

38th Winter Carnival: Thurs. to Sat., Feb. 1 to 3

## Tried-and-true events, plus new ones, mark city's 150 years

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Westmount residents can expect to receive a notice from the city this week detailing the schedule for the city's 38th

winter carnival Thursday-Saturday, February 1-3 showing Frosty the mascot holding a poster marking the city's 150th anniversary.

Following a seniors' luncheon at the Contactivity Centre on Thursday and a PJ party for kids and parents on Friday at Victoria Hall, this year's main daylong outdoor Saturday activities at King George (Murray) Park feature the addition of new ones, the return of others and the tried-and-true traditional events.

"We have kept all the staples for carnival," said Dave Lapointe, division director, Culture, Sports, Recreation and Social Development. "These include tobogganing, sleigh rides, sugar shack, hot dog lunch, and the winter classic hockey game.

"We have added a ..... family letter hunt, a youth ..... continued on p. 7

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## Aren't rabbits for Easter?



This rabbit is living in an Arlington Ave. back yard. Even in winter, it appears to be very well fed, as seen January 23.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

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To have fun with words

## New Scrabble club for kids starts at library January 30

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

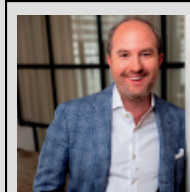
A Scrabble club is being introduced at Westmount Public Library starting January 30 for ages 10 to 13. It's one of hundreds of clubs across North America starting with children old enough to read as well as adults.

The first session of the new word-game program at the children's department will

run Tuesday afternoons from 4 to 5:30 pm until February 27. It is expected to be re-offered March 19 to May 14 after the spring break period, according to library officials. Registration for the current new program is required at 514.989.5229 or on the library's website.

"Our priority is for the children to have fun, encourage them to ..... play word games and give ..... continued on p. 8

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# City of Westmount talks about ‘Bell Let’s Talk’



Mayor Christina Smith holds the Bell “Cause pour la cause” flag with, from left, Benita Goldin, Contactivity Centre; councillors Elisabeth Roux, Kathleen Kez and Jeff Shamie; Laura Fish, Douglas Foundation; José Tiburcio, Bell Canada and, to the right of the flag, city staff including director general Julie Mandeville and Sports and Recreation director Dave Lapointe.

BY RALPH THOMPSON

Mayor Christina Smith, city councillors Elisabeth Roux, Jeff Shamie and Kathleen Kez and the city’s administration welcomed José Tiburcio, Bell Canada – senior manager municipal affairs, January 24 at 10:30 am to raise a flag outside city hall for Bell’s Let’s Talk campaign.

It marked the 14th year that Bell has led the “Cause pour la cause” crusade to support mental health across Canada.

Mayor Smith thanked all attendees, in particular Benita Goldin from the Contactivity Centre for its ongoing work reaching out to seniors and Laura Fish, the CEO of the Douglas Foundation.

“Since 2011, we have supported more than 1,100 organizations across the country by granting more than \$20 million in donations,” said Tiburcio. “Together we can reduce the stigma linked to mental illness.”

This year, Bell’s Let’s Talk campaign is focused on creating real change including organizations that provide services to the community, learning about mental health issues and starting conversations with loved ones, and nurturing well-being with positive practices.

Residents are encouraged to share their stories using the hashtag #BellLetsTalk.

Other participants included director general Julie Mandeville and Sports and Recreation director Dave Lapointe.

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# 135 requests for 'special passing attention'

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Public Security checked out 135 requests over the holiday season for the Special Passing Attention (SPA) service involving residents going away who want officers to check out their properties and remove tell-tale signs that homes are vacant.

Over this season, officers even made footsteps in the snow while checking doors and filed six reports detailing properties found not to be completely secured. These included unsecured secondary doors, meaning those at the side or rear.

Officers also reported removing parcels left on porches and were reported to be "key" in identifying several suspects involving thefts.

## PSO recovers stolen RAV4

A Public Security patroller on Lansdowne Ridge January 20 discovered a parked car that had a window broken, contents on the back seat that appeared to have been rummaged through and a dash camera ripped off. Police were contacted and identified the car, a RAV4, as having been stolen in Ontario. It was discovered at 2:50 pm. The RAV4s are reported to be among the most sought cars by thieves.

## Man admits to graffiti, ticketed \$664

Public Security received a call January 18 at 3:18 pm for a man defacing public property, officials said. A responding officer arrived on the scene in the lane behind Le Fournil bakery at 4910 Sherbrooke, just west of Prince Albert, and found a man with a large white-paint marker.

A witness who had stopped to question the subject was simply told "I'm tagging."

Police were called and arrived shortly after. Aged in his 30s, the Montreal resident was issued a ticket that totalled a fine of \$500 for defacing public property and a court fee of \$164.

## PSO thanked for assistance

Rather than a complaint related to a snow storm January 11, one email was reported to have been received by Public Security from a resident of Academy Rd. as a "shout-out" for the help she had received from a passing patroller.

"The officer stopped and quickly dug out a path for her car," said assistant director Kimberley Colquhoun. When asked, she identified him as PSO Anthony Rاندrianasolonirina.

## Need for donations continues

Despite a final total of \$6,700 received in Public Security's holiday food drive, requests continue to be reported, said assistant director Kimberley Colquhoun. In anticipation of the need. "I kept a few gift cards aside, as well as a box of non-perishable items," she said. "The need is dire this year and expected to continue through February."

## Remember: No more move-car alerts

Residents with on-street parking stickers are reminded that the city no longer calls them to warn of no-parking for snow removal operations, Public Security officials said last week.

This type of time-consuming "courtesy" call system was abandoned last year in the hopes residents will check for no-parking signage that can be placed some 12 hours before the snow removal.



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# Sledding season starts!



Left photo, five-year-old Raffi could barely stop giggling as she slithered down the slopes in Murray Hill (King George) Park January 27. Her parents moved from the Plateau to Westmount a couple of years ago and find the city and its parks a much more child-friendly environment. Right, from left: Oliver (left), 7, and Matisse, 4, on the same slopes January 20.



Left photo, a snow groomer was flattening the large snow mounds to create the toboggan runs in King George (Murray Hill) Park January 23. The groomer did a fast circle to face down the hill and then – whoops – the track parted company with the tractor. Artificial snowmaking had started by January 12, leaving huge un-sculpted hills of snow. The park opened officially on January 25, according to the city’s website. Right photo, the finished work on January 27.

PHOTOS: RALPH THOMPSON.

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## Memories of recent, not-so-recent carnivals



2023

Westmount's Winter Carnival was back in full swing last year (after a COVID diminution in 2021 and a COVID cancellation in 2022) in King George (Murray Hill) Park February 5, 2023. Draft horses Tristan, a Clydesdale, left, and Max, a crossbred Belgian-Persian, were trotting around the football field guided by Robert Coallie.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.



2020

At the carnival before the pandemic, February 8, 2020 at Murray Park, crossbred Belgian-Persian draft horses Baby and Max strode proudly in step around the soccer pitch guided by Robert Coallie (red cap).

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.



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## Reconstruction of Upper Lansdowne to be portrayed

# Major work proposals to be outlined at Vic Hall Feb. 1

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A third public meeting on the city's 2024 reconstruction project of Upper Lansdowne between Edgehill and Lansdowne Ridge is to take place Thursday, February 1 at Victoria Hall. The work is slated for 26 weeks from May though some of November.

Scheduled as a drop-in opportunity "at your convenience" from 4 to 8 pm, the Vic Hall event is an information session described as providing the proposed plans following feedback and comments from two other meetings, workshops and surveys.

Councillor Antonio D'Admico, of District 1, who reminded residents at the council meeting January 15 about the information meeting, also referred all concerned to the city's Engage website for details.

The previous meetings took place in November mainly involving concerned residents and the use of those accessing Summit Woods, picking up or dropping off students at Villa Ste. Marcelline on Upper Belmont.

The project is a major one in this year's

capital works budget. It involves replacement of the sewer and water networks, work on the public portion of water entries, replacing fire hydrants and work on Hydro Westmount infrastructure as well as re-design of the street and sidewalks.

The re-design feature seemed to dominate many of the comments already expressed. These include challenges, concerns and suggestions that can be found on some 35 pages of posted feedback by the consultation firm of Transfert.

These were identified as a need for designated crosswalks especially to access Devon Park, sidewalks used for taking walks, walking dogs, jogging and going to the park. Also reported were speeding, snow management and the need for additional or wrongly placed vegetation.

Others include common concerns around school zones particularly at school peak hours including the volume of traffic, drivers parking on existing crosswalks, double- or triple-parked and failing to stop at stop signs.

## Design & safety come on heels of consultation

# Second contract awarded for Forden re-development

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A second contract was awarded by city council January 15 for the re-development of Forden Ave. and Forden Cresc. – an area of confusing street design for which an initial contract for public consultation had been awarded December 4.

This latest one was to improve the design and safety of the two Fordens at a cost of \$366,770, including taxes, to Avizo Experts-Conseils Inc. Three other firms had also submitted bids, but their amounts were not reported since the "professional" contract was subject to a bid-weighting grid that includes other considerations such as quality.

Forden Ave. is where many motorists from Westmount Ave. turn down to Montrose and where northbound traffic takes a reverse route. It was on the intersecting Forden Cresc. where a cyclist had been fatally injured when reportedly blinded by sun (see story July 14, 2020, p. 10).

While the city had already implemented many recommendations of a coroner, now that reconstruction is required, several

councillors weighed in on the need to rebuild the two streets to be as safe and functional as possible.

### Volume of traffic

These included District 2 councillor Elisabeth Roux, who explained that when she had gone door to door campaigning, she found Forden-area residents very unhappy over the volume of traffic, and stated that "I'm just happy people will be heard."

Emphasizing what he called the value of public consultation over street re-design, District 1 councillor Antonio D'Amico had noted when the first contract was awarded that two recent public consultations on Upper Lansdowne in November had been well attended. A third one, called a public information session, takes place this Thursday, February 1, at Victoria Hall (see separate story p. 7).

The contract was moved by Councillor Conrad Peart, whose commissionership includes infrastructure and urban planning.

### Winter carnival, continued from p. 1

skating show, and have brought back the puck shooting contest. We have also added some extra fun games to play up on the soccer pitch. The weather forecast is promising so we are looking forward to a great turnout!" The family letter hunt is described as "a treasure hunt to find letters that spell out a magic word."

### Sign up for lunch, PJ party

Lapointe noted the return after a COVID hiatus of the seniors' lunch on Thursday, which requires registration at [contactivitycentre.org](http://contactivitycentre.org) or in person at the centre, 4695 de Maisonneuve. Cost: \$13.

The second required sign-up is to obtain free tickets for the "PJ Party" on Friday for kids aged 6 and over and their parents at Victoria Hall from 7 to 9:30 pm. These can be obtained by calling Community Events at 514.989.5226 or at [eventbrite@westmount.org](mailto:eventbrite@westmount.org).

This event features games, snacks and a family screening of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem* (2023).

"Attendees will receive small loot bags, popcorn will be served and there will be a photo booth and colouring station," according to Emily Gamble of Community Events. "Parents will also enjoy the humour and 80s and 90s nostalgia of seeing the Ninja Turtles on the big screen."

### Schedule for Saturday

Saturday's outdoor events generally start at 10 am and wind up at 2 to 3 pm. Among them are the winter classic hockey game at 10 am featuring the M7 (under age 7) players of the city's in-house league. The sleigh rides are scheduled from 10:45 am to 3 pm. During the lunch period (12 noon to 1:30 pm) free hot dogs will be offered and a "chuck a puck" contest will take place.

Between 1 and 2 pm, people are invited "to skate with the city's mascots" and the main events conclude at 3 pm with family skating. Anyone planning to toboggan is reminded to bring their own and advised to wear a helmet.

See photos of past winter carnivals on p. 6

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



This graffiti was put up between January 17 and 20, as seen January 23. Details of graffiti obscured by Hernandez/Independent.

FORMER TRAIN STATION NEEDS SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

I would like to bring attention to an incident that occurred last weekend in our residential complex. Unfortunately, our back lane was defaced with malicious scribbles drawn by vandals. Our complex consists of 16 townhouses located beside the old train station. (Please see photo.)

As you can imagine, this problem breaks our hearts. It is too close to our soul. It is a nightmare to be in a place where vandals have the time to make such a mess.

In 2010 and 2012, I wrote two letters addressing the problems in this area. And it took 12 years to have a steel trash receptacle installed! Only last year, all the lights were fixed, also after 12 years.

Back in 2012, we suggested that the city

buy and install non-invasive surveillance cameras directed at the walls of the old train station, along with warning signs to serve as a deterrent to vandals. The cameras could be triggered at sunset and could be on until morning.

Shall we wait 12 more years to have non-invasive surveillance cameras at the old train station? Shall we just accept that the vandals own our city and our houses?

Shall we just accept that allocating a couple of thousand dollars for this solution is too costly for the city?

How come the city had enough money to buy the lighted tree beside the entrance of the library? It looks dated and out of place – just waste of money.

The vandals should not feel safe destroying someone's property.

DIANA HERNANDEZ, ST. CATHERINE ST.

PLEASE STOP THE NIGHT SNOW CLEARING

On several occasions this winter, we have been jolted out of sleep by the scraping and sharp cracks of heavy equipment clearing snow off our street at just after 6 o'clock in the morning.

I do not need to describe how this disrupts the whole following day. Such disturbances to the well-being of citizens should not be allowed until the sun is well up in the sky, not in the night.

Of course, the serious question arises as to how Westmount will compensate for such loss. And it certainly should not continue.

ROGER JOCHYM, LEWIS AVE.

Scrabble club, cont'd from p. 1

as many students as possible the opportunity to expand their word skills," explained volunteer Christine Cardinal of Murray Hill, who initiated the program.

"We will guide them, provide feedback and tips on how to make the best plays. It's interesting to see how well the kids remember everything" after being given crib sheets for two-letter and three-letter words and those starting with J, Q, Z and X.

Well-known as the longtime former president of the Westmount Masters' Swim Club and a current judge of the library's McEntyre Writing Competition, Cardinal will be joined at the weekly sessions by Josh Sokol, who won the North American Players Scrabble championship for 2023, and Kyle Fella, described as "a rising Scrabble star."

Asked last week for her link between swimming and Scrabble, Cardinal answered quickly: "I'm competitive. I also have a sense of community."

While Cardinal had initially belonged

Corrections

Contrary to what we wrote in the story (January 23, p. 10) about the city's agreement to enable residents of the adjacent Montreal district of Tradau to use Westmount's sports and recreation activities, this entente does not include library services as had originally been reported in 1997.

\*

The name of the city's interim HR director, Roslane Mediouni, was incorrectly spelled on p. 1 of the story (January 23) about the city's white-collar agreement, but was correctly written on the story's turn on p. 5 and in the p. 5 story on his interim appointment.

\*

Oops. For the first time in a long time, an "XX" placeholder was printed in the paper (January 23, p. 6). It was regarding the final disappearance date of the leftover Christmas trees in the Metro grocery store parking lot. We can confirm they were gone by January 24. – DP.

to a Scrabble club at Loyola High School and her own children had played at Royal West Academy, "it makes sense to have a community club," she said. She wants children to know that with the start of the Westmount club at the library "there's a community waiting for you."

Cardinal, who has played in a women's Scrabble group in Côte St. Luc for some 20 years, said she had received a US\$600 grant to start new youth programs. This is to use for small things like prizes and equipment. This came from the NASPA Foundation for Youth Literacy. The NASPA stands for the North American Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology.

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

We are Westmount

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## Resident: Caviar for rent?



We know that one doesn't buy beer, one only rents it. Now, with inflation, it seems that Westmount gentry can no longer afford to purchase caviar. Consequently, La Fournagerie's [now defunct] shop, itself for rent on Sherbrooke at Prince Albert, is offering the rental of caviar.

PHOTO & CAPTION COURTESY OF PATRICK MARTIN.



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Westmount  
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Westmount  
BEDS: 6+1 | BATHS: 4+1  
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MLS 23490505

INTRODUCING



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BEDS: 3 | BATHS: 3+1  
\$2,595,000  
MLS 12390198



NDG  
BEDS: 3+1 | BATHS: 3+1  
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MLS 28640109



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# infoWESTMOUNT

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NOUVELLES

PROCHAINE SÉANCE  
DU CONSEIL

Lundi 5 février

NEWS

NEXT COUNCIL  
MEETING

Monday, February 5



### Carnaval d'hiver de Westmount

**Du 1 au 3 février.** Des activités pour tous et toutes : soirée pyjama, promenades en traîneau, patinage, cabane à sucre, feu de joie, et beaucoup plus ! Vous trouverez l'horaire complet dans votre boîte à lettres ou à [westmount.org](https://westmount.org).



### Westmount Winter Carnival

**February 1-3.** Activities for everyone: PJ party, sleigh rides, tobogganning, skating, sugar shack, bonfire, and much more! You will find the full schedule in your mailbox or online at [westmount.org](https://westmount.org).

#### Piste de luge du PKG ouverte

L'équipe des Travaux publics est fière de vous annoncer que la piste de luge du parc King George est ouverte. Soyez prudent.e.s, respectez les autres usagers, respectez la signalisation et amusez vous !

#### Sports et loisirs : l'inscription pour le printemps débute le 13 février

Inscrivez-vous en ligne ou en personne au Centre des loisirs de Westmount à partir du 13 février. Le guide d'activités est affiché à [westmount.org](https://westmount.org).

#### Arbres du parc King George : session d'information

**Lundi 12 février, 17 h 30**, hôtel de ville. Assistez à la présentation du plan d'ensemble pour la plantation d'arbres pour le parc King George. Pour plus d'informations, visitez le site [engage.westmount.org/parckinggeorge](https://engage.westmount.org/parckinggeorge).

#### Patinoires extérieures

L'état des patinoires peut changer souvent avec la température. Vérifiez les conditions avant de vous rendre; visitez [westmount.org/patinoires](https://westmount.org/patinoires).

#### Carte d'accès aux installations 2024

Demandez votre carte en ligne ou en personne au Centre des loisirs de Westmount. [westmount.org](https://westmount.org)

#### KGP toboggan run open

The Public Works team is pleased to announce that the toboggan run at King George Park is now open. Please be careful, respect the signage, show respect to other users, and have fun!

#### Sports and recreation: spring registration begins February 13

Sign up online or in person at the Westmount Recreation Centre starting February 13. The activity guide is posted at [westmount.org](https://westmount.org).

#### King George Park tree project: information session

**Monday, February 12, 5:30 p.m.**, City Hall. Attend the presentation of the comprehensive plan for tree planting in King George Park. For more information about the project, visit [engage.westmount.org/kinggeorgepark](https://engage.westmount.org/kinggeorgepark).

#### 2024 Facility Membership Card

Apply for your card online or in person at the Westmount Recreation Centre. [westmount.org](https://westmount.org)

#### Outdoor skating rinks

Rink conditions vary often with the weather. Check in advance at [westmount.org/rinks](https://westmount.org/rinks).

## BIBLIOTHÈQUE ET ÉVÉNEMENTS COMMUNAUTAIRES



### Galerie du Victoria Hall — exposition

**Jusqu'au 16 février.** Œuvres de Sara Colby.

### Lecture de A à Z avec Sherry

**Les samedis de 10 h 30 à 11 h 30, du 27 janvier au 24 février**, Bibliothèque. En anglais. Un nouveau programme de lecture interactive pour les enfants de 5 à 7 ans et leurs parents ou gardiens. Inscrivez-vous à [westlib.org](https://westlib.org).

### Club de Scrabble (10 à 13 ans)

**Les mardis de 16 h à 17 h 30, du 30 janvier au 27 février**, Bibliothèque. Pour perfectionner ses compétences et maîtriser l'art du jeu des mots. Inscrivez-vous à [westlib.org](https://westlib.org).

### Bloomsday — James Joyce's Birthday

**Dimanche 4 février, 14 h**, Bibliothèque. Des lectures par des personnalités locales. En anglais. collaboration avec le Festival Bloomsday Montréal. Inscrivez-vous à [westlib.org](https://westlib.org).

### Projection spéciale de la Saint-Valentin : Moonstruck (1987)

**Mercredi 14 février, 19 h**, Victoria Hall. Avec du pop-corn gratuit et des boissons thématiques. Inscrivez-vous à [westmount.org](https://westmount.org).

### Westmount 150 : premier événement officiel

**Judi 22 février, 18 h 30**, Victoria Hall. La Ville donne le coup d'envoi d'une année entière de célébrations avec une soirée spéciale. Au menu : l'artiste du cirque Sarah Louis-Jean, le violoniste Eric Speed et le duo humoristique Bowser and Blue. Musique, bouchées, bar payant et plus. Billets : 20 \$ Inscrivez-vous à [westmount.org](https://westmount.org).

### 125<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la Bibliothèque

Restez à l'affût des annonces d'événements spéciaux et préparez-vous à célébrer avec nous !

### Concours littéraire McEntyre 2024

Nous t'invitons à écrire au sujet des bibliothèques, des livres et des mots, comme si la bibliothèque nous parlait. **Date limite : le dimanche 24 mars.**

### Westmount 150: first official event

**Thursday, February 22, 6:30 p.m.**, Victoria Hall. The City is kicking off a full year of celebration with a special evening featuring circus artist Sarah Louis-Jean, violonist Eric Speed and the iconic musical comedy duo Bowser and Blue. Join us for music, appetizers, cash bar and surprises. Tickets: \$20. Register at [westmount.org](https://westmount.org).

### 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Library

Watch for special event announcements and get ready to celebrate with us!

### 2024 McEntyre Literary Competition

We invite you to write about libraries, books, and words, as if the library is actually speaking to us. **Deadline: Sunday, March 24.**

### Gallery at Victoria Hall — exhibition

**Until February 16.** Works by Sara Colby.

### Reading A to Z with Miss Sherry

**Saturdays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. from January 27 to February 24**, Library. A new interactive reading programme for children ages 5 to 7 and their parents or guardians. Register at [westlib.org](https://westlib.org).

### Scrabble Club (10 to 13 yr olds)

**Tuesdays from 4 to 5:30 p.m., January 30 to February 27**, Library. Hone your skills and master the art of wordplay. Register at [westlib.org](https://westlib.org).



### Bloomsday — James Joyce's Birthday

**Sunday, February 4, 2 p.m.**, Library. Readings by local personalities, in collaboration with Festival Bloomsday Montreal. Register at [westlib.org](https://westlib.org).

### Special Valentine's Day screening: Moonstruck (1987)

**Wednesday, February 14, 7 p.m.**, Victoria Hall. Featuring themed drinks and free popcorn. Register at [westmount.org](https://westmount.org).



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VILLE DE | CITY OF  
WESTMOUNT



## Police Report

# Remote video captures images of Westmount Square boutique thief

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Armed with a good description, crime investigators at the Montreal police's Station 12 are hoping to identify the perpetrator of an aggravated robbery that took place at a Westmount Square boutique on January 19.

Around 1:30 pm, he took advantage of the momentary absence of a store employee to raid the cash register, without realizing he was being watched remotely over a security camera connection.

According to Cst. Mike Yigit, Station 12's community relations officer, the boutique employee had to leave for a few minutes. So, she phoned her employer to advise him that he should switch on the remote camera system so that he could keep an eye on things during her absence.

While monitoring the video feed, the employer saw a man enter the boutique. After seemingly realizing there was no one there, the suspect was seen proceeding

behind the point-of-sale counter where he was observed forcing open the closed cash register.

"So, the boss at a distance saw what was going on, called the employee and told her to rush back to the boutique," said Yigit. "When she got there, she saw the man leave, exit the store."

Since the employer had told her he had witnessed the suspect tampering with the cash register, she immediately checked and saw it was empty. She followed the suspect out into the mall corridor, where she confronted him. He responded by pushing her away.

Cst. Yigit pointed out that with that pushing gesture, the suspect's act of robbery took on an element of violence. Shortly after this, according to a complaint report filed by the employee, the suspect dropped the money he'd stolen and ran away.

The investigators have a good description of the suspect furnished by the boutique employee, as well as clear images of

him from the video security system.

### One more car theft

Although a wave of automobile thefts that swept through Westmount late last year appears to have receded for the time being, there was one exception at the beginning of last week.

According to Station 12 incidents reports, a Jaguar F-Pace compact luxury crossover SUV was stolen on January 21 from a parking spot near the corner of Forde and Montrose avenues in the middle area of Westmount.

"It's the typical story," said Yigit, noting that the circumstances of the theft matched those of many other stolen car incidents. The last time the owner saw the vehicle was at 10 o'clock the previous evening. By the next day around noon, he noticed it was missing.

### No break-ins, perhaps due to cold

It's notable that Station 12 has received

no reports of household or business break-and-enter incidents at least since the beginning of the year.

"Usually they come in waves," said Yigit, adding that burglaries tend to be committed by individuals or sometimes small groups of organized criminals who become active periodically.

"Also, the weather can be a big factor," he continued. "It's been very cold. And when it's very cold, the burglars don't like to come out."

## Naked woman draws first responders outside Atwater Metro station

By JENNIFER BALL

In the early hours of the evening of January 25, police and an ambulance were called to the corner of Atwater Ave. and de Maisonneuve Blvd. to assist a middle-aged woman who had removed all her clothing and was causing a commotion out on the street, right outside Atwater Metro station.

Sabrina Gauthier of the SPVM (Service

de Police de la Ville de Montréal) media relations department indicated that police were called to the scene because "a naked woman was on the street screaming."

Eventually paramedics were witnessed attending to her.

Gauthier said the police report at the time indicated that the individual was very agitated and "suffered from mental illness."

A naked woman was photographed June 14, 2023 walking east on the north side of St. Catherine St. just before Wood. Given the absence of context, the *Independent* did not publish the (unsalacious) photo.

The *Independent's* source queried at the time: "A new trend?" but it is not known if this incident is connected to the January 25 event.



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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



# Wonderful Poncho is waiting for a family



9 Lives  
LYSANNE FOWLER

Most elegant, Poncho is a very handsome two-toned grey-and-cream Persian. He is an affectionate and dignified fellow, presently at the Montreal SPCA cattery. Poncho is a very healthy three-year-old, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped. He is de-clawed on both front feet, which makes him an indoor-only cat. He is available for a visit at the shelter, as it is open every day of the week, from 12

noon to 8 pm Monday to Friday, and from 10 am to 6 pm on Saturdays and Sundays. Please do not hesitate to consult the Montreal SPCA website at [www.sPCA.com](http://www.sPCA.com), then scroll to Poncho's information page from his identification number, 2000042946, and plan to visit the SPCA at 5215 Jean Talon St. West in Côte des Neiges, Montreal H4P 1X4. You will meet with adoption coordinators on site and visit the cattery. Please bring a carrier and, if a new one is in order, you can select all the accessories you need at their onsite boutique. Stunning Poncho is a lovely soul, he looks forward to cuddles and playtime in a wonderful new family as soon as possible. Your neighbour, Lysanne



# Adorable young Stuart



Westmount  
A-dog-tions  
LYSANNE FOWLER

Bright and social, here is a juvenile in need of a family from our neighbourhood. Stuart would fit right in: He is intelligent and cuddly. His sweet face has a lot of Boston in it, maybe it's the bright eyes or the funny ears. Delightful, he is making friends with everyone at the Montreal SPCA kennel. He is ready to go to a new home, as he is very healthy, up to date with his inoculations,

neutered and microchipped. Please open the Montreal SPCA website page for him at [www.sPCA.com](http://www.sPCA.com), then scroll by his identification number, 2000082556. You can then plan your visit to the SPCA shelter, which is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West in Côte des Neiges, Montreal H4P 1X4. It is open every day, from 12 noon to 8 pm Monday to Friday, then from 10 am to 6 pm on Saturdays and Sundays. You will meet with an adoption coordinator on site then visit the kennel to meet with Stuart after discussing your adoption interest. Please do not hesitate. Stuart is a great puppy. Your neighbour, Lysanne



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# Alexis Nihon-Westmount Square tunnel closes for 10 days

By JENNIFER BALL

The tunnel that connects Westmount Square to Alexis Nihon and the Atwater Metro station was recently closed for 10 days. The closure started on January 12, and the tunnel was re-opened January 22.

Residents of Westmount Square's towers 2 and 3, who are largely *de facto* condo owners (see November 29, 2022, p. 9), were notified of the closure by a letter that was affixed to the doors of their elev-



What appears to be water damage and repair work in the middle section of the tunnel between Westmount Square and the Atwater Metro station, as seen January 26.

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ators by Creccal Investments Ltd., which is a property management company that owns the shopping mall and office towers.

The tunnel was closed due to a water leak, the *Independent* learned when a resident of tower 3 spoke about the incident.

The *Independent* had previously reached out to Noemie Palenzuela and Mélanie Castonguay in the marketing and communication department of Alexis Nihon, but there was no response in time for the *Independent's* print deadline. The *Indepen-*

*dent* also reached out to Amir Chouyoukh, who is a property manager at Creccal, but no response was received.

"It has been repaired," said the resident of Tower 3 – who wanted to go on record but requested anonymity – while referring to the ceiling of the tunnel where there had been a water leak.

On inspection of the tunnel, there is still what appears to be damage on the ceiling in one section where a quantity of water seems to have seeped through and stained

it in a large patch. A black rectangle appendage was affixed to another portion of the ceiling where there had also been damage. New plastering of those areas has not yet been undertaken.

When the *Independent* last investigated the issue (see May 6-7, 2008, p. 1), the consensus seemed to be that Westmount Square was responsible for the tunnel, although there were other views. Creccal bought its part of Westmount Square in 2015.



**SESSION D'INFORMATION**

## Les arbres du parc King George

La Ville de Westmount vous invite à assister à la présentation du plan de plantation d'arbres basé sur les commentaires des résidents lors de la consultation publique du 31 août 2023 pour le parc King George.

**LE 12 FÉVRIER 2024 À 17 H 30 | L'HÔTEL DE VILLE (4333, RUE SHERBROOKE O.)**

**INFORMATION SESSION**

## The trees of King George Park

The City of Westmount invites you to attend the presentation of the tree-planting plan based on resident feedback from the August 31, 2023, public consultation for King George Park.

**FEBRUARY 12, 2024 AT 5:30 P.M. | CITY HALL (4333 SHERBROOKE STREET W.)**



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[engage.westmount.org/kinggeorgepark](https://engage.westmount.org/kinggeorgepark)



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# Neven working to bring beach tennis to Cuban kids, Stayner Park



City Views

VERONICA REDGRAVE

The word “tennis” conjures classic images: courts, rackets and yellow balls. Beach tennis, however, is a slightly different game.

Glenn Neven, owner of Greene Ave.’s MyShoeShop.ca, is a super fan. He’s also a super player: he won the 2022 mixed doubles championship in Aruba.

Beach tennis doesn’t actually need a beach, although the game is only played on a sand surface. It is governed by the ITF (International Tennis Federation). The ball is the same size, but softer. And it stays in the air the entire game. Rackets are shorter – “more like a paddle” – and they are held higher above the body, like a “tennis volley.” There’s only one serve, and one final point: no advantage in/out. The court is the same size as beach volleyball, and the net is 1.7 meters high.

Just back from Cuba, Glenn had a tale to tell. Working with Carlos Toledo, a pro there, he brought beach tennis to a modest little sports and racket club in Havana.

“This club had no running water and no electricity. The kids were playing on dirt.” So Glenn suggested that sand be brought in. But first they had to build a



Glenn Neven with prizes he won playing beach tennis.

fence so “the sand wouldn’t be stolen.”

However, the local government didn’t allow the fence. So now Glenn has a mission. He’s raising money so that they can transport kids to a local beach.

“I made a logo for them, and I’m using the Facebook beach tennis community

with the goal of buying them equipment as well. We don’t need much; about \$2,500.”

I was surprised to learn that in Montreal, apparently there are about 100 courts suitable for beach tennis – for example in TMR and Mohawk Park, and at Tennis 13,



Some of the Cuban players.

where Glenn used to play on the men’s tennis team.

He also has a local objective: to bring beach tennis to Stayner Park.

“There’s already an asphalt volleyball court there.” He plans to make a submission to the city of Westmount.

## Westmount Battery closes out 2023

The all-volunteer Westmount Battery held its annual dinner at the armoury of the 2nd Field Artillery on Côte des Neiges Rd. just outside Westmount on October 25. “We also fired one of the 214-year-old

Westmount cannon,” said battery president and former city councillor Patrick Martin.

The two cannon are owned by the city of Westmount and were in Westmount

Park to the east of the library from 1899 until 2006.

They have only recently been refurbished with new carriages and made fireable (see September 29, 2015, p. 1, September

3, 2019, p. 8, November 2, 2021, p. 1, 29).

The first, post-1897, firing of a cannon was for Queen Elizabeth II’s platinum jubilee (see June 7, 2022, p. 8). The 1897 occasion was Queen Victoria’s diamond jubilee.



◀From left, top row: Jean-Farel Nguemtchouang, Frédérick Lanoes, Benoît Dion and Jocelyn Blanchet; bottom row: Thomas Savoie, commander of the battery Gilles Aubé, Charles de Kovachich, Patrick Martin, George Bowser and Dominic Varvaro.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF D. VARVARO.



# Villa Sainte-Marcelline bring its music to St. Léon de Westmount



Social Notes  
VERONICA REDGRAVE

The annual benefit concert Les Marcel- lines Chantent Noël at St. Léon de West- mount church was a great success, raising over \$45,000 for bursaries. More than 100 students sang and performed a repertoire of holiday classics, showcasing the music program offered at Villa Sainte-Marcelline, the all-girls French school in Westmount.

Anne Mykytiuk, choir director and head of the music option offered at the school, prepared the musicians and singers for the program she organized. The event was hosted by the funny and talented Julien Patenaude and was kicked off by the presi- dent of the school’s board of directors, Viviane Croux, who welcomed guests.

For the first time, a benefit dessert pre- ceded the concert.

What a magical night! Not only was there a holiday spirit in the frosty air, but the über-tempting dessert reception offered “sprinkles!”, baklava, brownies, ginger- bread dreidels and pretty pastel macarons.



Michael Gentile and Viviane Croux.

Families gathered in the church base- ment to enjoy the delicious delights pre- pared by the teachers. A twinkling tree, bal-



Anne Mykytiuk and Hubert Lacroix.

loons and massive red poinsettias heralded the moment. Girls getting ready to sing were dressed in their school uniforms

adorned with a red poinsettia. Attending Marcelline students wore school uni- *continued on p. 18*



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**Social notes, cont'd from p. 17**

forms: black tights, smart shoes and tartan skirts to the knees. Student **Aya Karam**, who wasn't performing, looked street-cool in a leather jacket and sequins.

Amidst the uniform looks, there was a touch of tulle. **Melissa Varadi** (three years old) who hopes to attend Marcelline next year, looked ballet-lovely in white tulle, there with mum **Lilly Rose Varadi** and Marcelline student sister **Eva-Marie Varadi**.

Due to inclement weather, many uniforms were paired with "wellies" (Wellington rubber boots). There with her dad **Stefano Lucini**, **Minerva Lucini's** were my favourite: a beautiful bright blue.

Board members present included president **Viviane Croux**, first vp at Cheffe Québec, BMO Entreprises, there with her daughter **Alexandra Ghoche**, and vice-president **Michael Gentile**, partner Bastion Asset Management, there with his wife **Ellie** and daughters **Eva**, **Emmanuelle** and **Hannah Gentile**.

Also noted were **Hubert Lacroix** and his daughters **Margaux** and **Juliette Bélanger-Lacroix**; **Helen Antoniou** and **Andrew Molson** and **Sophia Molson**; **Jennifer Cosgrove** and **Olivier Setlakwe** with daughter **Isabelle Setlakwe**, and **Nakin Plaski** and **Philippe Fortier** with **Olivia** and **Camille Fortier**.

The benefit event was organized by the Villa Sainte-Marcelline Foundation. Committee president was **Hubert Lacroix**, vp of the foundation, working with hands-on helpers from the school's faculty: **Yolande Gaudreau**, **Sophie Gaudreau-Pinsonneault**, **Anne Mykytiuk** and **Nives Bazergui**.

This December's event was particularly significant as it comes after a tumultuous year in the school's history (for a summary and the finale, see "A deal is struck! – Villa Sainte-Marcelline school to acquire its campus," June 6, 2023, p. 10).

Judging by the enthusiastic attendance and participation of the school's community, everyone I spoke to was confident that the future looks bright for Villa Sainte-Marcelline.



Isabelle Setlakwe and Jennifer Cosgrove.



Margaux and Juliette Bélanger-Lacroix.



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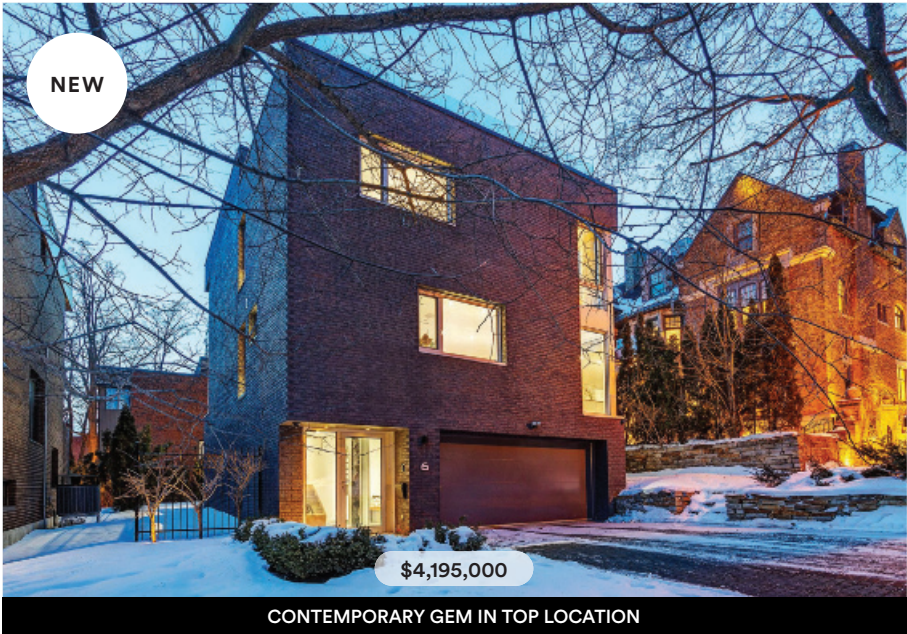




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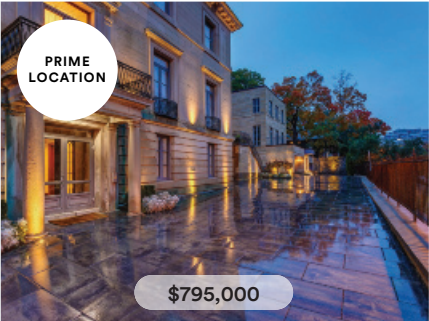


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