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## Scouting trio fundraise for charitable trip to Namibia

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

Three members of Westmount Scouting know that after this summer their lives will be changed forever.

Rovers Brian Bevand and Kendra Girdwood, 20, and Venturer Nathan Butcher, 17, will forsake summer job opportunities to spend six weeks building ventilated pit latrines for pre-schools in Namibia, Africa, to improve sanitation and provide disease vector control.



"I think it will be an amazing development experience," said Butcher, a student at Vanier College. "It will be good for the people there and life-changing for us."

"It will definitely change all of our lives," Girdwood agreed.

The trio is part of a contingent of 28 Venturers, Rovers and trip leaders from Montreal who will take part in an international development project in cooperation with the Namibian Scouts Association.

*continued on p. 3*

## Garden group marks milestone



Planning anniversary activities at an executive meeting March 17 are, from left: (seated) Lily Lam and co-presidents Gabrielle Pilot and Brigitta Brittain; (standing) Sally Cooke, Lorraine Ratzer, Elizabeth Tsuk, Susan Zegray and Diane Webster. The Westmount Horticultural Society, one of Westmount's younger community organizations, is going strong 10 years after its founding in 1998 by Stuart Robertson and Councillor Cynthia Lulham.

## In-depth interview Conservative candidate speaks

BY KRISTIN MCNEILL

As reported in the Feb. 27 *Westmount Independent*, Heenan Blaikie lawyer Guy Dufort will be the Conservative Party candidate for the Westmount-Ville Marie riding. Dufort was officially introduced by Senator Michael M. Fortier on March 17. The *Independent* spoke with Dufort the follow-

*continued on p. 8*

## Earth Hour is coming!

If on Friday, March 29 at 8 pm you find your neighbours' house in the dark, they might still be home. Around the world at that time, people will mark Earth Hour by turning off their lights. The idea is to highlight environmental and energy issues by abstaining from using electricity for one hour. The city of Westmount will also be participating by turning off lights at its buildings.



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## Shaddick brings home squash gold

Westmounter Duncan Shaddick won the 80-plus division of the 2008 Miller Zell US Open Age Division Squash Championships in Atlanta, Georgia the weekend of March 15-16.

Shaddick competed against two other participants to bring home the trophy. Shaddick, who turns 81 in June, felt confident as he sized up his older (82- and 83-year-old) competition, "I said to myself: "This will be like shooting fish in barrel."

Shaddick is a longtime member of the MBSC, now called the Atwater Club.

*Duncan Shaddick with his trophy*



## Largest residential crane in Canada?



In the March 5 *Independent*, we ran a photo taken in front of Alexis Nihon of what was widely reported to be the largest crane in Canada. Westmounters looking up Mt. Pleasant towards the Bronfman house at 15 Belvedere Rd. might be shocked to see a crane hoisting materials over a

tree in order to preserve it. Not something you see every day!

The crane is being used at this "Category I\*" heritage house, which is being renovated to the environmentally conscious LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standard.

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# Scouts to work in Namibia

*continued from p. 1*

The group will work in the area around Okahandja, a town just north of Windhoek, the capital, where some 18 pre-schools are located.

Namibia, the former South West Africa, is located on the Atlantic Ocean in what is considered to be a safe country. Its government does not provide financial assistance to pre-schools, however. As a result, many are located in shacks privately built and offering only bare essentials.

## To undertake repairs

The group has also been asked to do repairs and other work such as the installation of windows.

The design of Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrines consists of mesh-covered vent pipes that prevent flies and other disease-carriers from exiting the latrine. Scouts in Africa have been building these for many years.

"It's going to feel real good to help in a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Girdwood said. She's taking a six-week leave of absence from a job in animal care.

While Westmount Rovers and Venturers have a history of participating in similar Scouting development projects, this is

the first one in about five years. "I've heard a lot about them," Brevand said, "and I've been keeping an eye out for one in which I could go over and make a difference."

While Scouting's World Brotherhood Fund will cover the cost of the building materials, he said, the Montreal contingent is currently fundraising to defray the costs of their transportation and food, budgeted at \$3,500 each. Whatever they can't raise will have to come from their own pockets.

Along with the sale of T-shirts, hoodies, badges and other memorabilia, the three local Scouts will hold a Namibian dinner, April 25, at Espace DK, 4662 Notre Dame St. (514.484.6797 or 514.717.7248).

The project has also involved Beavers, Cubs and Scouts from the 2nd Westmount Scout Group at Mountainview United Church who have donated items to fill more than 20 shoeboxes as gifts.

"Our understanding is that our group will be able to stay in an old bunkhouse on a farm," Brevand said. While it will be winter there, temperatures will swing from hot days to zero-degree temperatures at night. Others participants include those from Scouting groups in Hudson, Laval and Dorval.

## TELE-CHECK keeps tabs on seniors



*Irene Simons on the job.*

TELE-CHECK, which was established in 1983, is a weekday telephone check-up service for seniors living alone. It is staffed by volunteers of the Contactivity Centre for Seniors (4695 de Maisonneuve, 514.932.2326), who phone the seniors on their list every morning between 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. to confirm that all is well. In the event that there is no answer, TELE-CHECK members call the person designated as the

"in case of emergency" contact.

Irene Simons is one of the TELE-CHECK volunteers. She is a retired nurse and "loves to take care of people." She has developed relationships with many of the people that she calls daily and thoroughly enjoys her work.

For more information about TELE-CHECK or to join, call 514.937.4273.

## Concordia announces Johnson Chair in Irish studies



*From left: former Westmount mayor Brian Gallery, well known for his tireless efforts chairing, and fundraising for, the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation; Quebec premier and Westmounter Jean Charest and Michael Kenneally, the director of the Centre for Canadian Irish Studies.*

Concordia University took advantage of the annual St. Patrick's Society Luncheon to announce the creation of the Johnson Chair in Canadian Irish Studies this March 17. The province of Quebec contributed \$2 million of the chair's \$3-million endowment (through the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation). The other \$1

million came from the Concordia University Foundation.

At the luncheon, former premier Daniel Johnson represented the Johnson family, which also includes his father, the late Daniel Johnson Sr., and his brother Pierre-Marc. All three Johnsons served as premiers of Quebec.



*Nathan Butcher, Brian Brevand and Kendra Girdwood display a T-shirt they're selling for their Namibia development project.*

## School Board News and Views

## Understaffed libraries impede student success

BY GINETTE SAUVÉ-FRANKEL,  
EMSB COMMISSIONER



In 2004, I wrote about literacy and the role of well-stocked, well-staffed school libraries in student success. In my article, I mentioned Keith Curry Lance, director of the Library Research Service at Colorado State Library, and the research done in the United States in 2003 that found that kids in schools with well-funded, well-stocked libraries run by professionally trained teacher-librarians who collaborate with staff on curriculum, score from 10 to 25 percent higher on standardized tests than their peers in schools with poorly resourced libraries.

As the national librarian, our very own Roch Carrier contended that school libraries are “the heart of the school.” Dur-

ing his nationwide tour, he was appalled at the “miserable state of school libraries.” He found libraries that were shut half of the time, or had no teacher-librarians, or were stocked with photocopied book materials.

#### No Canadian research, until now

At the time, no research had been conducted in Canada to replicate the US findings. So mentioning the US studies was often met with the objection that there were no Canadian data to confirm or negate them. However, a 2006 study by Queen's University and People for Education of more than 50,000 students and over 800 publicly funded elementary schools looked at Grades 3 and 6 test scores and the 2004-05 tracking results for school library staffing, hours open, collections and fundraising.

The study's report, *School Libraries & Student Achievement in Ontario* by the Ontario Library Association, highlighted find-

ings that include both a link between the enjoyment of reading and the presence of a teacher-librarian, and the higher reading achievement of students in schools with trained library staff.

For the last three years, the Ministère de l'Éducation, Loisir et Sport (MELS) has addressed the difficulties in maintaining well-stocked school libraries. Through a special measure, MELS has funded the purchase of school library books, with schools providing part of the purchase price of the books and the greater portion being paid by the government. This initiative has greatly helped in refurbishing the stock of our school libraries.

But what is the use of more books if they cannot find themselves in the hands of students because the library is only open and professionally staffed one or two days a week? That is the case in our EMSB elementary schools. And yet we are considered fortunate to have librarians or library technicians at the elementary level. Other school boards don't.

If higher student success is dependent on accessibility to books and the services

of a professionally trained librarian, why are our elementary school libraries not open every day and fully staffed? This is the question I have posed every year at budget time. The answer is always the same: lack of funds. So I was delighted when *Le Devoir* and La Centrale des Syndicats du Québec took the government to task at the end of January regarding the woeful lack of school librarians.

#### It's elementary

Shortly thereafter, the minister announced that funding would be made available for school librarians. We are still waiting for details. Maybe this year we will be able to increase the hours that our elementary school library staff spends with students.

Something else to consider: the allocation of library staffing in our system. Would we not be better to concentrate whatever resources we have at the elementary level — where the school library is often the only library available to students? Would earlier contact with school librarians lead to greater success?

### On the Market will be back soon!

We are having a tough time finding houses for our randomly chosen, house-for-sale stories. Our first pick, a Joan and Jill Prévost house at 48 Holton Ave., was sold before we could do the story.

Our second pick, a house listed by a Re/Max Westmount Inc. agent, had sell-

ers who preferred a more private approach to selling their house. And then our third pick, a Jane Allan house at 596 Lansdowne Ave., was also sold by the time we called.

Congratulations to Joan, Jill and Jane. Could it be the market is hot?

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Most frequently restocked drop sites: Lobby of 310 Victoria Ave.; Sherbrooke St. exit to Metro grocery store at Victoria Ave. and Sherbrooke St.

Drop notice: Snow conditions may delay us getting around to all of our drop sites on Tuesday of publication week. Whatever the snow conditions, we still aim to reach our “most reliable” drops (Metro on Victoria, Westmount Square and 310 Victoria lobby) on Tuesdays.

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### Westmount's St. Patrick's float wins again



Virginia Elliott, Westmount's assistant community events coordinator, points to Westmount's plaques for previous St. Patrick's victories. This year's plaque will be awarded later this month.

Westmount has won “Best Municipal Entry” at this year's St. Patrick's parade. The award was sponsored by CJAD/Mix 96 and awarded by the United Irish Societies of Montreal, the parade's organizer.

It is the fourth time that Westmount has won. The first two times were with the 125th anniversary float. This is the second victory with the current float. Previously, the Westmount fire contingent also won.

## Civic Alert: What if 'Mayo with everything' hits Westmount?

# Marianopolis triggers concerns over Superhospital impact

BY DON WEDGE



The arrival of spring reminds us that change is inevitable. One of my minor pleasures has been to spend a few minutes with a coffee watching a top European soccer game when I went for supplies from the Cavalero store on Sherbrooke St.

But the TV has been missing for a few weeks. It will be back soon, long before the summer's European Cup coverage, promises owner Tony Russo.

The wall that supported it is coming down as Russo extends his store and menu to meet new demands. "We'll have a lot more prepared lunches," he explained. "That's what our customers who work around here are asking for.

"Then there are the students who come down from the Marianopolis CEGEP."

We have heard a lot about the parking problems, new bus services and so on to meet the needs of the CEGEP, but this demand for lunch puts a bit more pressure on Victoria Village.

Yet it is nothing compared to the

changes that will come once the Superhospital, in whatever form, gets built on the Glen Yards. In fact, it has already resulted in a shift of retail outlets and rents.

I recall that when the mega-project was first realistically touted, the Westmount Municipal Association (WMA) said that – next to the forced mergers – the arrival of the mega-hospital was the most likely thing to change our city.

### Porter marks centenary

So it was interesting to note that the WMA was inviting Dr. Arthur Porter, chief executive officer of the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) to be the guest speaker at its Centenary Annual General Meeting in May.

If the hospital's potential arrival is hardly the highlight of Westmount's last 100 years, then its impact, even in its downsized form, is certainly going to affect our future – always assuming McGill overcomes the obstacles.

There was a revealing account in *The Economist* last month of what happens when medical facilities take over a city – and they are not necessarily for the worse.

Many of the planners of the original

McGill superhospital were inspired by the medical and commercial success of the Mayo Clinic. It is world famous despite being located in a modest city, Rochester, Minnesota, with a metropolitan population of only about 200,000.

*The Economist* categorizes the hospital-city relationship as "Mayo with everything" and likens it to the 21st-century equivalent of a 20th-century factory town such as Flint, Michigan. Its revenue in 2006 approached US\$6 billion.

An acquaintance who was a patient at the Mayo couldn't praise the medical care enough, but noted it was "credit card with everything!"

The Mayo covers more than 300 acres – about a third of the size of the city of Westmount. Some 30,000 people work there – 50 percent more than our population! Odds are that every 70th person you meet on the street will be a medical doctor.

### Hotels for visitors

An IBM plant there employs 5,000, but after that, the next largest economic group works in the hospitality industry that looks after the 2.5 million "health-visitors."

In fact, Rochester has about as many hotel rooms as Minneapolis, Minnesota's biggest city, which is four times larger!

*The Economist* also points out the success in Ohio of the Cleveland Clinic. That city is more akin to Montreal with its 3 million area population, so the hospital is less dominant. Even so, it earned about \$4.4 billion, including income from the three hotels it owns for its visitors.

As Quebec has progressively downsized the MUHC superhospital, it is unlikely to match the activity of the Mayo and Cleveland clinics. Nevertheless, the MUHC Glen campus will be enormous.

With the autoroute construction beginning, the impact is already biting at the residents of St. Raymond, the NDG neighbourhood to the west of the site.

Westmount is escaping much of the potential disruption that would come if major access points were built on Glen Rd.

and the Claremont-St. Catherine intersection as originally intended.

Given the political sensitivity in Quebec City to the project, it may become more than the public-private construction partnership proposed today and a smaller copy of those rich American clinics.

The present vacant land where some Westmount Rotarians would like to build a fitness park may house the "health-visitors" the MUHC would attract.

Whatever happens, Victoria Village inevitably cannot escape the hospital's arrival. More of Westmount will be hit as the plan develops. Stand by, grandchildren!

Don Wedge's e-mail is [calert@web.net](mailto:calert@web.net)

## Flower show's opening reception



Among those invited to the official opening March 19 of Westmount's 75th annual spring flower show were a number of community volunteers and newcomers. The reception took place at Victoria Hall where Councillors George Bowser and Nicole Forbes officiated. From left are: Lee Taylor, Karen Griffin, Anne McArel, Jim Griffin and Maureen Kiely.



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## The Inventory:

# Condos for sale and brokered rentals in Westmount

The Inventory is content provided by the Westmount Independent, and is compiled from public sources and parties that contact us. To find a brokered property's listing agent and additional information, please go to [MLS.ca](http://MLS.ca). In addition, both listing agents and agents working with buyers have more information (including the address of all listed houses) available to them on a private network. If you are a real estate agent or private seller whose property has been overlooked, please write to us at [indie@westmountindependent.com](mailto:indie@westmountindependent.com) and we will work to include your properties in future editions.

### Condos/duplexes for sale

\$179,000 3237 St. Antoine St.  
 \$212,000 399 Clarke Ave. 1A  
 \$219,000 3239 St. Antoine St.  
 \$279,000 376 Redfern Ave. #2  
 \$289,000 376 Redfern Ave. #4  
 \$294,600 Address unavailable  
 \$299,000 300 Lansdowne #14  
 \$319,000 376 Redfern Ave. #25  
 \$329,000 376 Redfern Ave. #9  
 \$329,000 3 Westmount Square #411  
 \$339,000 376 Redfern Ave. #19  
 \$339,000 4444 Sherbrooke St. W. #403\*  
 \$349,000 3235 St. Antoine  
 \$355,000 2 Westmount Square #601  
 \$359,000 2 Westmount Square #401  
 \$360,000 3 Westmount Square #315  
 \$379,000 466 Victoria Ave.  
 \$389,000 4700 St. Catherine St. #703  
 \$389,000 3241 St. Antoine St. W.  
 \$396,000 43 Bruce Ave.  
 \$399,000 205 Victoria #103  
 \$399,000 399 Clarke Ave. 2E  
 \$439,000 468 Victoria Ave.  
 \$449,000 205 Victoria Ave. #303  
 \$449,000 435 Grosvenor Ave. #2  
 \$449,000 4444 Sherbrooke #502  
 \$463,000 4700 St. Catherine St. W. #709

\$469,000 343 Clarke Ave. #4  
 \$489,000 376 Redfern Ave. #11  
 \$489,000 200 Lansdowne Ave. #503  
 \$489,000 Address unavailable  
 \$498,000 Address unavailable  
 \$499,000 Address unavailable  
 \$499,000 Address unavailable  
 \$499,000 Address unavailable  
 \$538,800 Address unavailable  
 \$545,000 4856 St. Catherine St. W.  
 \$558,000 4700 St. Catherine St. W. #208  
 \$561,900 Address unavailable  
 \$571,100 Address unavailable  
 \$579,000 54 Thornhill lower  
 \$599,000 2 Westmount Square #1203  
 \$619,000 3 Church Hill  
 \$619,000 Address unavailable  
 \$629,000 376 Redfern Ave. #6  
 \$639,000 466 Argyle Ave.  
 \$650,000 Address unavailable  
 \$654,000 376 Redfern #23\*  
 \$795,000 Address unavailable  
 \$1,150,000 4700 St. Catherine St. W. PH8  
 \$1,375,000 4175 St. Catherine St. W. #1402  
 \$1,575,000 1 Wood Ave. #1205  
 \$1,699,000 227 Clarke Ave.\*  
 \$1,950,000 4545 Sherbrooke St.\*\*

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\$1,700 376 Redfern #17  
 \$1,740 4800 de Maisonneuve  
 \$1,800 Address unavailable  
 \$1,895 4501 Sherbrooke St. W. 2d  
 \$1,975 Address unavailable  
 \$2,000 or \$339,000 4444 Sherbrooke St. W. #403\*\*  
 \$2,100 49 Windsor Ave.  
 \$2,200 58 Arlington  
 \$2,250 Address unavailable  
 \$2,400 58a Thornhill Ave.  
 \$2,500 400 Kensington Ave. #301  
 \$2,500 Address unavailable  
 \$2,600 4548 St. Catherine St.  
 \$2,600 447 Prince Albert Ave. #2  
 \$2,650 4175 St. Catherine St. W. #401  
 \$2,900 4654 St. Catherine St. W.  
 \$3,000 386 Olivier Ave.  
 \$3,000 17 Church Hill  
 \$3,000 447 Prince Albert #1  
 \$3,500 Address unavailable  
 \$3,500 75 Columbia Ave.

\$3,700 529 Lansdowne Ave.  
 \$3,900 17 Winchester Ave.  
 \$4,495 61 Oakland Ave.  
 \$4,500 Address unavailable  
 \$4,700 633 Murray Hill Ave.  
 \$4,800 3764 The Boulevard  
 \$4,800 83 Summit Cr.  
 \$4,950 4175 St. Catherine St. W. #1402  
 \$5,000 Address unavailable  
 \$5,750 611 Lansdowne Ave.  
 \$6,000 or \$639,000 376 Redfern #23\*\*  
 \$6,300 456 Mountain  
 \$7,000 or \$2,200,000 Address unavailable\*\*  
 \$8,950 or \$1,699,000 227 Clarke Ave.\*\*  
 \$11,000 Address unavailable  
 \$12,000 680 Victoria Ave.  
 \$12,000 4760 The Boulevard  
 \$12,500 Address unavailable  
 \$15,000 3657 The Boulevard  
 \$15,000/\$2,349,000 65 Belvedere Rd.\*\*  
 \*Dollar figure is rent per month unless stated.  
 \*\*Also for sale. Second amount is asking sale price.

## Unbrokered Rentals:

# What they were showing

A selection of rentals at well-known Westmount buildings at press time. If you are a landlord and would like to include a listing, please email us at [indie@westmountindependent.com](mailto:indie@westmountindependent.com) on Thursday, April 24 with your available apartments.

389 Claremont, 4.5, 5.5, 6.5  
 418 Claremont/ Le Richelieu, 3.5, 4.5, 5.5, 6.5  
 4656 Sherbrooke St., Parking  
 400 Lansdowne, 5.5  
 4643 Sherbrooke St./Abbey, Full  
 4557 Sherbrooke St., 3.5, 5.5  
 4501 Sherbrooke St./The Parkview, 4.5  
 4326 Sherbrooke St./Chateau Redfern, 6.5 and 5.5  
 4300 De Maisonneuve, 3.5, 4.5, 5.5 & Penthouse  
 5 & 7 Park Place, 4.5  
 50 Academy Road, 4.5  
 4556 St. Catherine St./Westgrove, 4.5  
 4560 St. Catherine St., 2.5, 4.5, 5.5

4400 St. Catherine St., 3.5 & Garage spaces  
 225 Olivier Ave./Olivier House, 1 & 2 Bedroom suites  
 220 Olivier Ave./Olivier House West, 1 & 2 Bedroom suites  
 331 Clark Ave./Le Warwick, 3.5, 4.5, 5.5  
 1 Rosemount Ave./Le Rosemount, 2.5, 3.5, 5.5, 6.5  
 10 Rosemount Ave./Westmount Terrace, 3.5, 4.5, 5.5  
 200 Kensington Ave. & 201 Metcalfe/Westmount Place, 1.5, 2.5, 3.5, 4.5, 5.5  
 239 Kensington Ave./Manoir Heather, Full  
 250 Kensington Ave./Westmount Manor, 6.5  
 216-222 Redfern Ave./Redfern Court, 4.5, 6.5

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 \$600 340 Victoria Ave. #16, 17  
 \$695 Address unavailable  
 \$710 Address unavailable  
 \$710 Address unavailable  
 \$720 Address unavailable  
 \$795 200 Kensington Ave. #514  
 \$850 339 Victoria Ave. #18  
 \$875 200 Kensington Ave. #518  
 \$910 Address unavailable  
 \$965 Address unavailable  
 \$1,000 200 Kensington Ave. #618  
 \$1,150 339 Victoria Ave. #9  
 \$1,215 140 Irvine Ave.  
 \$1,220 201 Metcalfe Ave. #327  
 \$1,395 4462 St. Catherine St. W. #2  
 \$1,400 201 Metcalfe Ave. #403  
 \$1,400 Address unavailable

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# Introducing Guy Dufort, federal Conservative nominee:

ing morning to find out his views on several topics, including the marked absence of Conservative representation in the riding's history. The fact that the Conservatives had not been in power in this riding for half a century was not lost on Dufort, who commented that 50 years ago this March on the heels of St. Patrick's Day, the last Conservative elected in the old riding of St. Antoine-Westmount was an Irishman, Ross Webster.

Here is an extract from our interview with Dufort.

## Background

**WI:** Tell me about yourself. Where were you born, where do you now live?

**GD:** I was born in Montreal. My mother's side has Abenaki blood, and the French side of my family has been in Boucherville since its creation in 1678. I lived in Ottawa for 10 years when I went to open an office for Heenan Blaikie. Since this January, my main port of call is now Montreal. I still have a secondary office in Ottawa, but I spend most of my time in Montreal. I don't have plans to move to the island of Montreal right now. Don't forget I have had an office in the riding since 1969. I have been working here. And I was educated as well in the riding...I used to play touch football in Murray Park!

**WI:** I imagine you are quite busy with your law career and politics. Not that these aren't fun, but what do you do for leisure?

**GD:** I do a lot of fly fishing, white water canoeing and a little golf when I have time. My two children are now lawyers, and I am a new grandfather. My daughter works for the Crown as a lawyer in Ottawa, and my son works for unions in Montreal. They're both over 30 years old. I see them at least once or twice a week. Apart from that, I do read a lot, and one of my hobbies has always been politics.

**WI:** Have you always been a large "c" conservative?

**GD:** Yes, I have. Large "c" and small "c" as well. There are all sorts of reasons. I am attached to the institutions. They've been set up in the past and have evolved. It doesn't mean that things cannot be improved, but to change things overnight, to do drastic changes, is always risky in the sense that if you start changing things erratically, people lose their compass ... I am very optimistic about the new generation. They are setting up their own values, but it's going to take time.

## Quebec politics

**WI:** You say one of the reasons you decided to run was 'the Prime Minister's motion recognizing that the Québécois form

a nation.' Could you elaborate?

**GD:** That's interesting because that was one of the resolutions that Mr. Garneau [Liberal candidate for the Westmount-Ville Marie riding] supported in the last federal election. He was a proponent of that, which I understand because essentially it's mine as well.

There is some kind of love/hate relationship between the Liberals and Quebec in that they have always refused in the past to recognize the fact that Quebec constitutes a nation. The Conservatives were the first party to do so formally, and the consequences of that is very simple. It goes back to Canadian nationalism, as well as Quebec or provincial nationalism.

We have a need for a recognition of our rights in the province of Quebec as a province. Any party that wants to centralize decision-making power in Ottawa goes against provincial autonomy. Provincial autonomy, if you look at the constitution, as it was enacted, is the essential base of a confederation.

And if you look at the way the Conservatives are now dealing with the provinces, there is now a lot more respect for provincial jurisdictions. Even in cases where the federal government wants to intervene in elements that deal with joint or provincial jurisdiction, the tendency now is to do it in a partnership. And partnerships are great in the sense that you do recognize that other provinces have the same need for autonomy.

Alberta is the best example of that. If you look at the positions that Alberta has taken over the last 10 years, it's very similar, if not identical, in certain cases to what Quebec has done, and there is some kind of alliance (excuse the word!) between Quebec and Alberta in terms of provincial autonomy. The consequences of recognizing Quebec as a nation is simply to recognize the fact that Quebec is the main government representing a majority of French-speaking people in North America, but has obligations towards the English-speaking minorities. That is what a Quebec nation is in my view. It's not a question of being a *Québécois de souche*, not at all.

**WI:** Where do you stand on the partition of Quebec into Canadian and Quebec portions in the event of separation?

**GD:** I am not running federally to con-

sider partition. To me, a province is a whole as well as Canada is a whole and should not be divided. That is very clear to me. If we start discussing partition even before there is a possibility of separation, we are wasting our time.



Guy Dufort, Conservative Party's candidate for Westmount-Ville Marie.

We should tell the people in the province of Quebec, and any other province for that matter, what are the advantages of federalism, rather than raise scarecrow tactics that say 'sovereignists are bad people', 'they want to kill our country' and so on. That's not the way to do it. People will remain and want to remain in Canada in a federation if they see the advantages.

## Riding issues

**WI:** What is the Conservative party's position on some of the issues facing the Westmount-Ville Marie riding?

**GD:** There are urban problems that exist in Westmount-Ville Marie. Homelessness is an increasing problem, and what did the Liberal government do to counteract that? Nothing. What is the federal Conservative party doing now? They are entering into partnership initiatives with local organizations to deal with homeless people ... The Ville Marie sector is a place where we have the most homeless people. To have civil servants dealing

with that is not the solution. We need people working on the ground, grassroots people who know the problems of the individuals. For instance we have La Maison du Père and the Salvation Army in the riding.

If they need more funding, that's something we have to look at. But one thing that really needs to be done is that these people who are presently homeless become, eventually, autonomous. That involves not only money, but education and promotion of a self-sufficiency.

Another problem we have in the riding is affordable housing. Rents are increasing at a substantial rate, and people who have been living in the riding for years will be forced to move out, and that attacks the social fabric of the riding.

Yes, we have to make sure we get through central housing - there are some programs. But we need to get involved with the municipal and the provincial governments, and the will is there at the federal level.

**WI:** Are these issues as much of a concern for Westmount constituents?

**GD:** To me, I would be representing the entire riding. Don't forget whatever problems exist in Ville Marie could have an overflow in Westmount. As to Westmount proper, the housing problem exists there - affordable housing. Overall, I am very sure that Westmount people would be really concerned about the orientation of our economy.

## Macro economics

**WI:** In your opinion, is the high dollar (and the high cost of oil) a threat to manufacturing in the east? And are you concerned about the US mortgage crisis creeping into Canada?

**GD:** I am not too concerned about the mortgage crisis overflowing into Canada. I am concerned (and I was concerned about this five or six years ago) that when the dollar was low compared to US dollar, companies were making profits, and they declared dividends when part of those profits should have been reinvested in productivity-oriented investments like new machinery and educating their people to increase productivity - that should have

# Partnerships are key to the future

been done at the time. When the dollar increased substantially and rapidly 16 months ago, they said they were taken by surprise – it did go fast, but they should have seen it coming way back.

What we have to do at the federal government level, and the provincial government as well, is to make sure there are incentives for companies to invest in machinery, education, training that will go towards increasing productivity and maintaining a relative competitiveness across the world.

**WI:** Prime Minister Harper lowered the GST in late 2007. Why bring down GST? Don't most conservatives like consumption taxes? And why haven't income taxes been touched?

**GD:** Don't forget the GST was enacted by the Conservatives, and their reason at the time was to help reduce the deficit – [it was said] at the time, if the deficit is under control, we can start reducing the GST. That was done. Why reduce GST rather than income tax? If you reduce income tax, 30 percent of Canadians will not benefit

from that, because 30 percent don't have to pay income tax. But they all have to pay GST. Reduce it, and everyone benefits.

**WI:** What are you most proud of as a minority government?

**GD:** I am very proud of the fact that we've been able to govern the country for more than two years. And whether people realize it or not, there have been compromises with the other parties. What I am proud of as well is the programs, the partnerships we've been able to implement with the provinces. It's a great new attitude, a decentralized approach to Canada.

The fiscal imbalance is another issue I am proud of. I go back to Mr. Martin's plan to reduce the debt, the deficit over the years. When the Conservative government was taken out of office in 1993, the contribution of the federal government to the province of Quebec was in the area of 23 percent. After three years of the Liberal government, it went down to 15 percent. It means that the deficit [reduction] was not as a consequence of the federal government cutting

down its operation, it really was done on the backs of the provinces. Now the contribution level is up to more than 23 percent. I am proud of that aspect, not only for Quebec but for the other provinces.

## *The environment and more*

**WI:** Prime Minister Harper's government has been given mixed reviews on its approach to environmental issues. What is your personal vision?

**GD:** My view on climate change ... is that it's really something people will have to deal with at all [government] levels. It's a big mistake to say that the federal government is the only one responsible to deal with it. It would also be a big mistake to say provincial governments have to deal with it on their own.

We need a total change in terms of education and social consciousness ... Municipalities and boroughs have to come up with their own action plan which will have to involve each household ... if it means in certain cases they will have to pay an additional cost for their garbage, so be it. It doesn't have to be overnight. It has to be done in an incremental way, in a progres-

sive manner.

**WI:** Anything else you would like to cover that would be of interest to Westmounters?

**GD:** I would like to emphasize the fact we have three universities in the riding. Universities are usually the best element of research and development. R&D in the States has been the main thrust of their economy – they come up with all sorts of new solutions, new technologies and so on. And they invest massively with universities for R&D. In Canada, we're lagging behind substantially. We have something here that could be a substantial element of our growth if we invest massively in R&D and provide universities with such grants and subsidies to do that kind of research that will eventually spin off in companies.

The best example of that in Canada was the research done by the University of Waterloo and the spin-off was the Blackberry technology. If we multiply that in Canada, we would be able to go head to head with the Americans and Europeans because of our productivity growth.

*Kristin McNeill*

## *Wine: What's In Store...*

# Fantastic wine... How do we get it?

BY CAROLA PRICE



There have been countless occasions when a customer on the sommelier side of my business oohs and aahs over a wine on my list only to be told that they can't buy it at the SAQ. The look of sheer

disappointment on my customers' faces tells the sad tale of what we call private importation.

### *Old stand-bys and new short-cuts*

The SAQ introduces hundreds of wines during the year to feel out the market. However, when the wines fail in sales terms, they are yanked off the shelves, never to be seen again by those who actually liked them.

Wine representatives, working for both the SAQ and restaurants, are constantly searching the globe for new wines that can filter their way into our market. When they come across something remarkable with a good price point for profit, they give their restaurant customers a tasting.

The restaurants are in turn able to offer

these new wines to their customers who can enjoy trying something new and unavailable. Representatives do the paper work and take on all the headaches of importing wine into a controlled market. This is great, especially when something you've enjoyed on your travels suddenly pops up on a wine list at your local resto.

### *And now the fun begins*

There is another window on the world for Quebec's wine drinkers. Every two years, the SAQ hosts a huge show called The Salon des Vins at the Palais de Congress. With over 1,200 products to taste, there are many wines that won't be on SAQ shelves any time soon and the public is able to buy them at the show! Now you can find wines you like, order them with the representative servicing the booth and pick them up on your way out. If the exclusivity isn't enough, there are also extremely informative wine seminars given for free at the back of the hall. The line-ups can be long, so arrive early for the ones that really interest you.

Enjoy the show, spit if you can, and if you see me, don't be afraid to tell me how informative you find my articles!

Hours of the show are Thursday, March 27 from 4 pm to 9 pm, Friday from 2 pm to 9 pm, Saturday from 12 noon to 9 pm and Sunday from 12 noon to 5 pm.

**Chardonnay, Fleur du Cap, South Africa. SAQ#00340406. \$14.45**

This white is dry and fruity with lovely hints of spice and a buttery mouthfeel. It is well balanced and medium to heavy bodied with oak ever-present but not too overdone. This is a great match with salmon, grilled chicken and warm vegetable salad with herbs and olive oil. Cheeses like Brie and Oka will round out the wine beautifully. SAQ availability at press time: 155 Atwater, Atwater Market, Pepsi Forum and Victoria

**Cabernet-Sauvignon Organico, Errazuriz, Chile. SAQ#10694392. \$22.75**

Chile always amazes me for its continuing value of really good wine. This dry and tannic red is no exception. With all the cab components of cassis and vanilla, it also has a slightly vegetal nose and a full mouth. For those that are following the trends, this is an organic wine but, as always, contains some sulfites. This is wine meant for roast beef and

grilled lamb or polenta with rabbit ragout. Cheeses that match are Epoisses, aged cheddar, and Saint André.

SAQ availability at press time: 155 Atwater and Victoria.



## Notaries

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## Westmount Profile: Gabrielle Soskin

# Living a theatre dream

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

Gabrielle Soskin's upcoming solo performances of Juliet, Cleopatra and other Shakespearean women could be said to embody all aspects of her 45-year theatrical career as an actor, artistic director and educator.

It's a career during which she has ignited a passion for the stage in numerous students through after-school drama classes at Roslyn, two decades of teaching at John Abbott College and the founding of Persephone Productions, a theatre company she created to provide work opportunities for emerging anglophone theatre artists.

"We should be proud of our English theatre and culture, celebrate it and value what we have to offer," she says.

And it's to that end, as a fundraiser for Persephone, that Soskin is embarking on her one-woman performances called *The Loves of Shakespeare's Women*.

"What better way to raise money for Persephone than to get out there and perform myself?" she says.

### Trained at Old Vic

Trained at England's Old Vic Theatre School and steeped in British drama, Soskin will perform three times: April 3 at 8 pm at Centre Greene; on April 9 at Griffin House – the McAuslan cabaret centre on St. Ambrose St. in St. Henri – and a third time April 16 in Quebec City at Champlain-St. Lawrence College.

And whether Soskin transforms herself into one of Shakespeare's women or simply lives as the "Gabby" many of her old friends call her, a similar headstrong and somewhat rebellious personality shines through.

Moving from acting into teaching, Soskin's entrepreneurial and risk-taking spirit led her to Canada for a fresh start. She soon settled in Westmount.

"I began to grow in better soil," she says, "and I began a most marvellous teaching career."

### Raised family in Westmount

It is also here that she met her husband, Ray Busbridge, and where they have raised their children: Matthew, who will be attending business school at Western, and Annabel, who is studying psychology and international relations at UBC.

Interestingly, Soskin says, neither child

dreamed of acting as she did even from her earliest days on a farm in Toddington, Bedfordshire during World War II. "My passion was always with music, dance and art."

In retrospect, "I was too young and highly strung at the time to benefit as much from my training at Bristol Old Vic as I would now. I very soon discovered that although gifted in acting, I did not possess that kind of inner drive or calling that actors, musicians and the Tiger Woods of the world need to overcome failed auditions and succeed. So I decided to take teachers' training and began teaching drama in London."

### Roslyn drama 'serendipity'

Some of her happiest days were teaching creative drama for Roslyn's Home & School Association during the 1970s. "It was almost a serendipity experience. Children love acting because it's all about make-believe."

But it was while teaching in John Abbott's professional theatre program from 1975 to 2003 that Soskin began evolving into directing. "Discovering my new abilities was a turning point." An experimental production of an adaptation of *Anna Karenina* led to the realization of her dream: to found and operate her own a theatre company.

She obtained a not-for-profit registration and so began Persephone Productions.

Despite receiving five Montreal English Critics Circle Awards (MECCAs), Soskin has been discovering the challenges that small independent theatre companies face in obtaining funding grants that typically go to the larger established theatres.

"The local community has been generous to Persephone. But to grow and produce more than one production a year, we need to be on a more stable financial footing rather than depending so heavily on ticket revenue." (This year's production in November of *Othello* will take place at the McCord Museum.)

### Taking up piano and yoga

Soskin is also in the throes of preparing for her Secondary V piano exam from the McGill Conservatory of Music. "In another life, I would like to be an amateur pianist," she says. Growing up playing violin, she only began piano lessons 15 years ago wondering if she "sustain the



Gabrielle Soskin rehearses at home on Somerville Ave. for her upcoming Persephone fundraisers. She'll wear a red dress (see p. 1) specially designed by Jean-Yves Lacasse whose Westmount boutique is on Sherbrooke St.

rigorous discipline." Taking up yoga has helped.

Meanwhile, her many students and friends will be able to attend her upcoming performances by reserving tickets at

514.481.1327. "They're a collection of Shakespearean monologues interspersed with anecdotes of my life," she says.

And of those, she certainly has many.

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## Centre Greene's pied piper on hiatus

Ben Griffin will be taking a break from his role as Centre Greene's Tumbling Tots animator. The popular Centre Greene program (Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 am to 11 am) will have to do without its ace musician as he embarks on an eight-week *stage* necessary for his education degree. His last pre-*stage* performance was March 20.

Griffin has been playing music for children for 17 of his 29 years, including 10 at Centre Greene, "[Tumbling Tots] is a social network for parents.

They can have coffee and take a break. The kids can be independent [in the gym]."

Griffin is no stranger to performing; he has two bands (the Echo Hunters and Good Time Charlie) that play at Irish pubs around town. He also hosts the downtown Olde Orchard's Wednesday singer-songwriter night.

Griffin was also one of the top 40 contestants during a recent season of *Canadian Idol*. He is light-hearted about these two experiences, "Playing for kids and doing *Canadian Idol* sure make you lose your street cred."

During Griffin's absence Centre Greene co-ordinator Anna Johansson will put a contingency plan into action. Someone will be setting up for Tumbling Tots



Ben Griffin with his fan base.

and parents will be filling in for Griffin. Nevertheless, Johansson good-naturedly expects a "mutiny" over his absence. She

assured the *Independent* that what was visible in the photo above is a "small crowd" by Tumbling Tots standards.

## WMA invites MUHC chief to centenary AGM

Dr. Henry Olders, president of the Westmount Municipal Association, has invited Dr. Arthur Porter, chief executive officer of the McGill University Health Centre, to be the guest speaker at this year's annual general meeting. The event marks the centenary of the WMA and takes place on May 5 in Victoria Hall.

## Rotary announces garage sale date

The Rotary Club of Westmount garage sale chairman Sandy Highet announced recently that this year's auction will be held on Friday, June 6 and the garage sale on Saturday, June 7. This event is the club's main fundraising event.

Rotarians have been picking up items from homes since last summer and will move them in to the Westmount arena during the week before the sale.

All funds raised will be used on Rotary community, national and international projects. Rotary has been in active in the

city for over 75 years.

For more information, or to arrange a pickup, call the club at 514.935.3344 or email [info@rotarywestmount.org](mailto:info@rotarywestmount.org).

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**St Henri.** Loft Sherwill. Spacious master bdr with walk-in cc. Mezzanine off lvr and dnr. 12.5 ft ceilings, large windows. Living area has a separate office space off kitchen and dining room. Walk to market, metro, all services. **Asking \$279,000**

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**Notre Dame de Grâce.** Charming and bright lower co-op. Two bedrooms, open living room/dining room, eat-in kitchen, finished renovated basement, wood work, gorgeous garden, garage. Close to all services, transportation, residential neighbourhood. **Asking \$289,000**

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**Le Sud Ouest.** Great loft with wall to wall windows and city views. 11-ft ceilings, originals beams, brick wall. Huge windows on this corner unit, over looking the canal, bike path, walk to Old Mtl, downtown. Garage, gym locker. **Asking \$299,000**

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**NDG.** Rare find! Architecturally interesting 50's gem! Quality renovated, very bright, contemporary 3 brd+den, deluxe custom kitchen. This unique, efficient home sits on a 5000 sf lot/mature per. gdn, great street, schools, parks and commuter train. **Asking \$442,000**

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**Westmount.** Cozy English style cottage renovated with taste, on quiet cul de sac, 3 bedrooms + MBDR+++ , wood floor, fire place, playroom, bedroom + bathroom in basement. Extended kitchen w/dinette, pkg for one car. **Asking \$575,000**

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