High  
3. Eliot Fleming                       Westmount High  
HM Spencer Stutman                St. George’s

HM = honourable mention



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**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

**Application to open a registry in view of approval by way of referendum – Second draft of By-law 1601**

- Following the public consultation meeting on the first draft of By-law 1601, held on May 9, 2023, the Municipal Council adopted the second draft of by-law 1601 entitled “*BY-LAW 1601 TO FURTHER AMEND ZONING BY-LAW 1303 – MEDICAL CLINICS AND DOCTORS’ OFFICES*” by resolution, at its regular sitting held on June 5, 2023.
- This second draft by-law contains provisions that may be requested by interested persons in order that a by-law containing them be submitted for their approval in accordance with the *Act respecting elections and referendums in municipalities* (CQLR, chapter E-2.2).
- Interested persons may submit to the City Clerk’s Office, no later than **Wednesday, June 21, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.**, an application to open a registry in view of submitting the provisions of the second draft of by-law 1601 to the approval of certain qualified voters.
- The legal notice relating to the foregoing is available at: <https://westmount.org/en/resident-zone/legal-services-city-clerks-office/public-notice/>

**[www.westmount.org](http://www.westmount.org)**



A group shot of more McEntyre writing competition winners.



## Westmount A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

All their lives, Yoshi and Satchi have been together: siblings adopted together, now in foster care together. For the future, they are looking forward to a family together since their previous owner was ill and could no longer care for them.

These adorable Pekinese, brown Yoshi on the left and cream Satchi on the right, are very healthy for their nine years of age, up to date with their inoculations, neutered and microchipped. They just had full dental review as well, so they are ready for adoption.

## Yoshi and Satchi

Yoshi and Satchi are quite social, as their previous owner was homebound and they had company. They enjoy a romp in the backyard and are always ready for their few short walks during the day. An adult home would be perfect as this is all they know, and a house environment as they enjoy watching for neighbours and squirrels outside their viewing window and do some regal lion dog barking to announce. If you would like more information on them, please enquire at the rescue's email [info@gerdysrescue.org](mailto:info@gerdysrescue.org) and refer to their website at [www.gerdysrescue.org](http://www.gerdysrescue.org) for more stunning photographs!

Your neighbour,  
Lysanne



## 9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Boris is a delightful fellow: sweet, affectionate and calm. He is in foster care for the Gerdy's Rescues & Adoptions volunteer group, doing very well while awaiting a forever family.

Boris is quite a handsome long-hair in shades of marmalade and white, with beautiful green eyes.

He is a middle-aged seven-year-old, active and healthy, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped. His dental review was completed as well, so he is in fine form.

## Gentle Boris

Boris was found to be de-clawed before he was taken into foster care, so he is an indoor-only cat.

If you would like more information on him, please email the Gerdy's Rescues & Adoptions volunteers at their email [info@gerdysrescue.org](mailto:info@gerdysrescue.org) and refer to their website at [www.gerdysrescue.org](http://www.gerdysrescue.org), where there are more shots of Boris posing on his cat tree.

Your neighbour,  
Lysanne

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Early 20th century time machine

# More lore concerning downtown’s Edgehill, eastern Westmount

BY DAVID NERCESSIAN,  
GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

The Independent keeps finding out more about the street called Edgehill that used to exist south of Fort and René Lévesque/Dorchester in downtown Montreal, a few blocks east of Westmount. Its only known connection to Westmount’s Edgehill is its name. It was demolished in 1971 to make way for an entrance to the Ville Marie/20/720/136 highway. Many thanks to David Nercessian for this latest installment.

The 1896 Notman photo looking northwest, reproduced below, shows how undeveloped the western downtown area of Montreal still was: it clearly shows the house at the corner of Wood and Sherbrooke (1).

Not even the Mother House (now Dawson College) had been built by then. Also prominent is the Douglas Methodist church (2), which stood at the corner of Chomedey and St. Catherine, eventually replaced by the Seville Theatre and now replaced in turn by condos.

Incidentally, the north wall of the theatre consisted of the original stone and brick of the church, which became the “Douglas” part of Dominion-Douglas, which was created by merger and which eventually itself merged with St. Andrew’s to become Mountinside Church, which just recently ceased operating in West-

LOVELL

Edgehill avenue, off 912  
Dorchester West, St. Andrew  
ward.

1 Ogilvie Mrs S wid hon A W  
2 Molson H M  
4 Guerin J J (hon) M.D.C.M.  
6 Coughlin Cornelius  
8 Foster Geo G. K.C.

mount at Roslyn Ave. and The Boulevard. Its building is currently unused and owned by a developer.

Behind the house at (1) are the backs of the almost-new row houses of the east side of Elm Ave. above Sherbrooke (3). Houses on Wood had yet to be built at that level.

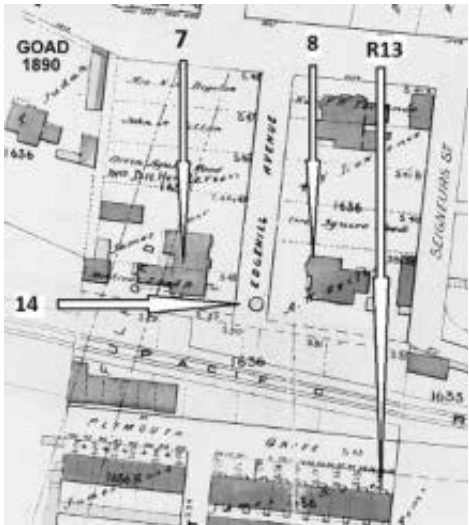
At (4) can be seen a facade of the Den-high apartments at the corner of Elm and Western, now de Maisonneuve.

Priests’ Farm

The term “Priests’ Farm” applied literally to the Sulpician properties, and the trees of part of the orchards can just be made out at (5), including, slightly to the west, what became the current Queen Elizabeth Gardens on Sherbrooke St.

Atwater Ave. didn’t extend above Sherbrooke until the 1920s and more rows of orchard trees can be seen as the terrain rises (6).

The 1911 Lovell’s directory, reproduced above, shows H. M. Molson lived at 2 Edgehill (7), and the widow of the Honourable



An extract from the Goad atlas of 1890.

A. W. Ogilvie lived at 1 Edgehill (8). These houses stood at the south end of Edgehill looking down the escarpment to Little Burgundy.

The turreted house

The house on p. 9 of the May 16 Indie stood at the foot of Fort St. with its front door on Dorchester (now René Lévesque) at the corner of Edgehill. It’s the same house as identified on p. SL-22 of that issue of Indie as the turreted house on the right (when looking west).

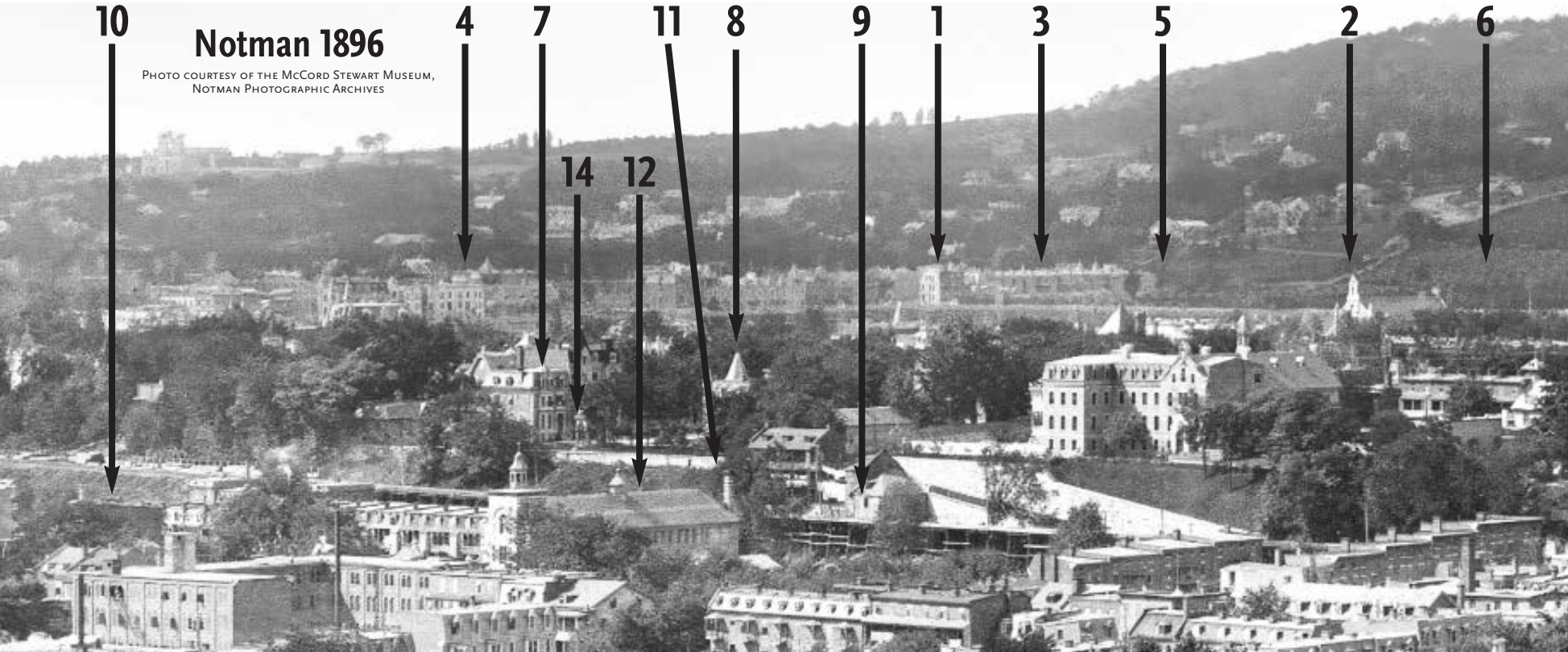
The Goad map of 1912, reproduced above, shows it was detached, and in those



days, had civic number 916 Dorchester. Brian Merrett’s photos on p. 9 and SL-22 show it survived intact to 1971.

To the left of it (when looking west) were the semi-detached Nos. 6 and 8. All other structures on Edgehill had been demolished by 1971, including the Molson house at 2 Edgehill, its attached neighbour 4 Edgehill, and of course the Ogilvie house at No. 1 on the other (east) side of the street.

An aerial photo of circa 1947 showing Edgehill, reproduced above, confirms what has already been said, i.e., that the Molson and Ogilvie houses had already disap-



peared by then.

One thing I only just noticed from the Notman photo is that sections of the CPR right-of-way to Windsor Station in 1896 were still laid on trestles (9).

(Only a few years earlier had the trestle bridge at the Glen/Glen Rd. in Westmount been replaced by the stone arch and solid embankments where Westmount Station and the Glen Yards were to be built.)

The current stone bridge dates to 1892, according to the *Independent's* past coverage (see March 21, p. SL-28, December 14, 2016, p. 17), although some sources imply a year earlier or later.

New embankment is visible at (10).

### Louise McNulty photo

A few years ago, I came across a picture belonging to Vicky Robinson showing her great-aunt, Louise McNulty, believed to be from 1912. Vicky wasn't able to identify the location, but eventually I realized it was taken at the foot of Edgehill. The main clue is the chimney (11) of St. Anthony's Church (12).

Also, the telegraph wires below the decorative fence suggested proximity to the railway. If Mr. Harry Molson had come out on his front step at the right moment, he would have seen Miss McNulty just off to the right, facing his house.

Of course, if this picture dated to the summer of 1912, he would already have perished in the *Titanic* disaster.

Behind Miss McNulty, therefore, are the venerable houses of Plymouth Grove (R13), long demolished when the 1947 aerial photo was taken.

Edgar Andrew Collard wrote that this section of Montreal by St. Antoine St. was once a very fashionable neighbourhood. The coming of the CPR in the 1880s surely started a major out-migration of those who could afford to move to a less industrialized district.

One last observation is that an elaborate wooden gazebo or belvedere once stood at the foot of Edgehill. It had gone by the time the 1912 Goad map appeared, but is shown in the 1880 and 1890 versions (14). It can

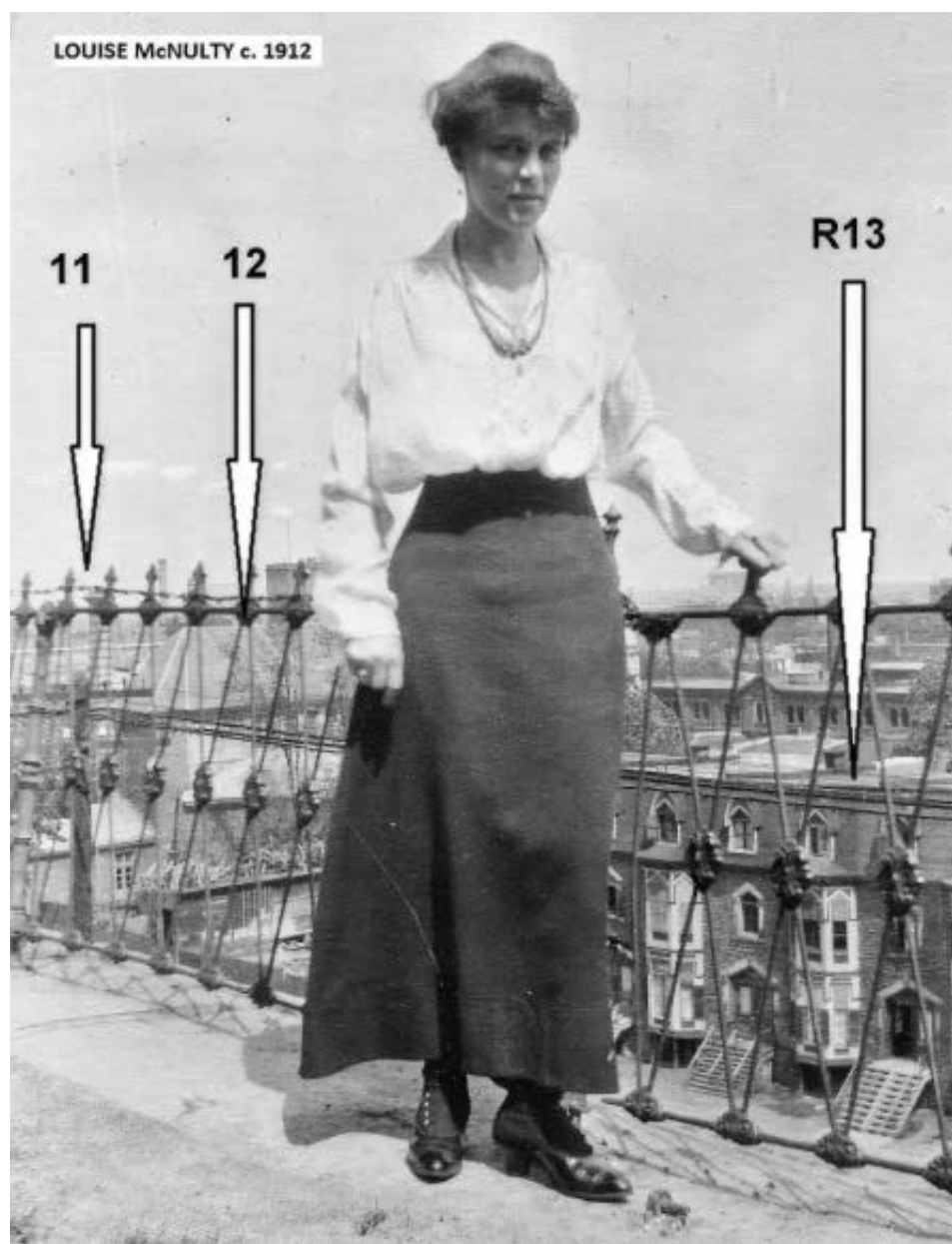
## Indie coverage of downtown's Edgehill

"Harry Molson: Westmounter, businessman, sailor, *Titanic* victim/The mystery of #2 Edgehill Rd." (March 28, p. 18)

"Was Harry Molson even a Westmounter?" (April 11, p. 18)

"Ogilvie family lived on downtown's Edgehill" (April 18, p. 4)

"Indie's Edgehill knowledge deepens," May 16, p. 9 & SL-22



Louise McNulty. The view is to the southeast.

PHOTO COURTESY OF VICKY ROBINSON.

be seen in the Notman photo of 1896 (14). The Notman photograph can be viewed

online in high resolution on the McCord Stewart Museum website:

[collections.musee-mccord-stewart.ca/en/objects/134094/vue-de-montreal-depuis-la-cheminee-de-la-centrale-de-la-mont?ctx=b3ba1b85fde184d7697d0d26fb68917e2809261c&idx=0](https://collections.musee-mccord-stewart.ca/en/objects/134094/vue-de-montreal-depuis-la-cheminee-de-la-centrale-de-la-mont?ctx=b3ba1b85fde184d7697d0d26fb68917e2809261c&idx=0)

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*‘We need more’ housing co-ops*

# NDP’s Filion would create native seats in parliament



NDG-Westmount NDP candidate Jean-François Filion is seen here outside his campaign HQ in NDG on June 6.

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

The housing crisis and the lack of native representation in Canada’s parliament are two issues NDP candidate Jean-François Filion is talking about these days while campaigning for the upcoming NDG-Westmount by-election.

“I just want to help build bridges,” the teacher of English at École internationale on Côte St. Antoine Rd. in Westmount said last week during an interview with the *Westmount Independent*.

Filion, who has never before run for an elected office and who only joined the NDP about three years ago, said that if sent to Ottawa as an MP, one of the pieces of legislation he’d hope to table would be a motion to create a new bloc of 13 house of commons seats reserved for Canada’s native population.

“How come they’re not at the table?” said Filion, who is a member of the NDP’s Committee of Relations with Indigenous People. “We cannot speak on their behalf. I cannot do this. I’ve never understood this. They should have a seat.”

He envisions allotting a seat for native peoples in each province as well as the three northern territories. “It would be up to them to decide who would occupy the seats, whether through a vote or otherwise,” he said. “We have to respect their customs.”

Filion said the idea, which he says he

came up with on his own, is not currently part of the NDP platform, although he hoped to bring it forward in the form of a resolution at a party policy convention in the future.

On the housing issue, he sees the development of co-ops as a solution to the now chronic shortage of affordable housing in Quebec as well as across Canada.

In this type of arrangement, apartment buildings are owned by tenants who take care of maintenance and administration as members of a governing board.

Co-ops can also be owned by municipalities.

“We need more of those,” he said, noting that Montreal’s ongoing Griffintown redevelopment project has given rise mostly to condominium development, while the homelessness crisis isn’t going away.

“I’ve understood this – we have homeless people – but how come there’s no place exactly for them to live? We need more places like that.”

Filion is an avid reader on a range of topics, including philosophy, sociology, economics, geopolitics and native literature, to name but a few of his favourite subjects. “I’ve spent my whole life reading,” he said.

On average, he reads a book every 10-14 days, he said, although less so lately while campaigning. His most recent read: a work by the French philosopher Edgar Morin.

*‘Hope and hard work’*

# Liberals’ Gainey representing ‘Team Trudeau’

BY JENNIFER BALL

The economy, immigration policies aimed at alleviating labour shortages, and low-cost housing could be common ground for contenders running to represent NDG-Westmount in Ottawa after the June 19 by-election.

Anna Gainey is the Liberal candidate. Fellow Liberal Marc Garneau held the seat from the 2008 federal election until retiring in March. When he was first elected, the riding was Westmount-Ville Marie and it dissolved into NDG-Westmount in 2012.

When the *Independent* caught up to Gainey, she was on the campaign trail visiting homes adjacent to Vendôme Metro station. Her campaign office opened on May 25 on Sherbrooke St. at Oxford Ave. in NDG.

From her front-porch interactions thus far, she said “...all of the issues you would expect to pop up pop up. Everyone’s got something on their mind and many people are happy to share. It’s always a very respectful and thoughtful exchange.”

According to a Liberal in the riding, immigration is a hot-button issue because there are many newcomers to the area. On May 26, the Liberal government released a statement from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada announcing new measures to strengthen family reunification, including:

- faster temporary resident visa (TRV) processing times for spousal applicants,
- new and dedicated processing tools for spousal TRV applicants,
- a new open work permit for spousal and family class applicants,
- extensions for open work permit holders expiring between August 1 and the end of 2023.

The economy and Chrystia Freeland’s latest budget have also come up on the campaign trail.

“I think that the supports during COVID were swift and responsive,” Gainey said. “There is obviously a ‘tail’ on an event of that magnitude, that we are feeling as a society. I think that the budget provided targeted policies that the government wanted to put in that budget in order to give some relief to people who are the most vulnerable, who really need it, for people who need help with their groceries or seniors who have challenges around the rising cost of living.”

Economical housing is likely to make it into the contender’s talking points.

“Affordable housing is a challenge



Anna Gainey on April 28 while campaigning for her party’s nomination on Victoria Ave.

across the country in our urban areas, in particular and our riding is no different...

“In certain pockets, we need to do more and the federal government has agreed to work with the provinces and the municipalities to bring the necessary funding in, in collaboration to develop those housing projects which communities really need, which families need and which new Canadians need...”

Gainey has served as policy advisor on the national defence and veterans affairs files and also as president of the Liberal Party of Canada. In these mandates, the facility of listening and resilience was forged, she said.

“The key to solving any kind of problem is communication and you have to start by listening and being open minded. I’m very pragmatic, I think, in my approach to those kinds of situations. It’s very important to be a good listener and then to try to find those areas of commonality – which always do exist, if you take the time to peel back the onion...”

“... there’s been all sorts of adversity in my life, whether it’s in those jobs – where you have challenging moments – or personally. I lost my mom when I was very young to cancer. So, adversity has been there throughout. But it makes you stronger and I think you learn a lot along the way from those moments. Hopefully, I can bring those skills to bear going forward for our community.”

*By-election is 'time to vocalize frustrations'*

## Conservatives' Kaminski a fiscal, but not a social conservative, he says



NDG-Westmount Conservative candidate Mathew Kaminski (right) is seen here on June 2 while out canvassing along Metcalfe Ave. with campaign volunteers Vanessa Aronovici and Jeff Joseph.

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Although Mathew Kaminski has no illusions about the difficulty of overcoming the Liberal incumbency in NDG-Westmount, he says he is committed to upholding the values of the Conservative Party of Canada “election after election” regardless of the outcome.

Over the last four elections, the Conservatives have consistently finished third in NDG-Westmount – usually at least 2,000 votes behind the NDP.

Kaminski, who ran for the Conservatives in the 2021 general election, describes himself as a fiscal conservative who prioritizes transparency and accountability, but insists he is not a social conservative.

A chartered professional accountant (CPA), he says he has been a Conservative his whole life and became involved in the NDG-Westmount riding when he was still in his teens.

While out canvassing door to door in Westmount last week, he suggested during an interview with the *Westmount Independent*

that the mood in the riding heading towards the June 19 by-election indicates frustration among voters.

“I think there’s a lot more people hurting now more than ever,” he said. “One of the biggest reasons as to why I wanted to join this race is that, as an accountant, I think we need to bring a little more fiscal responsibility back to government.”

While saying he’s run into a significant number of people who acknowledge NDG-Westmount is a Liberal stronghold, he added, “They feel like they’ve been betrayed whether it’s just through fiscal policy, whether it be through various social policies.

“They feel that this is the time to vocalize their frustrations and to vote differently. If not Conservative, then at least for someone else. And what I’m trying to do is to offer the alternative that people are looking for at the moment, because I think that people are searching for that.”

Kaminski said he is more socially progressive than conservative. “There’s nothing wrong with being a pro-life candi-

## Ball kicked hard



This soccer ball or volleyball had seen better days when the *Independent* caught up with it June 8 on The Boulevard at Lansdowne.

date, but I’m pro-choice and so is the leader of the party,” he said, referring to Pierre Poilievre.

“I think some people in Quebec might be a bit apprehensive voting for a Conservative because they think that all Conservatives might be social conservatives. I think making this distinction is important, especially when you’re running in a riding like this.”

Noting that by-elections are sometimes a barometer of discontent between general elections, Kaminski said NDG-Westmount’s voters “should find a way to send a message, because in a by-election, anything can happen. And I think one way or another the Liberals need to know that what they’re doing right now isn’t working.”

## Overheard

Young girl (aged eight or nine?) to mother, pointing to a parked car in the opposite direction of their movement: “Isn’t *that* our car?”

The pair changes direction.

Young girl: “Mommy is losing her marbles.”

Mother: “It’s because another car looks the same.”

– Prince Albert above Sherbrooke, June 8, 8 am

## Also running in the June 19 by-election:

Sean Carson, Rhinocéros  
Yves Gilbert, Christian Heritage  
Laurence Massey, Bloc Québécois  
Alex Trainman Montagano, Centrist  
Tiny Olinga, People’s  
Jonathan Pedneault, Green  
Félix Vincent Ardea, independent

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# Goodman, Hart organize Climate Solutions prize

Westmounters Jonathan Goodman and Jeff Hart are the campaign chair and executive chair respectively of the newly founded Climate Solutions Prize, which last month gave away \$300,000 “to outstanding entrepreneurs and researchers working on climate solutions,” according to a press release from the group dated June 2.

On May 23 and 24, more than 700 entrepreneurs, business people, investors and philanthropists gathered at the Grand Quai de Montreal for the first Canadian edition of the Climate Solutions Festival.

Winners this year were:

- Breakthrough Research Prize
  - First place: Philip Raphals & Professor Charles Kiyanda, NovoPower – Concordia University;
  - Second place: Dr. Soodeh Abedini & Dr. Maria Elektorowicz, Concordia University;
- Student Entrepreneur Prize: Yee Wei Foong, Quantus – McGill University;
- Start-Up Track: Opalia;
- Audience Choice Award: Altiro Energy.

“Across industries, people came together to discuss the climate-related challenges facing our planet, learn from experts in the field and celebrate new clean-tech innovations,” summarized the release.



From left, Lance Davis, CEO of Jewish National Fund Canada, which supports the prize; Westmounters Geraldine Caldart and Jeff Hart; Westmounter Johnathan Goodman and Westmount lawyer Moe Liebman, who is a representative of the fund on the leadership board of the prize.

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# 11th Au Contraire Film Festival celebrates



Marcel Pinchevsky and Philip Silverberg.

Among many in attendance at the fun eve were **Robert Moore**, Scotia Mcleod Westmount; **Pnina and Marcel Pinchevsky**, festival director; **Barbara and Philip Silverberg**, festival founder; **Paul Chan**; **Roberto Pietracupa**; **Karin Bjornson**; **Marie Pier Grisé**; **Julie D'Amore**; **Camille Vigneault**, Let's Bond; **Francois L'Esperance**, chair, department of psychiatry at the University of Montreal; Urban Pardes' **David Hoppenheim**, vice president and **Devon Reid**, director development; and ..... provincial legislator **Elisa** continued on p. 30

Making their way through Montreal's internationally renowned labyrinth – aka “rues barrées/fermées” – guests attending the recent Au Contraire Film Festival included government representatives and health professionals.

The festival is a philanthropic initiative of Urban Pardes in support of UP House, a psychosocial rehabilitation program that works to eliminate social isolation and rebuild the confidence and purpose of adults living with the challenges of mental illness in Montreal.

The 11th edition of the festival celebrated the annual awarding of the Coupe Lumière, which acknowledges the valuable contributions of an individual who works to alleviate the suffering of those with mental illness.

The 2023 recipient is **Dr. Amal Abdel-Baki**, founder and president of AQPEPP, a Quebec association of programs for early psychotic episodes. She was recognized for her 20-year career focussing on early detection of and intervention regarding psychosis in young people.

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David Hoppenheim, Elisabeth Prass and Devon Reid.



Nobuko Egawa, Michaela Duguay and Ruth McLellan.

.....  
**Social notes, cont'd from p. 29**

beth Prass.  
Attending from UP House were executive director **Ruth McLellan**, **Nobuko Egawa** and **Michaela Duguay**.  
Local res Philip Silverberg, explained that “of the thousands of films we review-


ed, above all we wanted to show the lives, successes, hopes, struggles and beautiful humanity of people with mental health concerns.”  
Screening as a world premiere within the international mental health film festival network, *Dear Ani* was the main feature of this year’s Au Contraire program.  
The film recounts the path that an aspiring songwriter began more than 20 years ago, including a creatively obsessive correspondence with music icon Ani DiFranco, believing her reply letters were encoded in the lyrics of her songs. *Dear Ani* is an odyssey of music, art and mania.  
The director and the protagonist were present.



Marie Pier Grisé and Julie D'Amore.



Dr. Amal Abdel-Baki and Philip Silverberg.



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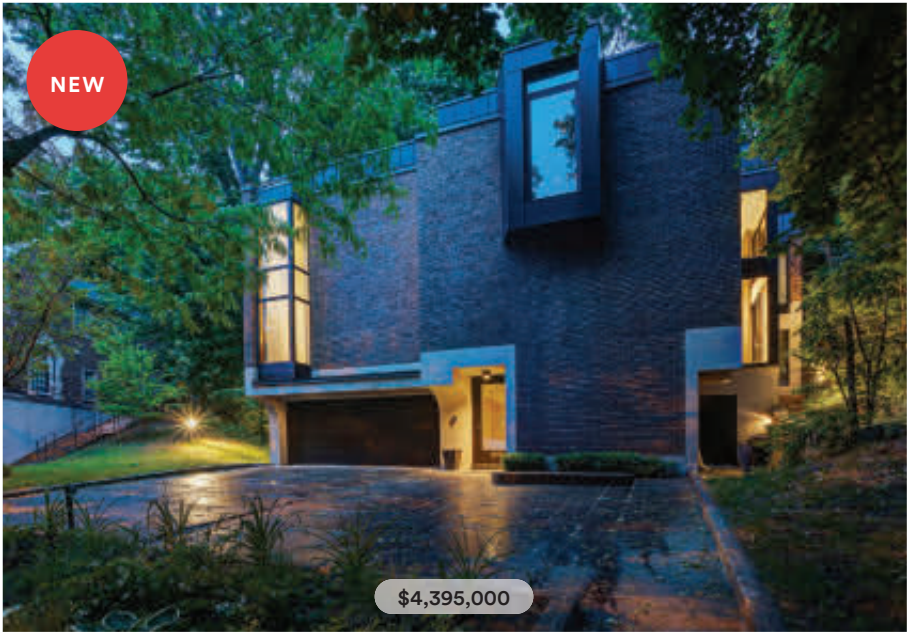
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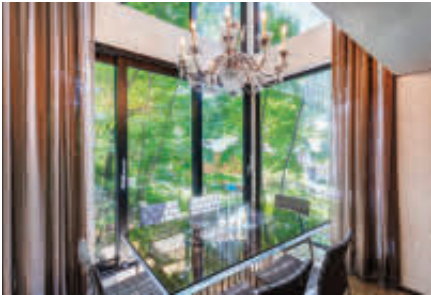
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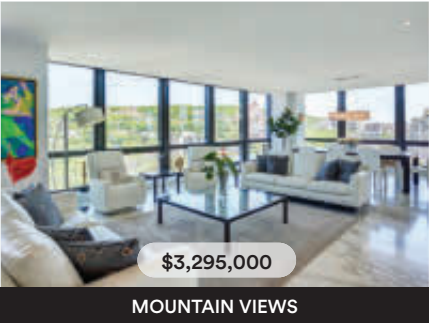
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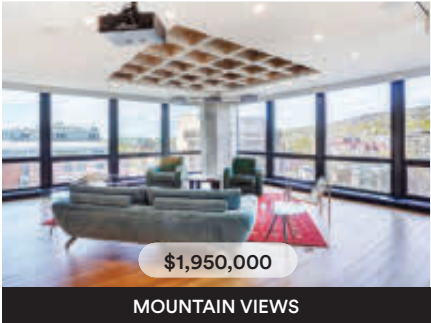
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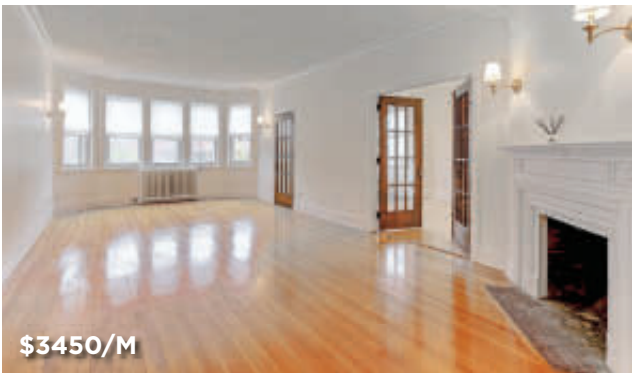
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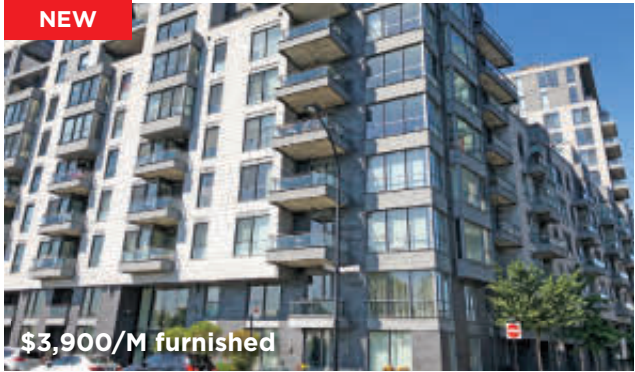
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