

Planning begins for 2025 municipal election

Province asked to renew city's existing electoral-district boundaries

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

With the next municipal election less than two years away, in November 2025, city council February 5 approved a resolution asking Quebec to renew the current electoral district boundaries for Westmount.

This is because they comply with variances of less than 15 percent concerning the number of electors in each.

In moving the resolution, Councillor Jeff Shamie, whose commissionership includes administration, explained that this is consistent with the election act, which states that by March 15 of the year preceding an election, municipalities may apply to confirm the electoral divisions of their territory based on the numbers of electors.

As a result, Westmount's electoral district boundaries are expected to remain unchanged.

Westmount is "topped" by District 1, the largest district geographically. This generally includes The Boulevard and Cedar and the entire summit area to city limits at the east, west and north. This council seat is held by Antonio D'Amico.

The two districts immediately south are numbers 2 and 3. Number 2, represented by Councillor Elisabeth Roux, is bounded to the south by Côte St. Antoine, to the west by city limits with NDG and to the east by Aberdeen, Church Hill and Côte St. Antoine.

District 3 beside it to the east, is bounded by Mount Stephen, Church Hill and Aberdeen to the west as well as Sherbrooke to the *continued on p. 8*

Westmount looking good for 150!



The city sold out its 150th anniversary event at Victoria Hall February 22. This apparatus was used by circus artist Sarah Louis-Jean as she performed with violinist Emilie Livernois-Desroches. See p. 21 for more coverage.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

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Jogger kicks dog in Summit Woods

By JENNIFER BALL

While cycling is not permitted in Summit Woods, it attracts many runners, off-leash dogs and dog owners. Recently, a two-legged runner had a violent altercation with a four-legged one. The canine was off-leash in compliance with the park's rules: dogs are permitted to be between November 1 and April 15.

Max, who did not want to share her last name, told the *Independent* that she has been going to Summit Woods for approximately 30 years, with every generation of

dog she has owned during that timespan. She was ill prepared, however, for a January encounter that her 10-pound dog had.

"Somebody kicked my little dog: my little boy, Oliver... I am coming into the park and some [expletive] jogger comes up and just kicks him. All [Oliver] did was to go up to the jogger, to say 'Hi' and to sniff his leg, and he kicked him and launched him several feet. He is just a tiny little dog!..."

"I said 'Excuse me, sir. If you do not like dogs, why are you here?' This is literally the only place in the city where dogs can just run."

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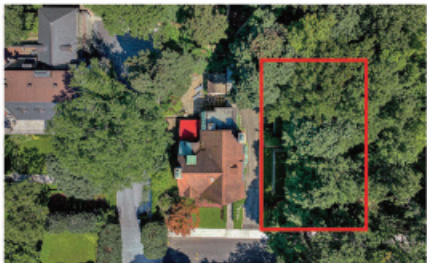
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Check-in participants fêted on Valentine's Day

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Some 30 residents who participate in a check-in service run by the Contactivity seniors' centre and Public Security were visited February 13 and presented with a chrysanthemum and small package of chocolate truffles for Valentine's Day.

The recipients were those registered in the joint project "Bonjour Westmount/Good morning Westmount" check-in program, a personalized service for seniors and persons with reduced autonomy.

The visit, which included dispatcher Alex Paleologopoulos, provided an opportunity for many to put a face to a voice they have come to know during the check-in Saturdays and Sundays when the service is handled by Public Security rather than Contactivity, said Kimberley Colquhoun, assistant Public Security director.



From left, Councillor Kathleen Kez, Public Security dispatcher/parking inspector Alex Paleologopoulos and Public Safety Officer Julie Noiret deliver Valentine flowers and chocolates.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY OF WESTMOUNT.

Safety fencing found unsecured on Roxborough Ave.

A public safety officer found a worksite that had been left unsecured on Roxborough Ave. in upper Westmount February 17 at 5:34 pm, according to Public Security officials. It was not reported whether the site was the long-vacant one at civic number 45, for which a permit to build a new house was approved at a hearing of

the demolition committee February 5 (see story February 13, p. 3).

An entrance used for machinery appeared to have been broken open. While fresh footsteps were noticed in the snow, no one was found on the site and a contact was informed. The officer put together a temporary closure.

Warning to parkers: Don't block driveways

A tow truck was called to remove a parked car blocking a driveway on Westmount Ave. near Lansdowne February 21, Public Security officials said. A ticket for \$210 was issued including the fine and the fee for towing. The car was relocated to Lansdowne. If the car had not needed towing, the ticket would have been \$121. Whether or not towing is required depends on the urgency of the situation. Officials urge all motorists to take special care not to block driveways and to keep an eye out for driveways that may be blocked by an accumulation of snow.

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Happy Clients: Their smiles, their gratitude – it fuels my passion. To see someone step into their new home, eyes wide with wonder, is pure magic. It's why I do what I do.

Making Moves: Here's to making moves in the years ahead. To finding that perfect place where memories will bloom, laughter will echo, and dreams will unfold.

Cue the Music: As we raise our glasses, let the music play. Let's toast to the past, the present, and the adventures yet to come.

Cheers to you, my dear clients, and to the journey ahead!

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One-step site for city permits, licences, information

Online ‘citizen portal’ opens Feb. 26 to centralize requests

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

See a pothole to be filled? Or need a permit for a dog licence or to file an application for an Urban Planning permit? These are among the city’s many items that are being made available to access online starting February 26 as part of a “resident” or “citizen” portal.

Described as a “convenient” way to pull together on one platform the various requests and application forms for filing reports, accessing services or obtaining information in a single step, the portal is designed to be used from online devices including mobile phones.

‘Gateway’ for city services

“It will serve as a gateway for all services,” said Councillor Matt Aronson at the city council meeting February 5.

Aronson, whose commissionership includes citizen engagement, explained that the portal is the first phase of the city’s new online experience and a re-design of the website set for later this spring or summer.

Accessible from Westmount.org, the new portal was described on the website as offering a modern and accessible platform “that’s quick and easy to use.”

On the other hand, the Engage platform will continue to be maintained as the source for surveys and public consultation, according to Sebastian Samuel, director of Communications.

Samuel has been overseeing the new citizen portal along with the IT department.

Registration help

“For residents who may be less familiar with computers and the web, our team is offering registration sessions at city hall, the library and Westmount recreation centre (WRC),” he said. “This is to assist and guide them through the navigation or registration process.”

These sessions will take place February 28 and 29, between 10 am and 3 pm. Along with answering questions online, over the phone or in person, he added, “we will provide online tutorials detailing each step to follow.”

Car towed after 2-vehicle collision at Dorchester and Atwater

A patrolling public safety officer came across a two-car accident at Atwater and Dorchester February 21 at 8:11 am that blocked the intersection, Public Security officials said.

Traffic was directed during a towing operation in which a Ford Fiesta had to be removed. The Subaru involved in the crash was able to leave the scene.

Dog permits checked, 2 found lacking on runs at Summit WAG

In recent campaigns to check out dog permits, two Westmount dogs were discovered without tags, Public Security officials said.

A dog in Summit Woods turned out to have never been registered with the city. The owner of the one at the Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG) was reported to have gone quickly to get the required tag.

We welcome your letters

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Police Report

Car theft and burglaries keep Station 12 police busy

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

A car theft and several residential and business burglaries in Westmount last week kept police at Station 12 on Stanton St. busy.

On February 17, the owner of a 2004 Lexus ES330 luxury sedan reported it as having been stolen from a parking spot on Lansdowne Ave. near the corner of St. Catherine St.

According to the owner, the vehicle was parked around 5:30 pm on February 16. It was no longer there the following day.

An unfortunate first

A tenant at a recently-completed condo/apartment complex on St. Antoine St. in lower Westmount lost a costly piece of property in what may be the first burglary/theft to be committed at the building.

According to Cst. Mike Yigit, Station 12's community relations officer, the tenant had locked a \$3,000 bicycle with a large chain inside the building's garage.

"When he left in the morning, his bike was there," said Yigit. "But when he came back, the chain was cut and the bike was

missing." On the positive side, the investigators have good images taken by video cameras to help identify the suspect.

Cst. Yigit, whose mandate includes advising on ways to improve security, noted that one of the riskier things is to leave a garage door open.

He suggested that for certain expensive items of property such as high-end bicycles, about the only sure thing you can do to minimize risk is to keep your bike locked inside your dwelling until it is taken out.

Restaurant robbed

A smash-and-grab burglar found an ingenious if somewhat direct way of breaking into a Japanese ramen restaurant on St. Catherine St. last week: he used a steel traffic sign post found nearby to shatter the glass front entrance.

"He forced the front door," said Yigit. Once inside, the suspect quickly grabbed two laptop computers and fled.

On the plus side, there was a good chance the investigators would find fingerprints on the pole. There are also good security camera images of the suspect.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

KUDOS TO CITY ON UPPER LANSDOWNE CONSULTATION

As preparation for a major reconstruction of Upper Lansdowne Ave., we are grateful residents who participated in the city’s new public consultative process. We would like to present our impressions and express our appreciation.

Everyone involved recognized the need for this major reconstruction, which will undoubtedly be disruptive to residents’ daily lives over a five-to-seven-month construction period.

Our residents were invited to three well-attended public consultations. We took full advantage of the opportunity to participate in identifying and highlighting the distinctive features of our neighbourhood, as well as safety concerns.

Kudos to the city’s project staff, city councillors and the mayor for encouraging our resident involvement, listening and carefully considering our points of view. In our opinion, the involvement of the residents was a key feature in the planning process.

We felt that this new approach to public consultations was very effective. We therefore encourage other local resident groups that will be involved in similar future projects in the city to be proactive and be well represented in response to invitations to attend future public consultation meetings.

We are very pleased with the final version of the street reconstruction plan.

COLLEEN AND CLAUDE BISMUTH,
UPPER LANSDOWNE AVE.

YES, GARBAGE COLLECTION IS HERITAGE

The garbage collection controversy currently playing out in this paper exposes the limited view we hold on what constitutes heritage.

An urban planning unit at Erasmus University in Rotterdam defines urban heritage as not just buildings and landscapes but all remnants of humanity such as its social and cultural environment. Urban heritage shapes a city and is what makes it unique. Under this definition, garbage collection is in fact part of our city’s urban heritage.

Over the last 150 years, the residents of Westmount have worked hard to incorporate urban heritage practices to create a city with a superb quality of life. Our previous garbage collection process had been one example of this with its goal of keeping our city clean and, at the same time, providing safety to residents who would find it difficult to move garbage bins from the back lanes to the front of their houses.

Council just tossed this practice out. It is obvious here that we have multiple views that have not been appropriately addressed and managed.

A roadblock here is that council’s recently updated goals provide no indication that it intends to upgrade public consultation on services and policies. One goal calls for more consultation on budgets. This should be easy as currently it is a big zero. Annual budgets are released in December

without any prior input from residents on priorities*. To be fair, the city does seek input from residents on road reconstructions after they have been announced. Virtually all other public consultation such as on zoning changes is mandated by law.

As we evolve and adapt over time, a thorough understanding of urban heritage becomes pivotal to Westmount’s future development. Urban heritage preserves the soul of a city. If our council keeps chipping at it without much thought, we will end up with the shell of the city we once were. And as former mayor Trent wondered: Did we de-merge for this?

DENIS BIRO, BURTON AVE.
**Editor’s note:* In the first years of this newspaper, the city did have pre-approval public consultation meetings on the budget, see for example December 5, 2007, p. 1. It should also be recalled, though, that the one described in that article took place November 28, which did not really leave much time for adjustment given public input. And at one such meeting (maybe the same 2007 one – I can’t remember), there wasn’t that much “input” anyway. In fact, there were three people present: then director general Bruce St. Louis, *Independent* chief reporter Laureen Sweeney and

I. There is an argument for democratic governments to keep going through appropriate hurdles regardless of what the public does, but one can’t fault the politicians and unelected employees for tiring of meetings that no one attends. Also, when some budgeted project actually happens and some residents or voters dislike it, they will complain even if they didn’t make use of the budget consultation meeting.

Addressing the budget specifically, it seems particularly ill suited to consultation. For starters, huge portions of it are locked in, including by practical concerns (e.g. you must clear the snow) and/or by legal ones (e.g. union agreements, multi-year contracts with third parties).

All this to say: in my opinion, “consultation” is not a panacea. It doesn’t necessarily build consensus or political peace. In my view, it should be reserved for only the largest projects to ascertain which fairly specific version the public favours (if any).

This does not mean that the city cannot listen to residents or garner information from them in ways other than full-on consultation. It always seemed to me, for instance, that a spring “pothole contest” – to help prioritize both patches and complete street re-paving – would be a good idea. – DP.

SATIRE

THE RATS WEIGH IN

I am the king of the Westmount Park rat colony and I write today to thank Westmount city council for their efforts to make our city more “environmentally friendly.”

Everyone at the rat colony got a good laugh out of that one, although we did have some complaints about the taste of the eight-page newsletter (it was a bit inky). We are so excited to toast the soon-to-be hired “Environmental Inspector” (we saw the job posting* – hilarious!) as he pokes through the garbage bags of Westmount “collecting data to establish evidence” that our two-legged neighbours have not been composting.

Nothing brings the rat vote out quite like mandatory composting! We just love the rotting, stinky messes. We can’t wait to scurry around Westmount at all hours of the day, spreading disease and lowering property values. We are curious to see how high the fines will be for any poor human taxpayer whom the “Environmental Inspector” catches putting compostable materials in their garbage bags. Have the fines been announced yet? We aren’t sure. It seems that it’s gotten harder to know what happens at city council meetings. But perhaps we’ll get another printed newsletter about that.

One question: why do you need a full time “Environmental Inspector” to “visually inspect bins and bags” and “identify any infractions” when the garbage will only be picked up once every 14 days?

What will he be doing on the other days, looking in windows? Well, I suppose his union can handle those details, perhaps another strike will be in order!

Oh, we also wanted to thank you for making it easier for our rat colony members to access the garbage, by prohibiting collection from laneways or bins. It was harder for us rats, dealing with those last few holdout lanes and disabled or elderly folks who kept their garbage in discreet bins rather than tossing it right into the street.

Now life is grand for the rats of Westmount! We simply can’t understand why any rich people would want to move to Mars when they can come to Westmount and pay \$10 million for a mansion on a street that smells of rotting food! It’s heavenly! With gratitude,

HRH THE RAT KING,
WESTMOUNT PARK RAT COLONY

**Editor’s note:* The *Independent* wrote to the city February 15 to check the facts about this job posting, which was not visible then. The city has not replied. – DP.

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

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Early spring arrivals at Alexis Nihon



Retail Review
VERONICA REDGRAVE

Returning from travelling on the Metro (easy and fast), I have noticed fun new shops in Alexis Nihon.

At the Metro level, **L2 Thé Aux Perles** opened in January. The shop offers irresistibly pretty macarons and ever-popular Bubble Tea. It comes from Taiwan where it started in the 1980s. The cold drink is made with tea (often sweetened) and fruit flavourings with chewy “boba,” aka tapioca pearls. This popular drink is also offered here at **Pâtisserie Cocobun**, a student go-to for savory and sweet buns as well as cakes.

Nearby is the handy **Electro Cell**, where you can take your injured mobile phone for quick repairs and while you’re there, pick up accessories for it.

Tim Horton’s has also just moved here. Although no red carpet is needed for this popular spot, daily line-ups are handled Hollywood style: with stanchions.

Leaving the Metro level and following the crowds up to the main floor, I loved the escapist glitz of **Urban Customz**. Here you can choose a cartoon character and have it printed on a T shirt or sweatshirt. Wall coverings, both posters and on canvas, come in small, medium or large.

The “art” works cleverly clone the zeitgeist of contemporary culture, be it street

or classic. A *Playboy* cover of Kate Moss sparkles in the window, but something Italian caught my eye: a street-styled David, Michelangelo’s famed sculpture re-interpreted.

Nearby is **Greiche and Scaff** featuring fabulous frames for all types of glasses, and **Sparkle Cleaners** renowned for excellence in handling delicate things. Nearby, neighbour to **Roasters BBQ & Sports Bar**, **Tommy Café** can be also entered from de Maisonneuve.

Moving up to the second floor – famed for masses of Winners merchandise – I discovered **Le Pink Royal** starring fun fashions and accessories for ladies and lasses.

Miniso has a space here now too, having moved from its former corner spot at the St. Catherine Street entrance. Here you can find all things plastic in a rainbow of colours, as well as beauty products.

As it was Valentine’s Day, on leaving I stopped by the pop-up Valentine’s “flower market.” Here a bunch of tulips was \$27, so I bought mine for half that at local 5 Seasons.

Sadly, the abandoned building opposite Alexis Nihon still stands hideously-draped in a funereal shroud.

Remembering Stephen Chin (1930-2024)

Retired piano teacher and Westmounter Stephen Chin, a frequent writer of letters to the *Independent*, died February 11, according to his obituary. For Chin’s last major piece, see “Earth’s End Now Nigh?” (October 3, 2023, p. 8).

Many locals will remember him walking his dogs while on his bicycle (including on sidewalks) and practising movement exercises in Westmount Park.

“Stephen seemed like a gentle and kind soul,” said editor David Price, “although he could sharpen his tone in pursuit of his causes, which included peaceful, natural parks, and animal rights. I always liked his email address, which began ‘pianoforjoy.’ Rest in peace, Stephen, and hopefully in joy too.”

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Election, cont'd from p. 1

south and District 1 to the north. It is held by Councillor Jeff Shamie.

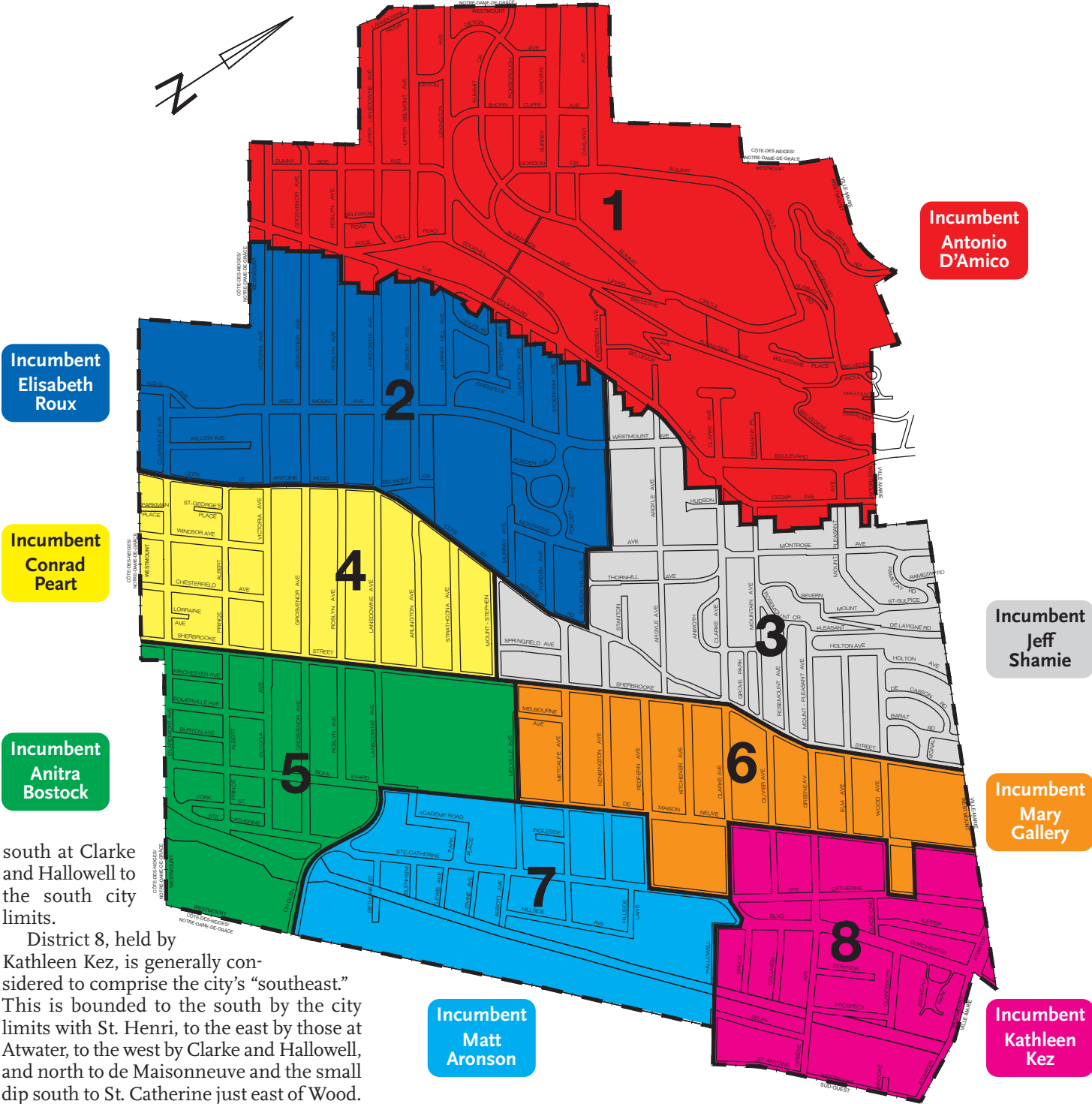
District 4, represented by Councillor Conrad Peart, is located between Sherbrooke and Côte St. Antoine and from the west city limits at NDG to Mount Stephen.

While the districts to the south – 5, 6, 7 and 8 – have several irregular boundaries, these can be seen on the map of the electoral districts at right.

Generally, number 5, held by Councillor Anitra Bostock, is bounded by city limits to the south with St. Henri, to the west with NDG, to the north by Sherbrooke and to the east by Melville, then south to de Maisonneuve and further south down Lansdowne and Glen Rd. to the south city limits.

District 6, whose councillor is Mary Gallery, has undergone several boundary changes through the years but now continues to be bounded to the north by Sherbrooke, east to the city limits (just west of Atwater), and generally west to Melville and south to de Maisonneuve with two dips to the south to St. Catherine for a small section at Wood and another section at Redfern.

District 7, represented by Councillor Matt Aronson, lies between de Maisonneuve to the north, the city limits to the south, and Glen Rd. to the west. The east boundary is Redfern to St. Catherine and



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south at Clarke and Hallowell to the south city limits.

District 8, held by Kathleen Kez, is generally considered to comprise the city's "southeast." This is bounded to the south by the city limits with St. Henri, to the east by those at Atwater, to the west by Clarke and Hallowell, and north to de Maisonneuve and the small dip south to St. Catherine just east of Wood.

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Québec

Welcome Hall's Watts: Target poverty (cause), not hunger (symptom)

By JENNIFER BALL

"Focus on tackling poverty first," Sam Watts of the Welcome Hall Mission proclaimed to Westmount Rotarians instead of doing "food drives or buying non-perishables with after-tax dollars" for struggling citizens to consume.

Watts joined the Welcome Hall Mission as CEO in 2016, which is found at 606 Courcelle St., in St. Henri. He brings with him a wealth of leadership experience and is devoted to consulting on improvements to policy on disaster and humanitarian relief, poverty alleviation, social services, among others.

Watts has also been a Rotarian at the Rotary Club of Westmount since 2019.

On February 14, he told members that we have framed the problem of food insecurity entirely the wrong way, and by doing so we're doing things that are not contributing towards solving the problem and that the problem is only growing.

The new vision of Welcome Hall, which started in 1892, according to Watts, is "that we're moving away from the past where everything was about a handout and we're moving towards the future where instead of a handout it is a helping hand..."

"Our vision for the city of Montreal is that everybody should have the right to adequate permanent shelter. That everyone should have access to enough healthy food so that they can maintain themselves in that shelter and be healthy..."

"Then the other part is the love part. We talk about shelter, food and love, and 'love' for us means that you are part of a defined community of care and surrounded by



The Welcome Hall Mission at 606 de Courcelle St. in St. Henri on Feb. 26.

people who care for you."

Right now, the Welcome Hall Mission is serving 9,000 people a month and about a year ago it was 6,000.

So why do we need an entirely new response to the issue?

"The concern that we have framed for 100 years and maybe longer is, it is a hunger problem. We need to feed people: they're hungry..."

"I would contend that it's a poverty problem and poverty is a systemic problem. Whenever we have seen reductions in the level of poverty, we have seen, reductions in the need for people needing to access food services..."

"I asked decision makers and elected officials: why are we building up an infrastructure to support something that we say shouldn't exist in Canada?"

Watts says that if all we are doing is handing out baskets of food to people, we are not solving the core problem and a better infrastructure needs to be built upstream.

He is confident that those in government will be focussing on their key performance indicators leading up to the next general election. Poverty could well be an acute focus if the interest is there, he said.

The definition of poverty is something Watts said "that if you put 15 researchers in a room, you'll get 15 different definitions. So, it's tricky..."

"I'll look at five or six different definitions and look at the trends, and one person who's living under the poverty level is one person too many. Right now, I can give you an actual hard number: a family of four who has earned income lower than \$60,000 is considered living below the threshold of poverty in a major city."



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Analysis of King George Park’s 363 trees

Plan to renew Murray Park’s trees packs council chamber

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

An updated master plan for the five-year renewal of trees in King George (Murray) Park unveiled February 12 provides an analysis of the current ones and recommendations for immediate action. Proposals for phasing in new trees over the next five years and beyond are detailed.

Presented to a packed city council chamber by Westmount landscape architect Sophie Robitaille, the plan also described the preponderance of black locusts (acacia/Robinias) and maples, which together account for 189 of the park’s 363 trees.

Among recommendations for immediate action are the planting, or “re-planting,” of missing street trees such as those along Westmount Ave. north of the playing field. This includes adding large specimen canopy trees around the park’s perimeter “to improve its character” and provide shade as well as re-locating a number of existing trees. Also included is restoring the park’s pond, which is fed by the waterfall.

“It was nice to see the community rally to support this effort,” said District 2 councillor Elisabeth Roux.

“It was evident that residents care deeply about the beautiful pastoral setting that is King George (Murray) Park, as well as how the city addresses the environment.”

She also pointed out how questions not only pertained to the trees, “but also to the plants, grass mowing and even nesting opportunities for the birds.”

Other recommendations include maintaining three existing groves of black locust in the current quantity. This includes managing their suckers to prevent unwanted invasive propagation, encouraging tree diversity, and developing a tree plan that enhances park character and ecology.

Goals include climate change

The goals of the tree-planting program are listed as “maximizing diversity for ecological and climate resilience, celebrating history, improving the park’s beauty and char-

..... continued on p. 19



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Children’s book on late environment crusader now available

Freed talks ‘Bicycle Bob’ Silverman at Rotary lunch

By JENNIFER BALL

The recently published children’s book, *Bicycle Bob and the Bike Revolution*, was being promoted by author Josh Freed at a meeting of the Rotary Club of Westmount on February 7.

Freed is an award-winning writer, director and journalist and he writes a weekly humour column in *The Gazette*. He had Rotarians laughing when he surprised them with a snippety announcement at the start of his talk, which was held at Victoria Hall.

“Some of you already paid for your lunch here before we started, but we have just been told by the government that, under Quebec law – because this is an English language gathering – you are going to have to pay twice...”

“While I am giving my talk, people will come through collecting the extra English fee. But do not worry, it’s going to go to a French Rotary Club.”

An avid cyclist himself, Freed’s latest project is a homage to late legendary Montreal character Robert Silverman, better known as “Bicycle Bob.”

The illustrated children’s book is published by Kata and features illustrations by Satoji.

‘Little bit crazy, little bit eccentric’

“He was the Montrealer who was a little bit crazy, a little bit eccentric, but he was

also fantastic, and I think almost a magical character.”

This is the first children’s book Freed has written. “People ask me why I wrote it, and the answer, honestly, is the same as why I write my *Saturday Gazette* column: because I love writing about ideas that interest me, and especially about ideas that make me smile and hopefully my readers smile too.”

Bob was Freed’s neighbour, and he wrote *Gazette* columns about him over the decades.

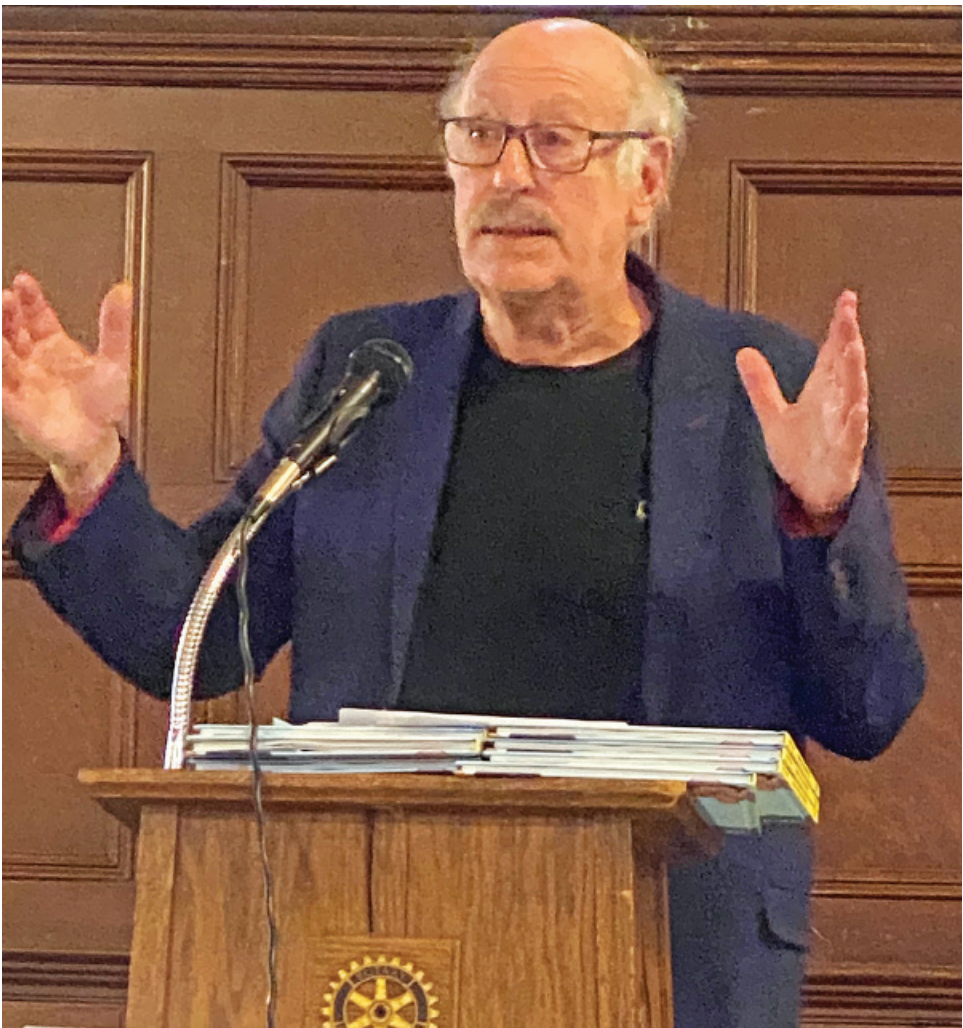
He regaled Rotarians with funny anecdotes of scenarios when he went to great lengths to avoid Silverman any time he was driving in a car because Silverman took it as an affront to his “bike revolution” to see Freed behind the wheel of an automobile.

When he died two years ago, Kata approached Freed and asked him if he would like to write a children’s book about Silverman.

“I thought about it, and I thought, ‘What a great idea, especially a kids book in Montreal, because in some ways Bicycle Bob was a local superhero, though most people don’t know it.’”

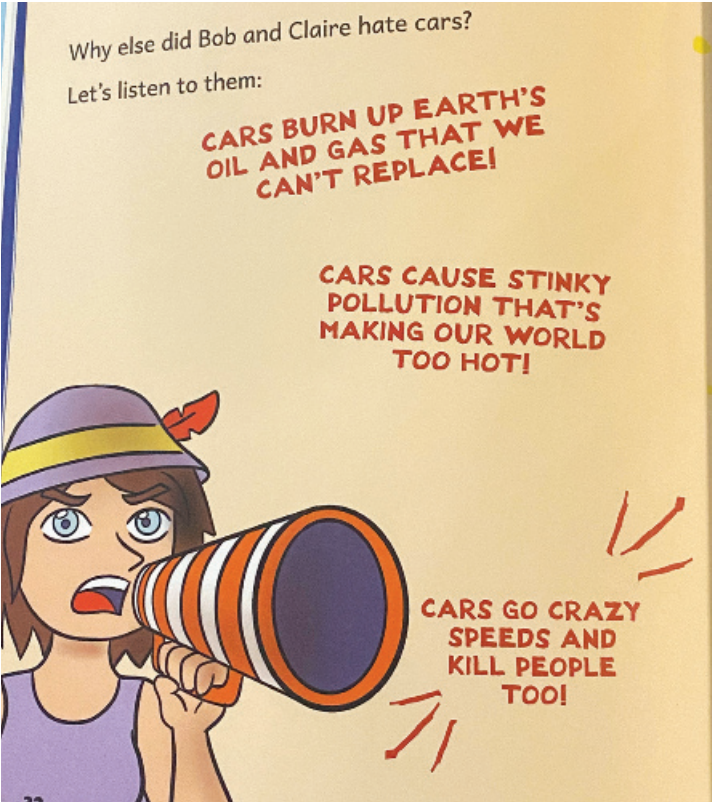
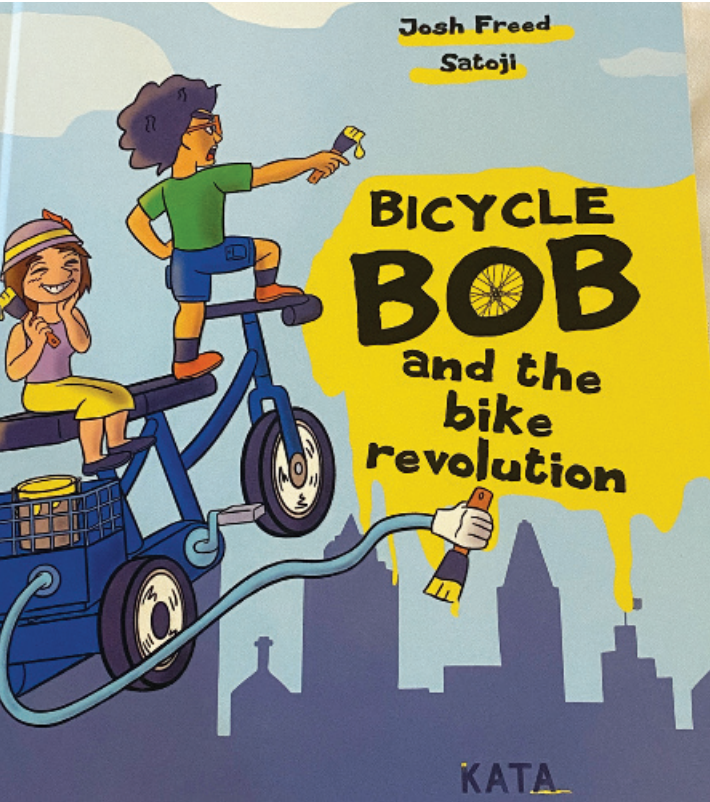
Silverman’s lasting legacy

It recounts how the late pedalling and environmental crusader Silverman along with his romantic partner Claire Morissette propelled Montreal into becoming one of the most bike-friendly cities, boast-



▲ Author Josh Freed gave a talk about his new book *Bicycle Bob and the Bike Revolution* on February 7 at a Rotary Club of Westmount luncheon at Victoria Hall.

◀ The book’s cover and an inside page.



ing Bixis, the Tour de l’île and more than 860 kilometres of bike paths.

Freed tells how the activist helped facilitate the creation of a cycling path along the Champlain Bridge and the right to take a bike on the Metro.

Icicle paths?

As Freed says in the book, Montreal is a city that should have “icicle paths” and not bicycle paths, “but every year Montreal lists as the top biking city in all North America, with the most bike paths and this is by every major cycling group in the world.

“And there is only one reason! Because of one eccentric, obsessed, remarkable Montreal character – who I had the privilege, and often the pain in the *** – to know for years: Bicycle Bob, Robert Silverman.”

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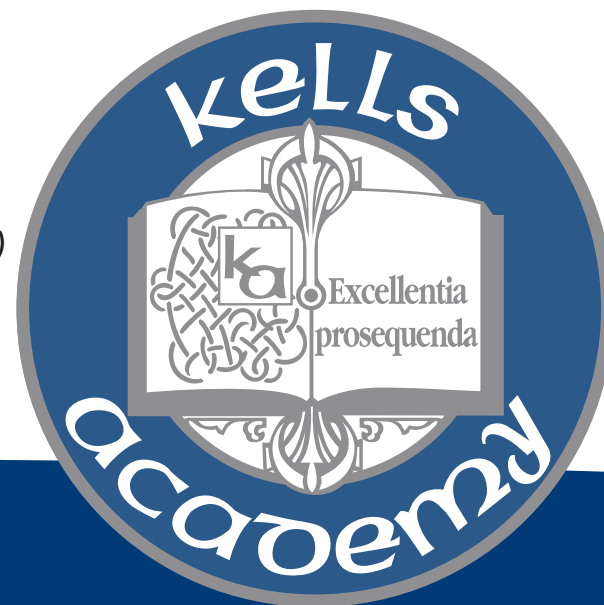
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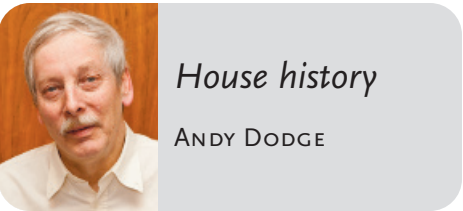
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House history

ANDY DODGE

Martin Swiss Repair Shop? Martin’s Swiss Repair Shop? Martin Swiss’ Repair Shop? Cycles? Skis? Locks and keys?

All of these have at one time or another been a part of one of Westmount’s oldest storefronts, which is still in operation on Victoria Ave. next to the large 4855 de Maisonneuve Blvd. condominium building.

The building has borne the names “Martin” and “Swiss” since 1952, but in fact Martin’s Swiss Repair Shop was opened on Beaconsfield Ave. in NDG in 1937 by Paul Martin, presumably of Swiss heritage.

HISTORY OF 311-319 VICTORIA AVE.
(since construction)

Date	Buyer	Price
7-Dec-1895	Alexander McIntosh, livestock exporter	\$10,325
10-Jul-1901	Cornelius Coughlin, livestock exporter	\$8,000 ¹
12-May-1911	John M. Guerin, gentleman	\$11,000
6-Apr-1927	Michael B. Dunning, musician	\$19,000
6-Feb-1934	John M. Guerin, gentleman	Liquidation
5-Mar-1937	Thomas Guerin, nephew of John	Succession
6-Sep-1979	current owner	\$90,000
“and other good and valuable considerations”		

Martin’s Swiss Repair Shop

He moved his repair shop around the corner to 6068 Sherbrooke St. West in 1943 and, in 1947, the shop was taken over by Ant Lambert and Raoul Oligny. Two years later, they had moved to 1460 Guy St., and then moved the shop into 313 Victoria Ave. in 1952, still with the name, “Martin’s Swiss Repair Shop.”

The lot’s history

But let us step back in time and learn how 313 Victoria Ave. came to be.

The story of western Westmount starts with farmland reaching up the mountain, bottom to top, granted to Isäie Hurtubise in the 18th century.

As his family grew, he bequeathed a long strip of land reaching down from Côte St. Antoine Rd. (where Isaïe’s house still stands) on the east side of “Hurtubise Road” (later to become Victoria Ave.), to his son-in-law, Ephrem Hudon.

The land reached all the way down to what is now St. Catherine St., with the important transverse Western Ave. (now de Maisonneuve Blvd.) reaching all the way from Greene Ave. Western was a privately-built road that was encouraging the development of the western section of what is now Westmount.

Once the village of Notre Dame de Grâce was established in 1874, town planners began forming subdivisions inside the farmers’ strips of land, and the Hudon property’s Western Ave. frontage became Lots 215-73, -74 and -75, all very valuable

pieces of land at Victoria Ave.

The potential for development caught the eye of one George Gebhardt, a lithographer who had a large print shop on Craig St. in downtown Montreal, with branch in Toronto.

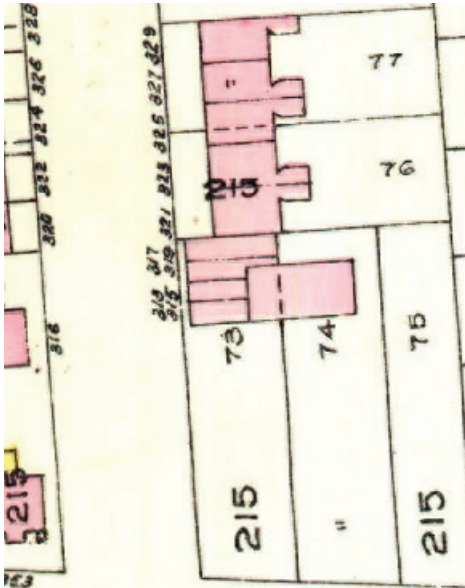
He bought up the three lots along with other land on Victoria Ave. near Côte St. Antoine (which he apparently planned to develop) and may have made efforts to expand his print shop into Westmount, but it appears the result was disaster, for by 1884 he was forced to liquidate his assets in the (then) village of Côte St. Antoine.

Bulmer buys

They were picked up by Thomas C. Bulmer, who that year began his career as a city councillor and one of the main motivators of development in the southwest corner of the city.

Apparently, there was a small house on the property, which Bulmer used as his “summer” office (according to Lovell’s Directory) until he sold the property in 1895 to Alexander McIntosh, a livestock exporter who bought only the northern portions of the three lots, including the “summer” house.

McIntosh sold to fellow livestock exporter Cornelius Coughlin in 1901, but continued to be the occupant of 319 Victoria Ave. until 1910, after which Coughlin sold to John M. Guerin, a “gentleman” closely associated to James John Edmund Guerin, who had just been elected mayor



The 1912 Goad’s Atlas shows the original house supplemented by four streetfront stores.

of Montreal.

Building takes shape

Guerin extended the house by adding storefronts, which were in place by the time Goad’s Atlas was published in 1912.

The “house” provided second-storey apartments, but the ground floor was divided into – by 1914 – four commercial operations plus two apartments.

The *Independent* found no evidence of a “hotel for the train station,” which one source had said was the building’s original vocation.

The first two stores, which appear in the 1913 *continued on p. 18*



The moods of the Martin Swiss shop: on the evening of February 3, left, and on February 8.





infoWESTMOUNT

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NEWS

NEXT COUNCIL
MEETING

Monday, March 18



Coup d'envoi du 150^e réussi !

Le 22 février, près de 270 Westmountais se sont réunis au Victoria Hall. Unis par leur fierté de Westmount, ils ont donné le coup d'envoi officiel d'une année entière de célébrations. Merci pour cette soirée inoubliable !



First official 150th celebration

Some 270 Westmounters gathered at Victoria Hall on February 22. United by their pride in our City, they enjoyed exciting performances and officially kicked off a full year of celebration. Thank you for this memorable event!

Découvrez le nouveau portail citoyen

La Ville a lancé sa nouvelle plateforme en ligne le 26 février. Cette porte d'entrée à tous les services municipaux vous permettra d'obtenir des services, de trouver des informations et de signaler tout incident facilement.

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Détails à westmount.org.

Inscriptions du printemps en cours

Inscrivez-vous maintenant pour vos activités préférées. Consultez le guide à westmount.org.

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Obtenez votre carte 2024. westmount.org

Discover the new citizen portal

The City launched its new online platform on February 26. This new portal will allow you to find information, obtain services and report incidents quickly and easily.

Visit one of our support kiosks to learn more and for assistance with opening your client account:

- Tuesday and Wednesday, February 28-29, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- at City Hall, the Library and the Westmount Recreation Centre

Details at westmount.org.

Spring registration underway

Sign up now for your favourite spring activities. Check the activity guide at westmount.org.

Be aware of this phishing scam

A scam being sent over text message attempts to access your personal information by alerting you to supposed unpaid parking or road traffic violations. Learn how to protect yourself from this and other current scams. Learn more at westmount.org.

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Ciné-club — L'immensité (2022)

Mardi 27 février, 14 h, Victoria Hall. Réalisé par Emanuele Crialese avec Penélope Cruz. Inscrivez-vous à westmount.org.

Galerie du Victoria Hall — vernissage

Mardi 27 février, 18 h. Œuvres de Tina Louise Jones et Wendy Hayden, avec musique en direct par Melissa Reed. westmount.org

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.**

Appel de dossiers 2024

La Galerie du Victoria Hall

Du 15 février au 15 avril. Les artistes de Westmount sont invité.e.s à soumettre leur candidature pour la prochaine saison d'exposition. Informations et formulaire : westmount.org.

Journée de La Princesse dans un sac

Samedi 2 mars, 14 h, Bibliothèque des enfants. Rejoignez-nous pour des histoires, des bricolages et des petits cadeaux. Aucune inscription requise. Détails à westlib.org.

Collecte de sang Héma-Québec

Mercredi 6 mars, 13 h 30, Victoria Hall. Prenez rendez-vous : 70 donneurs sont recherchés. Détails à westmount.org.

Club de films documentaires

Mercredi 6 mars, 19 h, Bibliothèque. *Flee* (2021). Inscrivez-vous à westlib.org.

Conférence : « L'orpheline de Westmount »

Judi 7 mars, 14 h, Victoria Hall. Une étude de cas de microhistoire portant sur Rachel Paquin. Inscrivez-vous à westmount.org.

LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

125th 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.**



Film Club — L'immensité (2022)

Tuesday, February 27, 2 p.m., Victoria Hall. Directed by Emanuele Crialese and featuring Penélope Cruz. Register at westmount.org.

Gallery at Victoria Hall — vernissage

Tuesday, February 27, 6 p.m. Works by Tina Louise Jones and Wendy Hayden. westmount.org

Celebrate Paper Bag Princess Day!

Saturday, March 2, 2 p.m., Children's Library. Join us for stories, crafts and giveaways. No registration required. Details at westlib.org.

Documentary Film Club

Wednesday, March 6, 7 p.m., Library. *Flee* (2021). Register at westlib.org.

Héma-Québec Blood Drive

Tuesday, March 6, 1:30 p.m., Victoria Hall. Make an appointment. Details at westmount.org.

Lecture: "Westmount's Little Orphan"

Thursday, March 7, 2 p.m., Victoria Hall. A microhistory case study about a little girl named Rachel Paquin who lived in Westmount. Register at westmount.org.

Call for proposals 2024

The Gallery at Victoria Hall
February 15 to April 15. Westmount artists are invited to submit proposals for the next exhibition season. Information: westmount.org.



House history, cont'd from p. 16

edition of Lovell's Directory, are Victoria Wardrobe Repair and William Bros. Plumbers.

A year later, a shoemaker named Simkin and the George Wong Laundry added to the storefronts, the latter staying there until it moved across the street in the 1960s and lasted several decades more.

Other stores provided electrical services, painters, watchmakers, a pastry store and the "Wee Scotch Shop" from 1927 to 1950.

Neighbouring lot becomes gas station, condos

In 1930, Bulmer's widow sold the southern section of the three lots, fronting on Western Ave., to Shell Canada, who built a service station that graced the corner for more than 50 years until it was replaced by 4855 de Maisonneuve Blvd, the large condominium building.

Among the many tenants of the storefronts was Westmount Bicycle & Auto Accessories, which opened in 1950 and was operated by Fred J. Travers.

By 1952, this shop had been picked up

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- 1874 -
Village of Notre Dame de Grâce (area of current-day Westmount and NDG) incorporated.
- 1876 -
Village of Côte St. Antoine (area of current-day Westmount) breaks away. It become a town in 1890.
- 1888 -
Wooden railway bridge opens over Glen Rd., southwest of current-day Westmount recreation centre. It is replaced by the still-in-use stone bridge in 1892.
- circa 1890 -
Train station opens at the foot of Abbott Ave. It was moved to the foot of Victoria Ave. in 1907, where the building still stands.
- 1895 -
Town of Côte St. Antoine changes its name to Westmount. It becomes a city in 1908.
- 1899 -
Westmount Public Library opens in its current building (which has been added to).
- 1922 -
Current city hall opens.
- 1925 -
The current Victoria Hall opens. This building, still in use, replaced an 1899 version that burned down in 1924. Also, the St. Catherine St. armoury of the Royal Montreal regiment, located on city land, opens.
- 1958 -
Westmount's previous arena opens as an open-sided venue. It was enclosed in 1963. The pool at this facility was added in 1962.
- 2002 to 2005 -
The merged years. Westmount is merged January 1, 2002 with the city of Montreal and becomes one of its boroughs. It demerged on January 1, 2006.
- 2013 -
Current Westmount recreation centre opens.

Kim receives Aléo bursary



Westmounter Hyeongi Kim recently received a \$1,500 bursary from the Accès Nouvelle Génération program of the Fondation Aléo. The program's awards, now in their second year, are for student athletes.

Kim's sport is judo and he attends Marymount Academy.

According to the group's February 15 press release, more than 50 percent of past program beneficiaries joined a sports team or attained a recognized sports level, and three students were actually kept from dropping out of school after counselling services offered as part of the initiative.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FONDATION ALÉO.

by Lambert and Oigny, who included bicycles and bike repairs to their locksmith and appliance repairs, continuing the name and reputation of the original "Martin's Swiss Repair Shop" store.

Meantime on the land ownership front, John Guerin died in 1937 and title passed to his nephew, Col. Thomas Guerin, who held on to the property until his death in 1964, after which his widow kept the property for another 15 years. The current owner bought the whole building in 1979, paying \$90,000. He also continues the Martin Swiss bike and locksmith shop.

Other stores came and went, such as

Avenue Video and Brickpoint Needlework, both of which eventually moved elsewhere on Victoria (before closing), and some tenants lived upstairs through about 1999, but since then Martin's Swiss Cycling and Repair has grown into the entire storefront, a sure indication of its success.

STORES WHICH WERE LOCATED AT 311-319 VICTORIA AVE. (based on listings in Lovell's Directory)

- Victoria Wardrobe Repair (1913-33)
- William Bros. Plumbers (1913-17)
- George Wong Laundry (1914-61)
- S. Simkin (shoemaker) (1914-15)
- Westmount Electric Co. (1919)
- Regent Electric Co. (1920)
- Dorman & Simmons, painters (1921)
- James Johnson Pastry (1924)
- George Palmer, watchmaker & jeweller (1925)
- Wee Scotch Shop (1927-1950)
- Westmount Bicycle & Auto Accessories (1950-51)
- Martin's Swiss Repair Shop (1952-today)
- The Swop Shop (1955-57)
- John Larsen, Cabinetmaker (1960-1977)
- Burton's Furniture Refinisher (1980-84)
- Avenue Video (1988-1990)
- Brickpoint Needlework (1996-1997)

Independent's coverage of Brickpoint needlepoint shop

- "Brickpoint will remain open," June 6, 2007, p. 1.
- "Brickpoint to shut Victoria Ave. door, shift to the web," May 21, 2013, p. 3
- "Brickpoint's evolution" (letter), June 11, 2013, p. 6
- "Remembering George and Shirley Brickenden," April 10, 2018, p. 17



VILLE DE | CITY OF

WESTMOUNT



IMPORTANT NOTICE

Minor Exemption Application

1. The City of Westmount has received an application for a minor exemption for the building located at **70 Belvedere Place**;
2. The application will be reviewed at the regular sitting of the Municipal Council that will be held on **March 18, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.** in the Council Chamber of City Hall, located at 4333 Sherbrooke Street West, in Westmount and will be broadcast live on the City's website. The link for the sitting will be available at the following address: www.westmount.org/council-live.

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

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Geo, a unique little guy



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LYSANNE FOWLER

Here he is!

Geo is a tiny seven-pound fellow, a mix of Chihuahua and Chinese crested, presenting himself with a most original look and charming way.

He is presently in a foster home for the Gerdy's Rescues & Adoptions volunteer group. His foster family reports that Geo is loving and attentive to all, be it people or other dogs and cats.

An affectionate companion, this little 10-year-old is quiet and cuddly and, at this stage of his life, he would do well in an adult home. Geo spends most of the winter indoors and peeks out on good days for his walks and outings when the weather is clement.

With his Chinese-crested look, his skin needs warm clothing protection from the seasonal cold. He then reverts to sunscreen and cute t-shirts in the summer.

Geo is very healthy, up to date with his inoculations, and neutered.

If you would like more information on him, please do not hesitate to contact the Gerdy's Rescues & Adoptions volunteers at their email address info@gerdysrescue.org. You can also refer to their website at www.gerdysrescue.org or their Facebook presence online.

Your neighbour, Lysanne



Happy Piccolo is a ray of sunshine



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

A vanilla-and-caramel swirl, smiling Piccolo is a fun and friendly kitty, who is in need of a new family. Born in 2016, he was in a home for a number of years but is now in need of adoption again.

He is presently in foster care for the Moustache Adoption de Chats volunteer group. Piccolo is very healthy, up to date with his inoculations, and neutered.

He is a hilarious little joy, ready for affection and games. He has not been in a home with other cats before, but he would be companionable to a dog that is cat-friendly. He loves everything about his cat tree and also has been used to wearing claw protectors in the past.

If you would like more information on Piccolo, please contact the volunteers at Moustache Adoptions de Chats at their email moustacheadoptiondechats@outlook.com and you can also find out more about them at their Facebook link.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne



Murray Park, cont'd from p. 11

acter and minimizing the risk of impact from pests and disease."

Details and numerous illustrated plantings presented at the information session can be accessed on the city's Engage website under current projects/documentation.

A previous overall tree management plan initially presented at a public consultation meeting August 31, 2023 at Victoria Hall drew an outcry from residents resulting from the previous cutting down of many "treasured" black locust trees as well as the planting of many small trees that "block views" and evergreens planted together in rows rather than shade trees.

Best practices

Included in the recent presentation are best practices concerning black locust trees in Ontario as well as a general tree resilience "rule" for renewal of all trees that calls for maintaining tree age diversity at 40 percent for young trees, 30 percent for semi-mature ones, 20 percent for mature ones and 10 percent old trees.

Proposed tree selection by type includes: canopy (white elm, red maple, linden), medium canopy trees (such as paperback birch, hackberry), and understory and

flowering trees such as plum, dogwood and service berry, as well as conifers and shrubs.

Planting recommendations focus on native trees that attract birds such as red maples that provide food for cardinals and nesting for American goldfinch.

Also outlined in the presentation is the historical use of the land by native peoples, French farmers, British landowners, and in 1927 development of the public park. There is also an overview of significant trees, groupings, groves and layers of trees by heights.



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Film's North American premiere at Shaar

Director Bloch takes on October 7 attack with *Supernova: The Music Festival Massacre*

By JENNIFER BALL

"The fairies went to dance at night, and the demons came and killed them," is how Israeli documentary film director Yossi Bloch abridged what occurred on October 7 at the Supernova music festival.

His film *Supernova: The Music Festival Massacre* had its North American premiere at the Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, which is located at the corner of Côte St. Antoine and Kensington Ave., on January 31. There was a second showing there for CEGEP and university students only on February 5.

Bloch, along with filmmaker Duki Dror, was able to edit the documentary in just a matter of weeks with accounts from survivors, their relatives and responders, along with authentic cellphone videos curated from the day.

Billed as "a journey of unity and love" the Supernova music festival started at around 10 pm on Friday, October 6, just hours after the end of Israel's week-long Sukkot religious/thanksgiving festival.



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Still from *Supernova: The Music Festival Massacre*.

Thousands of revellers were at the event that was held in Kibbutz Re'im, three miles from the Gaza border.

The documentary captures what happened next.

Bloch – who had flown in from Israel on January 30 for the screening – revealed that he was at home with his wife and children on October 7 when Hamas breached the border.

He received a phone call from his distressed sister who told him his nephew was at the festival. "He was drunk, and he did not know what was happening, but she got him out."

Victims bore witness

The Israeli-Hamas war is one of the first conflicts where social media has taken

centre stage. Except for the post-event victim interviews, Bloch explained that all the footage that makes it into the documentary was recorded by the victims themselves or extracted from what Hamas posted online.

Bloch expressed incredulity that there was so much footage to be had. "...Why did the people [film]? Why would you [film] when someone has thrown a grenade at you? [Why isn't your instinct to run and hide?]"

He agreed that there was an overwhelming motive from the victims to record events to bear witness. He said they were legitimately in fear for their lives but felt compelled to act.

Bloch originally declined the offer of directing the film. "I was called by a friend, and he talked about what's going on in the



Yossi Bloch, director of *Supernova: The Music Festival Massacre*, at the Congregation Shaar Hashomayim on January 31.

south and I said 'No, I'm not taking part in that.'"

Bloch previously directed the documentary *The Devil Next Door* about John Demjanjuk and was not convinced he wanted to go back into such dark material. But a victim from the Supernova festival reached out and asked Bloch to "tell our story." He began doing interviews with survivors, their friends, and families about eight days after the tragedy.

One subject in the documentary described believing, at the time, that the music festival was the only target of the attack. They were disquieted to discover that on the day and days to follow, the death toll would rise to approximately 1,200 and victims were felled throughout many other parts of the country.

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Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

'Westmount 150' begins, at Victoria Hall



Anna Gainey, former city councillor Cynthia Lulham and Anne Garschagen.

The musical comedy duo opened with former mayor **Peter Trent**, renowned equally for his poetic prowess and wit. Loving word play, he noted that the idea for a

new Westmount pool (which opened with the Westmount recreation centre in 2013) went "swimmingly," and that tennis suffered "no net loss." Performing a version of his poem "The First Magistrate's Lament" (see also April 11, 2017, p. 7), he noted that "For grazing a cash cow like Westmount, The Valérie Plante is invasive."

Bowser and Blue continued the hilarity with their song "Game of Cones" during which "you can't get anywhere from anywhere." They went on to quip about Westmount, where "the facades are magnificent but have crumbling infrastructures and leaky plumbing – like us."

Members of Westmount's 150 committee, led by **Nicole Forbes** and **Mitch Joel**, were **Barry Garber**, **Tori Scholfield**, **Erika Ludwick**, **Christian Matossian** and **Anne Garschagen**.

City council members noted were **Mary Gallery**, **Conrad Peart**, **Anitra Bostock**, **Matt Aronson**, **Kathleen Kez**, **Elisabeth Roux**, **Jeff Shamie**, **Antonio D'Amico**, and **Mayor Christina Smith**, who welcomed all, noting many exciting 150th events to come.

Mock-cocktails and real sips were served in champagne flutes branded "Westmount 150" – a nice touch.

Food stations offered *continued on p. 22*



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Bryan and Gillian MacCormack.



City councillor Mary Gallery and Anthony Zitzmann



PSO William Lamontagne.



Michele Marchand and Virginia Huber.

Social notes, cont'd from p. 21

easy-to-hold mini-quiches and skewers by Dolci Piu. The much-loved cupcakes, from The Sweetest Chef, were also marked with the sparkling 150th image.

Noted in the crowd were provincial legislator **Jennifer Maccarone** and MP **Anna Gainey**, as well as **Gillian and Bryan MacCormack**, **Isobel Marks**, **Anthony Zitzmann**, **Michele Marchand**, **Virginia Huber**, **Daphne Tsadilas-Shamie** and **Jeff Shamie**, **Martha** and former city councillor **Nick Matossian**, former city councillor **Theodora Samiotis**, former city councillor **Patrick Martin**, former city councillor **David Laidley**, former city councillor **Vic Drury**, **Diana Bruno**, **Joan McCordick**, former city councillor **Cynthia Lulham**, **Anthony Jenkins**, **Nancy Kalec** and **Nancy Rosenfeld**.

Bowser and Blue's unique style and dexterous repartee were the perfect "icing" on the 150th cake, revelling in a special moment – and above all, a special place.



Mélissa Denis-Daigneault and Anne-Marie Lacombe.



City councillors Jeff Shamie and Conrad Peart, and Nancy Rosenfeld.

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Ethel Seath (1879-1963)

Tulip Pattern, 1950

Oil on canvas

20 x 16 in (50.8 x 40.6 cm)

The inscription on the verso indicates the artists' former address 361 Melville Avenue in Westmount.

Provenance

Private collection, Westmount, Quebec

By descent to the present private collection,
Toronto

Exhibitions

Montreal, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts,
Group Show of Women Painters: Collyer,
Hampson, Lockerby, Morris, Savage and Seath,
3-24 May 1950.

Hamilton, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Third
Annual Winter Exhibition, December 1950.

Montreal, Galerie Walter Klinkhoff Inc., Ethel
Seath (1879-1963) Retrospective Exhibition,
September 1987, no. 36.

Literature/Press

"Paintings by Women At Fine Arts Museum:
Kathleen Morris, Ethel Seath, Anne Savage,
Nora Collyer Among Exhibitors," *The Gazette*
(Montreal), 6 May 1950, 22



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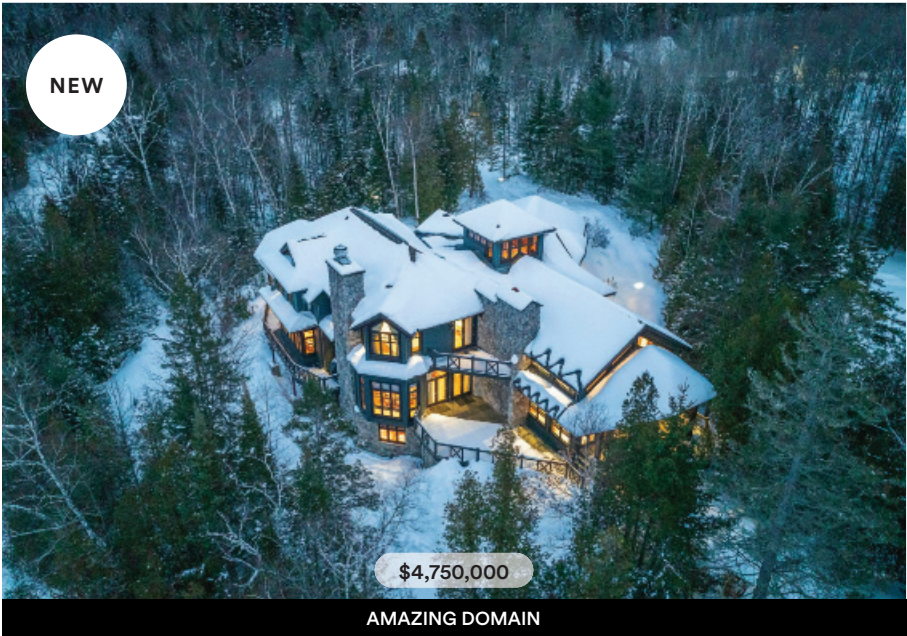
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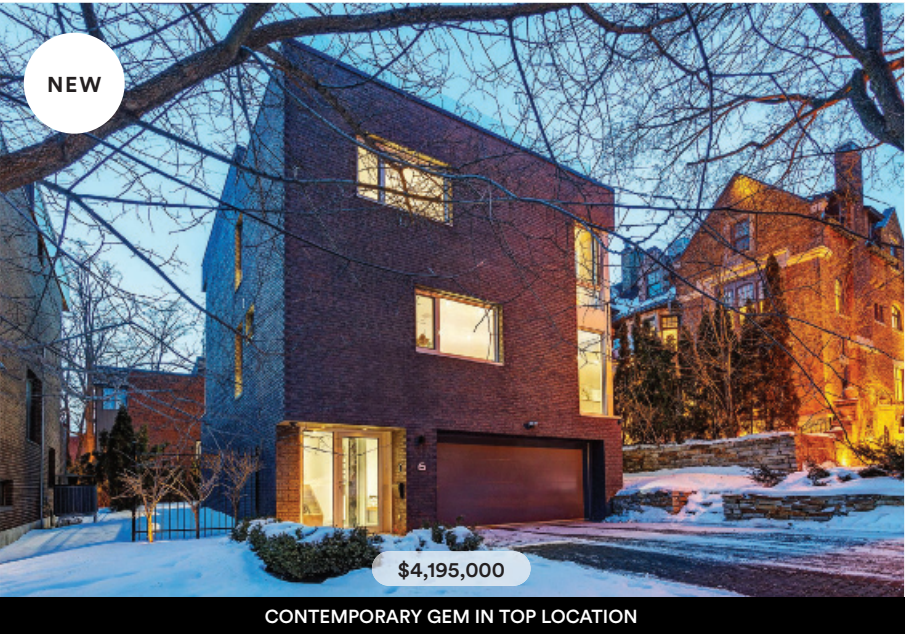
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