

# WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

Weekly Vol. 17 No. 8c

We are Westmount

August 22, 2023

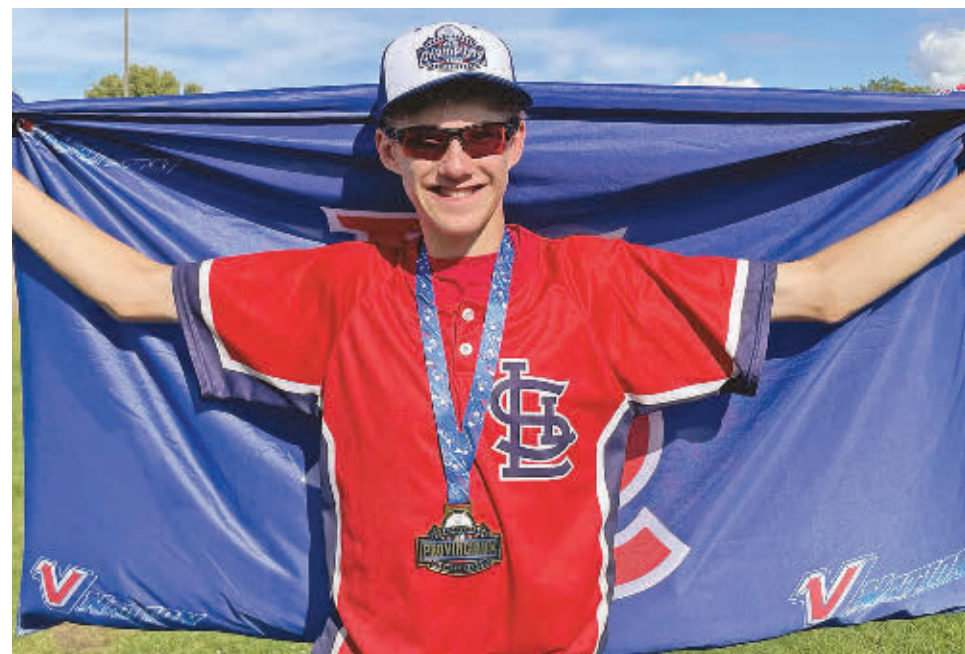
## Castonguay secures Canadian bronze in first pentathlon



Westmounter Laurence Castonguay, seen August 17 on Victoria Ave., won the bronze medal in pentathlon in her under-16 category at the Legion Canadian Youth Track and Field Championships, held in Sherbrooke August 11 to 13. See p. 11 for story.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

## Perlman, teammates win AA baseball provincials



Westmounter and short-stop Jayden Perlman, above, and his teammates from the Lac St. Louis U15 AA Baseball All-Star Team won their division at the provincial championships, held August 10 to 13 in Three Rivers. See p. 10 for story.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHANA ROTSTEIN.

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## Summer winds down for swimming lessons

# Pool goes into post-season use after challenging year

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

As this summer's drownings in Quebec brought warnings from life-saving groups about the need for more swimming lessons, Westmount's youth sessions were so popular that at some levels there were waiting lists in some of the 90 spaces available at various levels in four sessions, according to Sports and Recreation officials.

"Overall, the registration level was about 70 percent for the total of 90 spaces available in the four sessions," department director Dave Lapointe said last week. This was consistent with other years. The highest registration levels were at the end of the season.

The masters swim and aquafit were always full, said assistant director Bruce Stacey as

*continued on p. 8*



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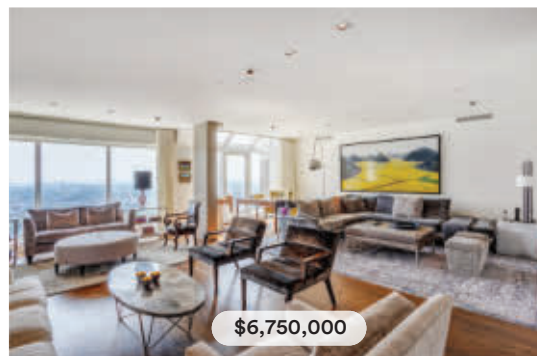
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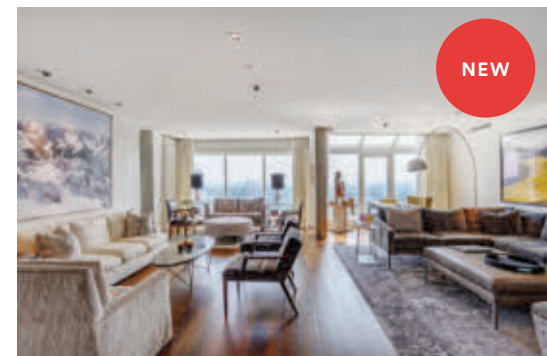


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## Police Report

# Suspect arrested after vehicle on Dorchester broken into

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Although the summer vacation period has been relatively quiet up to now in terms of criminal activity in Westmount, police at Station 12 report a few incidents, including a household burglary and a forced entry and theft from a vehicle.

Around 6 am on August 10, according to police, a Dorchester Blvd. resident was instrumental in helping police to arrest a bicycle-riding suspect who'd been seen forcing his way into a vehicle parked near Weredale Park road.

"A witness saw the suspect break the car window and then start to look inside the vehicle," said Station 12 community relations Cst. Mike Yigit, reading from the incident report. "Then he moved onto the next vehicle and also looked inside. So, he was looking in many vehicles."

Shortly after the resident called 9-1-1 to report what he'd seen, Montreal police officers arrived, identified the suspect and arrested him. They seized a wallet, which was found to belong to the owner of one

of the vehicles that had been broken into.

## Kensington couple interrupts burglar

A Kensington Ave. couple who went out for a morning walk around 7 am on Aug. 17 found after returning that the back door of their home was unlocked and a burglar alarm had been triggered.

Uncertain as to what was going on, they went to the rear of their property, where they saw a male suspect standing on their balcony. "And when they approached, the man ran off," said Cst. Yigit.

According to Yigit, the suspect dropped a black bag while running off, which was found to contain items of personal property taken from inside the home. Although those items were recovered, the couple reported that \$50 in cash was missing.

## Electric scooters legal – for 3 years

While many people were on vacation over the past month or so, the provincial government launched a three-year pilot project whose purpose is to regulate the use of

continued on p. 8

## Live tree burned on summit



This living tree was partially burned by a campfire in Summit Woods, as seen August 16, at which time the area still smelled of ash. The same firepit was photographed for our June 27 edition (p. 6).

PHOTO COURTESY OF LYSANNE FOWLER.



Cracking down in Summit Woods

Tickets issued for breaking dog and cycling rules in park

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

A city of Montreal resident was fined \$230 August 13 for allowing his dog to run off leash at 2:27 pm in Summit Woods, Public Security officials said. He was told his dog required a Westmount licence to use the park, which is a dog run.

Earlier in the day in Summit Woods, a cyclist was stopped and ticketed \$80 for riding on a park path. He was also a city of Montreal resident. “We have been receiving many complaints about people cycling on the gravel-covered pathway,” explained Public Security director Greg McBain. This is the north section of Summit Circle that has been closed to motorized vehicle traffic for years and is part of the nature preserve signed for no cycling.

‘Bullet holes’ reported in car

Public Security received two calls August 15 around 11:20 pm reporting bullet holes in a car parked on Edgehill, offi-

cials said. Callers were referred to police but when public safety patrollers began searching for the car, they found it parked at Lexington along with an occupant. The so-called bullet holes turned out to be “decorative stickers” resembling them.

Spotted in pond, unlicensed dog generates \$230 ticket

A patroller in Westmount Park spotted a dog in the pond August 17 at 5:19 pm and informed the guardian that not only were dogs required to be leashed at all times when not in the dog run but were also prohibited from being in the water. In reporting the incident, Public Security officials said it took “a while” for the woman to be able to catch the dog. She provided identification and was issued a ticket for \$230.

2 parked cars involved in accident

An accident opposite 34 Winchester on August 16 was reported to have occurred when the driver of a parked car was attempting to pull out of her space, Public Security officials said. It hit another parked vehicle as witnessed by a city blue-collar worker, who called for patrollers at 5:36 pm. No injuries were reported and the drivers of the both vehicles were assisted in filling out a joint accident report.

Tracking device comes to the rescue

A golden doodle was found running loose August 14 at Metcalfe and de Maison-neuve and was taken to a veterinarian by public safety officers to be checked for possible microchip identification. While none was found, the dog’s owner contacted Public Security after a few minutes, thanks to a tracking device on the dog’s collar. It

turned out the dog was visiting from Vermont.

Patrollers wait with broken down car

Public safety officers stayed 15 minutes with a car that patrollers found had broken down on Roslyn August 15 and needed towing, officials said. Occupants were waiting for roadside assistance they had summoned.

Table of Contents

- Police Report, p. 2
- Letters, p. 6
- Pet page, p. 18
- Retail Review:
- Fall camp for adults, p. 20
- Social Notes: Ometz, p. 21

Conservatory door opener re-timed to opening hours

The automatic door opener to the conservatory that was reported fixed to the Independent last week was reported by a reader August 21 to be not working. The issue has now been resolved, according to Public Works director Robert Talarico.

Interestingly, he said the issue was found to be related to a programming timing issue and has now been readjusted to work between 10 am and 9 pm.

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IMMOBILIER

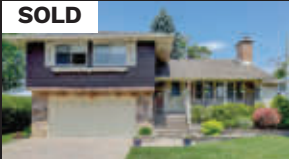
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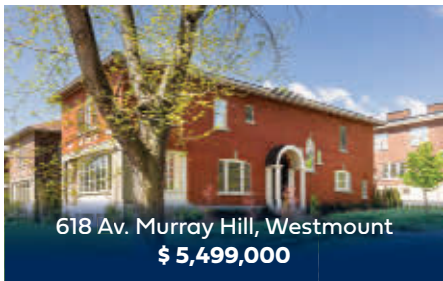
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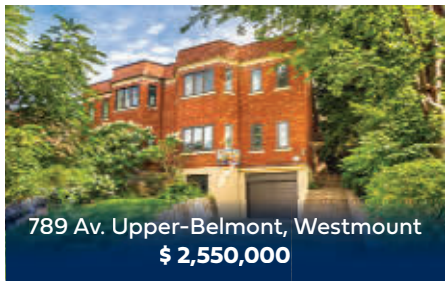
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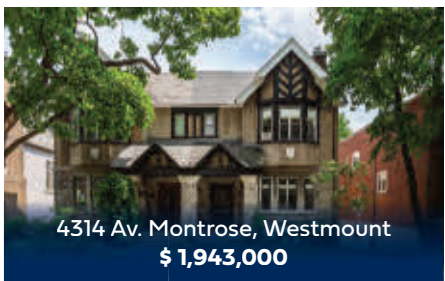
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WOMEN SHOULD NOT  
BE WEAKENED PREY

My letter is in response to Alice Myers’ article (July 4, p. 21) on the petition asking the Legault administration for tests targeting date-rape drugs to tell whether or not one’s drink has been spiked.

In my salad days, I experienced something similar done by an ex-boyfriend. We referred to it as Rohypnol. Women were then advised to always cover any drinks and hold bottled beer in their hands. I never cease to be amazed by the perfidy of men and the extreme ways in which it is manifested.

It reminds me of the occasion when the former American vice president Dick Cheney shot a fellow bird hunter in the face. The owner of the large Texas estate on which Cheney was hunting unwillingly faced the press three days after the act. By then, the details revealed that Cheney’s excursion into the wild country was a “canned shoot,” i.e. shooting birds kept in cages since such fledglings can’t fly above a human’s waist when released – and the height makes them much easier targets for game hunters like Cheney and his ilk.

A canned shoot may not, to many, be equivalent to date rape. To me, it underlines how many males see women as prey that must be weakened. If it takes a nasty tactic, so be it. I praise our Westmount-St. Louis legislator Jennifer Maccarone and

McGill student Solenne Trequesser for addressing the frequent use of GHB with their petition. According to figures they cite from UNwomen.org, 736 million women globally experience assault.

The numbers are breathtaking, are they not?

BRONWEN MANTEL, BRUCE AVE.

GIVE THE PERSONAL  
EDITORIALS A REST

Come on, David! Isn’t it supposed to be “letters to the editor,” not “letters from the editor”? And how come the 300-word limit never applies to you? Just how high a percentage of the space devoted to *any* letters over the past six months has been devoted to letters from *you* – either about the proposed change in Château Maisonneuve’s zoning or the admission of more medical clinics to Victoria village – all of which really focus on your personal access to parking. Bring back some real news, please!

JO LAPIERRE, METCALFE AVE.

**Editor’s reply:** The paper’s Letters to the Editor section and editorials (when they are present) are separate sections and are clearly identified with “in bubble” section headers. If you want to ignore the editorials, you can, because the distinction is clear.

The city is welcome to reply at equal length. Speaking of distinctions, it might

explain why it can’t make the distinction between the “19th” and “20th” of a month, and between “July” and “August.” Please remember that the city is a *government* with a material amount of taxpayer-funded personnel and assets, to which higher standards apply than just some people making some changes from time to time to some personal rules. The city is not, or least ought not be, a private club.

My personal parking is totally unaffected by any current proposal, but I am proud to champion the situations of my neighbours who aren’t so lucky. Why aren’t the politicians doing the same for their constituents? – DP.

LET’S SHIFT GEARS FROM  
PARKING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

I read last week’s editorial in the *Westmount Independent* (p. 8) with a mix of interest and concern. The opinion piece laments the recent city registry regarding the proposed re-institution of a longstanding zoning by-law permitting medical offices in Victoria village. The editor suggests that the process is undemocratic due to perceived limitations in expressing opposition, attributed to the newspaper’s closure during the summer holidays. However, it’s important to clarify that the registry process was adequately publicized on the city’s website and even extended by one day to allow ample opportunity for citizen input. Only 36 out of 1,696 eligible voters showed their support for a costly referendum, a detail that seemingly troubles the editor, leading to claims that such a process undermines Quebec’s democracy.

The assertion of “total confusion” and a lack of “true, reliable” information warrants scrutiny. The city’s website clearly published information about the process, and concerned citizens had the opportunity to participate in city council meetings to gain clarity.

Considering the editor’s prior lengthy editorials, it seems reasonable to infer that his primary concern is the fear of heightened traffic and parking challenges in his neighbourhood. Surely he doesn’t object to an increase in medical care facilities in his backyard.

The attempt to discredit our city’s democratic process by questioning the registry exercise is unsettling. Challenging a “perfectly legal” process (editor’s words) appears to be an emerging trend, which regrettably leads to division among constituents, as we’ve witnessed elsewhere.

However, my primary apprehension lies in the disproportionate energy directed towards parking concerns, especially in light of more pressing social issues. For

instance, our provincial government recently pledged to reduce the number of cars on the road, a commendable initiative to make our province carbon-neutral by 2050. Re-directing the public discourse towards such shared, locally and globally, beneficial objectives is imperative.

Shouldn’t our focus shift to broader societal matters such as healthcare, education, social housing and environmental sustainability? Rather than fixating solely on parking, let us collectively engage in discussions about matters that truly shape the well-being of our community.

I, for one, would wholeheartedly support a local newspaper that champions broader social and environmental causes. I extend an invitation to fellow Westmount citizens to partake in this discourse and steer our conversations towards more meaningful and impactful topics.

RICHARD DUFOUR, ANWOTH RD.

PICK UP YOUR DOO, PLEASE

Dog owners, do you feel proud of yourselves leaving your doggie doo-filled bags on neighbours’ properties? How sad for you...that you seem unable to walk it back to your own garbage pail or to the nearest disposal bin.

BARBARA WINN, METCALFE AVE.

DOG OWNERS, SHAPE UP

I am a dog owner and I would like to apologize to all non-dog owners for: bone-head dog owners who wreck the neighbourhood by doing as in the photo (this happens regularly at this corner even when there’s no blue-collar strike); really dumb dog owners who put their bags of dog poo in other people’s garbage cans, recycling boxes and yard waste bags (dog poo is not part of the yard waste composting process, you boboheads, and think about what



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

happens if the bag you put in someone else's garbage can pops and smears everywhere); and the super-nasty dog owners who chuck their dog poo bags into hollow trees at Summit Woods, throw them in the gutter or stick them down a sewer drain where they wash directly into the St. Lawrence River.

Come on, ignorant dog owners, get your acts together, deal with your dog's poo responsibly – yes, it is your problem – and stop being disgusting pigs.

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THOMAS LAPIERRE, CHESTERFIELD AVE.

### MYSTERY DWELLERS WELCOME

There are residents dwelling in the deep basement of an apartment building on Metcalfe Ave. I never see him, or her, or them. But I know they are living there.

I know because I see the entrance, or the exit (or both) to their place.

When I moved to the area in the summer of 2019, I took little notice of the hole about the size of the seat of a chair in the ground on a patch of wannabe lawn close to the entrance of the building.

But that hole got bigger as time went on. It was difficult to see how deep it actually was. It did not go straight down and there were roots from the nearby tree crisscrossing it.

It was hard to ignore it, but I thought of it as a mere oddity.

Fall came, winter came, snow covered the hole and out of sight, out of mind.

Spring arrived, accumulated dead leaves and little tree branches were cleared and

the hole was filled with fresh soil by building management.

The hole appeared again... small at first, then it got bigger.

It surely cannot be a sinkhole, what else then?

Groundhogs or even foxes? It must be!

This ritual repeated itself for the next two years. Management would fill the hole, whoever lives down there opens it up again.

This summer they took their time, I thought they had given up... but NO, it is there again!

I marvel at the tenacity and determination of these residents!

I marvel that in this neighbourhood, under all this concrete, asphalt, manicured lawns, nicely maintained parks, and patches where nature is allowed to grow as it pleases, there are thousands of creatures who share this marvelous planet with us, creatures who from time to time let us know that they are also here, and that they are more important than we realize to the survival of our shared world.

Being aware of their mostly unseen presence makes me happy.

HEIDI VERMEULEN, METCALFE AVE.

### WHY LIMIT 350-PERSON POOL TO 32 SWIMMERS?

The early morning adult swim at the Westmount public pool is limited to 32 swimmers. One must register online a couple of days ahead for this swim time. If the maximum of 32 is reached, you cannot swim, despite the fact this is an eight-lane pool with a capacity of 350 people.

And it has been regularly noted that not all who sign up actually turn up to swim. Some do cancel their reservations, but not all. As a result, other swimmers are not able to enjoy the pool.

The limit on the number of swimmers was put in place as a COVID measure and since then some swimmers have told the Sports and Recreation department that they liked this restriction. But most swimmers do not. Just ask them!

Many requests to remove the sign-up requirement have been sent to Sports and Rec. and the responsible councillor, but were rejected, apparently due to pre-COVID complaints about the number of swimmers.

Some of these complaints can be resolved with the help of the lifeguards ensuring that swimmers of similar abilities are in the same lane, and by swimmers respecting the lifeguards and their fellow swimmers. In addition, a pool of this capacity can certainly accommodate more than four swimmers per lane.

I would also like point out that there are no restrictions on the number of swimmers at any other adult swim time.

Why does the morning swim exclude some Westmounters?

I also offer a suggestion that for the last few weeks of outdoor swimming, why not remove the sign-up and test the waters, so to speak?

ROSALIND DAVIS, LORRAINE AVE.

### CAR THEFT SOURED VISIT TO MONTREAL

Living in Plattsburgh, we love Montreal and missed it during the pandemic, even vowing to re-discover it. But will we come again as often as we'd like? Not likely. We have always used Trudeau airport as our departure for air travel too, but will re-think that. We had our car stolen recently from one of Trudeau airport's Econoparc lots – a staffed, fenced and gated parking lot for which we prepaid through the airport's website.

We were unaware that Montreal has a stolen-car epidemic. Nearly 10,000 cars were stolen in 2022, the CBC reported, and thefts in 2023 were on pace to break that record. Data shows roughly a one-third increase in thefts every year in recent years.

We are apparently "lucky" to have had our car recovered by police after it was abandoned on the street. Yet we hardly feel relief knowing that our car was broken into, stolen, stripped and sullied, inside and outside. Despite insurance, we will have to absorb expenses. It could take weeks, even months, for our car to be repaired and cleaned because of existing work volume, staffing and the parts supply chain.

In Canada, we expect to be able to leave our car on the street and find it later. We surely expect that a staffed, fenced and gated parking lot overseen by Trudeau airport will protect our car – especially at its high price.

This airport is a gateway to and from Montreal. If someone cannot trust that its parking lots are secure, this will undoubtedly result in tourists thinking twice about using this important travel hub. We doubt we will trust the airport parking again. Until the problem abates, we will think twice about driving up to Montreal for any reason.

SHAWN MURPHY & ELAINE OSTRY,  
PLATTSBURGH, NEW YORK

### LIES, HOLLOW PROMISES FROM PREMIER LEGAULT

*The Independent received the following press release July 16 from The Task Force on Linguistic Policy*

The true impact of Bill 96 is now being felt, offering proof of the lies and hollow promises of Premier Francois Legault. Last year, in the wake of criticism by the Task Force on Linguistic Policy and others, the CAQ government paid millions of dollars for advertising the legislation "would not affect English-speaking Quebecers." Premier Legault has repeated these talking points, despite evidence to the contrary. The latest embarrassment has come in the form of a death certificate, issued by the Quebec government in 2009, but now refused by the same government. Even though the person seeking to use the death certificate in a family legal matter is a so-called "historic anglophone," the application of the law is as severe as for anyone else. It means it will no longer be possible to register English birth, marriage or death certificates.

Task Force President Andrew Caddell says, "We were the first to sound the alarm of the excesses of Bill 96 in 2021 and were called fearmongers when we provided detailed critiques of it. Now they are coming true." Caddell points out the June 2022 ad campaign said "several falsehoods have circulated" as to the impact of Bill 96 on anglophones. Among the "corrections" offered were English-speakers would have the same constitutional guarantees to justice and access to health care in English.

"This is patently false. We already know of people provided with French-only information and services in health care. This development proves all legal documents must now be in French, which is an imposition on the rights of any English-speaking Quebecer," said Caddell.

On May 31, the Task Force took the Quebec and Canadian governments to court for failing to protect the rights of English-speaking Quebecers. Cases include a woman suffering from ulcerative colitis who is not a historic anglophone and cannot get service in English, the mother of a boy with autism, and a businessman who will no longer be served in English by the Quebec government. The Task Force will soon create a platform allowing the public to submit stories how Bill 96 is negatively impacting lives.

*The Task Force on Linguistic Policy/Comité spécial sur la politique linguistique was formed in June of 2021 to fight Bill 96 and Bill C-13, the federal Official Languages Act. It boasts over a thousand subscribers and many more followers and members on social media. It is active in the community and depends on donations to support its crowd funded lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Bill 96. Learn more about them at [www.The-TaskForce.ca](http://www.The-TaskForce.ca).*



A hole in the ground on Metcalfe, as seen August 11.  
PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.





Westmount's pool on one of its busiest days, the ALPS swim meet. This year, it was held August 12. See p. 16 for story.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

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**Pool, cont'd from p. 1**

the pool headed into post-season use. Despite many requests to provide more time for aquafit, “when we add something, we have to take something else away,” he explained.

**Pool kept open**

Enough life guards are to be available to keep the pool open for post-season use August 21 to September 4 inclusive. Many are students headed back to CEGEP and university. A schedule has been posted on the pool's page of the city's website.

Despite a few early pool closures over the summer during the strike of the city's blue-collar workers, most of the morning lessons and activities managed to operate with management carrying out the vital testing of water and general cleanliness. Even the city's director general, Julie Mandeville, for example, was reported to have been out testing water at 10 pm one night.

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**Police, cont'd from p. 2**

motorized personal transport vehicles, the most notable of which are electric scooters.

The official word comes from the police at Station 12, who issued a statement with some details on how law enforcement officers will be dealing with electric scooters, which are still not considered “street legal” because there is no mention of them in the Quebec Highway Safety Code.

Transport Québec, according to a statement issued in early July by the highways ministry, wants to safely integrate “motorized personal transport devices” with other types of transportation already in use on the province's streets, roads and highways to see if the highway code itself should be modified.

According to the rules applying during the three-year trial period, drivers of so-called MPTDs must be at least 14 years of age and wear a helmet. They will be allowed to drive an MPTD on any road

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where the maximum posted speed is 50 km/h.

However, the speed of vehicles cannot exceed 25 km/h, and they must be equipped with red reflectors at the rear and a white reflector in the front. As well, the vehicles must have a white headlight in front for night-time use and an illuminated red light at the rear.

**No passengers**

In addition, the vehicles must have an operational braking system and drivers are not allowed to carry passengers. The fine for breaking any of these rules is \$200. As well, vehicles cannot weigh more than 36 kilograms (including the battery).

Regarding other types of MPTD (such as motorized skateboards), Cst. Yigit suggested they would not be considered acceptable under the new rules because they're not equipped with brakes.

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Test launched last week at 3 locations

# New street painting to highlight pedestrian safety



An eastbound car on Sherbrooke St. turns north/left onto Grosvenor August 18. PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

New road painting aimed at increasing pedestrian safety was introduced last week at three locations on a test basis.

The measures, such as cross-hatching and sidewalk extensions, have been added with paint at Grosvenor and Sherbrooke, St. Catherine and Dorchester and on Dorchester just east of Hallowell, according to Councillor Anitra Bostock, who chairs the city's Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC).

Bostock told the *Independent* the markings have been undertaken using money remaining from the city's regular line-painting budget. They are intended to make pedestrian traffic more visible to drivers, create more space for pedestrians at crosswalks, and effectively encourage drivers to keep their distance from the curb.

Described on the city's website August 14 as "giving extra attention" to traffic calming measures, Bostock pointed out that the use of the paint at the Grosvenor/Sherbrooke intersection is a prime example, especially at the northwest corner.

It's here, for example, that eastbound drivers making a left-hand turn to head up Grosvenor at the Bank of Montreal tend to cut the corner too sharply, in the city's view.

## Used by many Roslyn students

"This is a crossing used by many school children to and from Roslyn School as well as seniors crossing at the entrance to Victoria village," Bostock pointed out. A bollard has also been installed in combination with the paint for added attention.

Dan Lambert, president of the Association of Pedestrians and Cyclists of Westmount, said that "Generally speaking, we are happy with any measures which make pedestrians feel safer and thereby encourage more residents to walk rather than drive."

As had been reported at the city council meeting May 1 by Bostock in her capacity as commissioner of public works, the city is now switching to a new environmentally safe epoxy road paint after finding that the latex wore off too quickly.

# Haircuts on the fly come to (or go through?) Westmount



This mobile barber shop was spotted on the corner of Sherbrooke and Lansdowne.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

## MAURICE G. VÉZINA

February 19, 1931 – July 26, 2023

Surrounded by the love of his immediate family, it is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Maurice G. Vézina in Montreal on July 26, 2023.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Monique (Lafontaine); his children, Renée (Daniel Archambault), Marc (Julie Rochefort), Robert J. (Christian Gagné-Cholette) and François (Sophie Migneault); his grandchildren, Pascale, Bernard, Mélanie, Antoine, Raphaël, Eliot, Flavie, Olivier (Camille), Mathieu and Laurent; his great-grandson, Éli; his sisters, Madeleine (late Claude Tellier) and Michèle; as well as his sister-in-law, Lucy Lafontaine (Jean Cossette).

Preceded in death by his brother, Roméo (late Andrée Beauregard); his sister, Lyse (late Michel Hogue) and his brother-in-law, Hébert Lafontaine (late Bella Houde), he will be deeply missed by his many nephews, nieces, relatives and friends.

Maurice Vézina was a civil engineer, he founded the engineering firm Vézina Labrecque & Associés (Vézina Fortier & Associés) as well as Monbel inc., a countryside development fronting Lake Stukely near Mount Orford National Park.

Born in Matane, he grew up in Trois-Rivières. The Vézina family then settled in Outremont. Maurice Vézina studied at Loyola College and McGill University, where he obtained his degree in engineering. In 1957, he received his master's degree in sanitary engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) in Boston.

Maurice Vézina has been involved in the community, among other things as a churchwarden at St-Léon Church in Westmount and a member of the fundraising campaign committee for the acquisition of the Church's new organ. He was also a member of the board during the creation of the Queen Elizabeth Health Complex and its charitable foundation.

A generous and dedicated family man, he was passionate about classical music, fishing, travel, cooking and reading. More than anything, he loved spending time with his family at Lake Stukely.

The funeral will be held at St-Léon Church in Westmount on Thursday August 31 at 3:00 p.m. Before the ceremony, the family will receive condolences at the entrance of the church starting at 1:30 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations to The Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation ([fondationduchildren.com/fr/collectes-de-fonds/a-la-memoire-de-maurice-g-vezina](http://fondationduchildren.com/fr/collectes-de-fonds/a-la-memoire-de-maurice-g-vezina)) or to the Queen Elizabeth Health Complex Foundation ([qehcfoundation.org](http://qehcfoundation.org)) would be appreciated.



# Lac St. Louis U15 AA baseball wins provincials

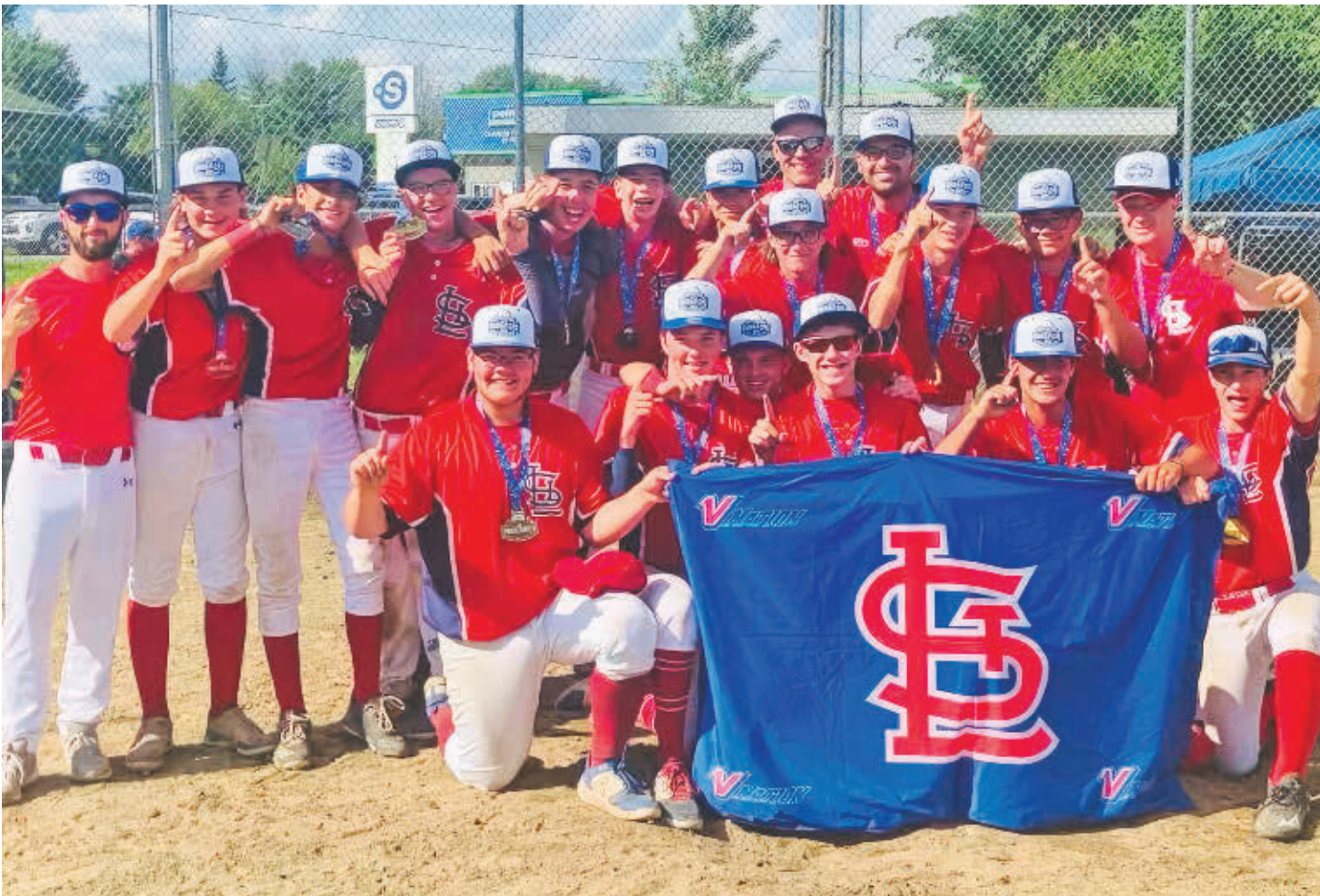
The Lac St. Louis U15 AA Baseball All-Star Team won its division at the provincial championships, held August 10 to 13 in Three Rivers. The team included Westmounter Jayden Perlman, who plays short-stop.

The players went 6-0 in the tournament and won their final game 10-9 over Lan-audière, their closest score of the tourna-ment.

“Victory is sweet!” said Perlman’s mother Shana Rotstein. “This is one of the deepest and most talented teams Lac St. Louis has ever put forward.... These mem-ories will last a lifetime!”

See p. 1 for another photo.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHANA ROTSTEIN.



## 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 the following week. Email us at: [editor@westmountindependent.com](mailto:editor@westmountindependent.com)

xomed

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## Castonguay wins bronze at Legion Canadian Youth Track and Field Championships

Westmounter Laurence Castonguay won the bronze medal in pentathlon (running, hurdles, shot put, high and long jump) for her under-16 category at the Legion Canadian Youth Track and Field Championships, held in Sherbrooke August 11 to 13.

The top competitor – from BC – dominated the event with 3,233 points, with the silver, bronze, fourth and fifth places forming a tighter bunch with 2,797, 2,690 (Castonguay), 2,642 and 2,618 points. The

fifth finisher had 1,952.

Only nine competitors were in Castonguay's section, but they had met what her father Sylvain Castonguay describes as "very high standards" to be there. In Laurence's case, she had so qualified in three events, namely the 100-meter, the high jump and the shot put, as well having put in a strong performance at a heptathlon.

It was her first time competing in the event, which she said is "like a family. Competitors coach each other."

What is this event like for competitors, especially a first-time one?

"It takes a lot of stamina – it is very tiring – and you have to be a little good at everything, not just at one event."

Castonguay previously won the gymnastics provincials for her age (see May 7, 2019, p. 11) and a silver for the vault at the eastern Canada regionals (see May 21, 2019, p. 3).

What's next for Castonguay? In the next age bracket (under 18), for women, the pentathlon morphs into a heptathlon – and she hopes to represent Quebec in that event at the track and field championships in Calgary next year.

*See p. 1 for another photo.*

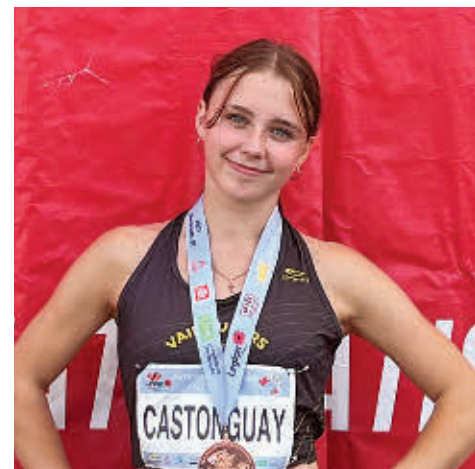


PHOTO COURTESY OF SYLVAIN CASTONGUAY.

## Mother Nature smiles as she works



"I saw this on my daily walk and couldn't help but smile," Lynn Caplan told the *Independent* August 7. "The two bees helped Mother Nature create a very special smiley face!" PHOTO COURTESY OF L. CAPLAN



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**‘A sustainability and legacy project’: Cllr. Roux**

# Public consultation set for August 31 on Murray Park’s trees

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

Public consultation on the future of trees in King George (Murray) Park is scheduled to take place Thursday, August 31 at 7 pm in Victoria Hall. This is to discuss development of what is being described as a new cycle of trees to take root in the park under Phase 3 in a five-phase project.

Westmount resident and landscape architect Sophie Robitaille of the firm RobitailleCurtis will propose options for public discussion.

The future of the trees, many described as having belonged on the original Murray family property, became a hot issue last year when neighbouring residents discovered a number of acacia (black locust) trees had been cut down without public consultation (see story October 25, 2022, p. 6).

“I’m glad residents will have a chance to hear from Sophie Robitaille on her proposed options for the arboreal future of King George Park (Murray Park),” District 2 councillor Elisabeth Roux said last week.

“She is a very well-respected landscape architect, who has an extensive knowledge of the park. This public consultation will give residents a chance to ask questions and express their opinion. Both residents and experts have written about the importance of the park and its acacia grove in your paper. This will be an opportunity for all to gather, exchange ideas and generate consensus.

“This is both a sustainability and a legacy project. It will have an impact for generations to come. I strongly encourage residents to participate in this public consultation.”

While some of the acacia trees had been described as irreversibly damaged by invasive insects and listed as trees that were no longer permitted to be planted in Westmount (see November 2, 2021, p. 4), Mayor Christina Smith later said there had been initial misunderstanding by the city. In fact, the invasive acacias could not be planted within 100 meters of Summit Woods (see story October 25, 2022, p. 6).

### Outstanding acacia grove

This acacia grove is “the most outstanding of the few in the Montreal area,” according to retired landscape architect Ron Williams in a guest column for the *Independent* (May 4, 2023, p. 7). The trees re-seed and regenerate very quickly.

Although susceptible to the locust borer, the acacia is a robust and fast-growing tree as some residents have observed new

shoots sprouting from some of the remains of acacias already cut down.

Details of the city’s five-phase development plan for the trees in the park can be

accessed through “Engage” in the homepage of the city’s website.



King George (Murray) Park was returning to nature during the seven-week strike by the city’s blue-collar workers, as seen August 8 above. By August 20, below, it was back to its usual appearance.

PHOTOS: RALPH THOMPSON.





Avant que tu ne sois là a 'lyrical lullaby' to children

# Renaud's new book hot off the press last week

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A new book is hot off the press from Westmount's prolific children's writer Anne Renaud. Called *Avant que tu ne sois là*, it is published in French from her original unpublished English manuscript entitled *Before you Came*.

This is consistent with the fluently bilingual author's usual practice to write in English and shop a manuscript around to Canadian and US publishers before preparing her own French translation, which is now published by Les Éditions Héritage in its Monarch collection.

Witten for pre-schoolers, this book is a departure from Renaud's numerous others, which usually have a historical theme such as the invention of the potato chip (*Mr. Crum's Potato Predicament*) and the sinking of the *Empress of Ireland* (*Into the Mist*).

"It is a kind of love letter, prayer and lullaby to remind children how much they are loved," she explained last week. Though Renaud has no children of her own, she is a devoted aunt who was inspired by her own sister and how "desperately" she had longed to have children.

As a result, when Renaud's niece was born, she said, "I was able to relate to how parents feel toward their children and the magnitude of their love they carry in their hearts for them."

As she writes to the young reader on the opening pages: "Before you came, I wished you upon stars and howled you to the moon, And just like the moon calls to the tides, I called to you without yet knowing your name."



And it concludes, in part on pages 24-27: "Now you are here, our steps travel the same path, And I will fight armies for you.... You are my heart...and I am your home."

## Fantasy illustrations

Fantasy illustrations by Nahid Kazemi were suggested by Renaud "because I love her work and I was delighted that she accepted to illustrate the text."

The acceptance of the French version came just before the first COVID lockdown, Renaud told the *Independent*. "Since COVID, everything in the industry has been moving at a snail's pace, which is why it took so long to be published."

She said she hopes that the publisher will be able to sell the English rights to the book, which is expected to be available from the children's department at Westmount Public Library along her many other books.

One of Renaud's English books, *Gwendolyn's Pet Garden*, published in 2021 (see story April 13, 2021, p. 21) was selected last year for distribution by Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and more than 400,000 copies given to pre-school children and their families, Renaud said.

This program is described as "a turnkey, scalable, low cost, low risk, highly effective program promoting equitable access to early childhood educational resources" having "direct effect on the home literacy environment with families engaged in reading, school preparedness and academic achievement."

Before retiring a couple of years ago, Renaud had worked many years at Westmount's city hall as executive assistant in the mayor's office.



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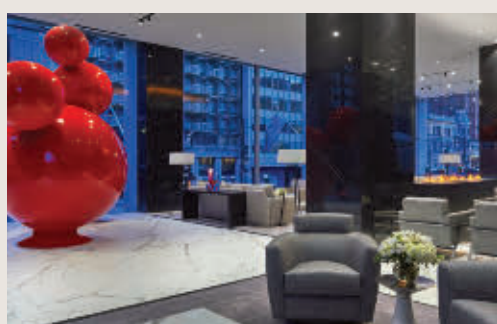
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*Dolphins' swimmers win bronze*  
**City pool hosts ALPS Division A finals**

By RALPH THOMPSON

Westmount hosted the Division A finals of the Association of Lakeshore Pools (ALPS) August 12 at the Westmount recreation centre swimming pool.

Division B, C and D competitions took place at other locations.

ALPS comprises 22 swimming clubs including the Westmount Dolphins and promotes water safety, operation standards, water treatment and the operation of aquatic programs. Activities also include water polo, synchronized swimming and diving.

The home team, the Westmount Dolphins, competed against six others from the West Island and beyond in what has developed into a highly competitive event.

“This is the 30th anniversary of the Dolphins,” said event organizer and volunteer coordinator Leta Polson. “We are supported by the city and by generous donors. We depend upon parents and volunteers to support these events, but it’s becoming harder to get volunteers today.”

Polson went on to explain what she sees as the benefits of swimming for children: to interact, compete and improve their skills.

*The meet*

The relay competitions quickly progressed from eight-year-olds and under to the senior class, 15 and older. The weather was perfect and the organizers quickly coordinated all the races. Coaches and supporters were cheering and shouting loudly for their teams.

The final race of the day, boys 15 and over, 4x50m, was a real squeaker with all four anchors within one length of each other. By 2:45 pm, the judges were adding up and confirming the numbers for the Alps Division A final.

Westmount Dolphins President Gillian Murray said, “Westmount came in with a strong third-place finish behind first-place Valois Pool of Pointe Claire and second-place Beaufort Pool of Beaconsfield.

“The Dolphins are especially proud as they were the smallest team of the seven teams competing in the A division, the strongest division of the Association of Lakeshore Pools (ALPS) league. This finish guarantees they remain in the A division.

“Almost every swimmer from the Dolphins and all of their relays have qualified to compete in the ALPS swimming finals taking place at Baie D’urfé Pool on Saturday, August 19.”



Lunch break at the ALPS swim meet. Competitors take a break and get some shade in their team tents.



Standing room only overlooking the swimming pool as a large crowd awaits the start of the swimming competitions.



Older swimmers demonstrating streamlined dives to start their races, above and below.





As summer winds down...

# Westmount rec centre looks ahead, behind

By ALICE MYERS

The Westmount Sports and Recreation department will continue to host, create and improve its various classes and

courses this year. A staple in nearly every Westmounter's life, the sports facility offers various activities suitable for people of all ages. The *Independent* spoke with a Westmount sports coordinator Gabrielle

Jay-Riendeau by phone on August 11.

Jay-Riendeau, a 10-year employee of the rec centre (in both part- and full-time positions), listed a few fan-favourite activities that will be recurring later this year, among them hockey, dance and art classes.

While the rec centre does not currently plan to introduce any new courses, it will be changing the indoor boys' soccer class curriculum to match the girls', which includes instructional aspects.

There have already been tweaks to the city's offering. This past summer, it added a new feature to its day camp – STEAM Week (i.e., science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics).

When asked what makes activities offered in Westmount different than in other neighbourhoods, Jay-Riendeau was quick to emphasize the unique sense of community in the rec centre and Victoria Hall. A former Westmount camp attendee herself, Jay-Riendeau says she counts herself lucky to get to watch the Westmount youth "grow up" and "see the same kids return, year after year," to participate in activities.

The recent blue-collar strike has also impacted rec activities – Jay-Riendeau

explains that manual tasks were placed upon herself and her colleagues – moving heavy equipment, cleaning, etc.

She points out that "maybe [the community] didn't realize how essential the blue-collar workers are to how activities are run.

"Everyone there really works extremely hard," Jay-Riendeau said of the Westmount city working environment. "We really do care so much."



A view of the Westmount recreation centre on August 21 from its St. Catherine/Academy Rd. parking lot. PHOTO: INDEPENDENT

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## Nugget, young and sweet



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Nugget is just a year old, a wonderful juvenile with handsome tabbie markings, an affectionate disposition and a youngster's playful ways.

He is presently at the Montreal SPCA cattery, waiting for a family to see him in this column and drop by the shelter to adopt him into loving arms.



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As the shelter is open every day from 10 am, you can plan your trip to visit Fletcher and the adoption coordinators soon. They are located in Côte des Neiges at 5215 Jean Talon St. West. Fletcher is waiting, he would be so happy in an active and affectionate family like yours.

Your neighbour, Lysanne

## We welcome your letters

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

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# Temple's Pride participation personal, religious

By JENNIFER BALL

The 2023 Montreal Pride parade drew record numbers and amidst those in attendance were two Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom congregants who had very personal reasons to be there.

The temple is located at the corner of Sherbrooke St. and Wood Ave., and it led the Jewish contingent at Montreal's Pride Parade that included Hillel Montreal and the Cummings Centre.

Mathieu Gelbhart is a Temple congregant who dressed head to toe in pink, replete with a Stetson hat, for the occasion. Gelbhart immigrated to Quebec in 2017.

"I'm from France and when I arrived in Montreal, I wanted to find a reform or liberal synagogue," Gelbhart said.

He decided to march in the parade because "it's important not only as a gay man, but also as a Jewish man to be here."

## *'I want that to be me one day'*

Aliza Perez is assistant to rabbis Grushcow and Kowalski at Temple. About 10 years ago, she went to her first Pride parade and noted a participating Jewish contingent.

"I said to myself: 'I want that to be me one day.' Ten years later, exactly, I got to walk in the parade and lead the group and it was the single-most-amazing experience that I have had in my life..."

"... a long time ago I was a religious Jew so it was hard to figure out how to balance my sexual identity with my Jewish identity. I find that being with Temple has really opened up my entire life and it has been a great experience just being 100 percent myself."

## *Religion and Pride?*

But on the heels of the parade boas, glitter-bombs and banners, how do the faithful disburden themselves of some divisive passages in their holy books that



Mathieu Gelbhart, a Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom congregant, at Montreal's Pride Parade on August 13. The parade started at the corner of Metcalfe St. and René Lévesque Blvd., and finished in the Gay village.

form the foundation for their faith?

"I believe it is all about interpretation," Perez said. "Reform Judaism is actually very progressive. Anyone in the LGBTQIA2+ community is widely accepted. The Reform community is very different than the other stream of Judaism in that regard."

"I think it's a question for Judaism and all religions," Gelbhart said. "It's how you read those scriptures. A lot of it is not straightforward. We also find answers in our common history..."

"I'm French. My family are death camp survivors on one side and on the other side

they were in the Resistance. So, I think tolerance is something that matters in the Jewish community."

## *Other Pride activities*

The August 13 parade was not the Temple's first pride-related activity, nor is it to be the last in 2023.

"We had Pride shabbat pot-luck dinner on June 30, we are having a Montreal family Pride day event in Temple on August 27, and November 10-11 is transgender weekend with Kate Brookes as a guest," Marcy Kastner, who is director of programming and community engagement at Temple, substantiated.

Brookes is an award-winning TV reporter-turned-producer and the mother of a trans daughter. She's a regular pundit for the US trans community.

In recent years, it has been asked by some if supporting a big street party really helps to highlight community issues like healthcare, education, employment, housing and social services inequality.

But as much as Pride parades were once demonstrations – beginning with the June 28, 1969 Stonewall Inn protest – the reason to participate can now be more personal than political.



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Retail Review  
VERONICA REDGRAVE

Westmount res Marcy Beraznik-Green-spoon, program manager strategic partnerships and projects at the Cummings Centre, invites adults to be kids again. She has organized a sleep-away camp weekend in the Laurentians in collaboration with the Cummings Centre and Camp B’nai Brith of Montreal. Proceeds go to both organizations.

The “Wellness Weekend” takes place September 8 to 10 at Camp B’nai Brith of Montreal on the shores of Lac Ludger.

The trip includes workshops on wellness and fitness (all levels) as well as camp activities: canoeing, paddleboard, rock climbing, arts & crafts and, yes, pickleball. (Classic camp smores are sure to be a hit.)

Accommodations offered are rooms for two with a full bathroom, or you can choose to stay in camp cabins (for six) with bathrooms and showers a few steps away. Meals and drinks are included.

Tax receipt from Camp B’nai Brith of Montreal for up to half the amount. Information: Wellnessweekend.ca.

# Forget summer camp! It’s fall camp (for adults)



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## Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

# Ometz welcomes new president, board members



Nancy Cleman, Dany Pollack, Janis Levine, Mia Goodman and Dominique McCaughey.

Agence Ometz recently held its first annual general meeting since the pandemic. The event began in the Cummings Centre Peace Garden with a cocktail dînette sponsored by iA Private Wealth, then attendees moved inside the centre for the main program, which featured remarks from CEO **Dominique McCaughey** and the board, as well as first-person client testimonials.

The event opened with a powerful speech from Ometz caseworker **Tihon Petanov**, a Ukrainian immigrant who now helps Jewish Ukrainian refugees – overwhelmingly women and school-aged children – re-build their lives in Montreal.

Outgoing president **Joel Shalit** gave a snapshot of the past year's accomplishments, highlighting that Ometz reached almost 12,000 people through its wide-ranging immigration, employment and social services.

Incoming president **Jeff Berkowitz** noted how fortunate he felt to be "part of this organization: helping ..... the vulnerable and provid- continued on p. 22

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Gail Small, Lesli Green and Mitch Shiller.



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**Social notes, cont'd from p. 21**  
ing support for people to help themselves.” The 160-year-old organization is in a period of active renewal, and the AGM marked a significant changeover in Ometz’s board of directors.

In addition to welcoming a new president, two new board members were introduced and four departing board members were honoured for their service. Noted during the evening were Nancy Cleman, David Martz, Igor Bernadski, Joel Shalit, Jeff Berkowitz, Karen Sigman, Bonnie Lester, Genevieve Busbib, Eric Fleury, Efrat Sterling-Harel, Frédéric Dayan, Nick Shinder, Lesli Green, Mitch Shiller. Janice

Heft, Brigitte Fortin, Lianne Haimovitz, Jonathan Sigler, Dany Pollack, Janis Levine, Mia Goodman and Ometz CEO Gail Small.

The evening closed with moving testimonials from three clients who described the profound impact Ometz has had on their lives. Agence Ometz is a Jewish human services agency offering social, employment and immigration services to help people fulfill their potential and to secure the growth and vibrancy of the Montreal community.

Please send information on your upcoming events to: [veronica@redgravepr.com](mailto:veronica@redgravepr.com).



Jonathan Sigler.



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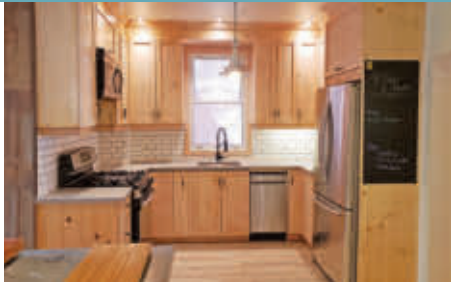
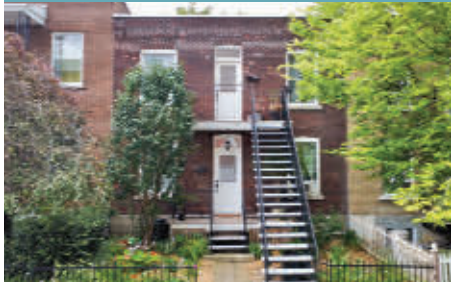
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