

Targetted to open November 15 City rents rink for set-up in Westmount Park

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Skating is expected to be available in most weather conditions this year in Westmount Park after city council October 5 approved the rental of a refrigerated ice rink for installation, possibly as early as November 15.

The decision is an offshoot of the COVID-19 restrictions on social distancing and a need to provide an option to the freeze-melt cycle affecting the regular outdoor rinks.

“There will be lighting and it should be wonderful for seniors and everyone to be able to be outside,” Councillor Mary Gallery told the *Independent* as commissioner of library, culture, sports and recreation.

The rink is to be installed at the location traditionally used for the city’s campout

near the comfort station and follows a request from school heads to help them find alternate activity and space in the public domain (see story September 8, p. SG-1).

The rink is to be rented from Synergplace Canada at a proposed maximum amount of \$99,993 for the 2020-2021 winter season of which \$54,784, including tax credits, is to be paid in this fiscal year.

Details concerning how the rink would be managed have yet to be determined. “Its control will have to be monitored as to who has access and what the process looks like,” Gallery said. “This is to be discussed and resolved over the coming weeks. It is an ever-changing time, which requires constant adaptation.”

The city had purchased – and later sold – a refrigerated rink that Public Works set up at the *continued on p. 10*

Where in Westmount is this field?



Or is this view to the east even in Westmount? Please see p. 21 for story.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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Total surplus remains at \$29M Council switches \$4.6M from debt reserve to pay-as-you-go

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A surplus re-appropriation by council October 5 of \$4.6 million to be put toward the city’s pay-as-you-go amount for infrastructure renewal does not change the bottom line and is rather a bookkeeping “re-classification,” according to Councillor Kathleen Kez, finance commissioner.

It’s being switched from the previously

appropriated amount of \$13.9 million designated for debt repayment, for which only \$9.3 million is now needed for debt reserve, she explained.

This leaves the city with its total surplus of \$29 million, consisting of appropriated surplus of \$28.8 million and unappropriated surplus of \$205,000. Of the unappropriated surplus, \$49,127 comes from the 2019 sur- *continued on p. 11*

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Gas leak clears out Alexis Nihon, Metro, Dawson

BY VERONICA REDGRAVE

The flashing lights of emergency vehicles formed a barrier at the corner of Atwater and St. Catherine St. October 6.

noon.

Although the leak was not on a major line, repairs took some time as it was necessary to dig in order to find the shut-off valve. The leak also meant that Atwater

Ave. was closed between Sherbrooke and de Maisonneuve.

There was still a slight recognizable odour of gas later in the afternoon.

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Fundraiser Profile
(Arlene Bratz-Abramowicz), p. 24

9 Lives, p. 16

Westmount A-dog-tions, p. 20

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Atwater and St. Catherine on October 9, three days later.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Mona Monette, receptionist at Cominar, told the *Independent* later that there had been a gas leak due to a pipe being ruptured during construction at the corner of de Maisonneuve and Atwater. Real estate investment trust Cominar manages Alexis Nihon Plaza.

There was a crush of people from the evacuation of the plaza as well as of the Metro station, the green line of which was partially closed from Angrignon to Berri-UQAM.

Dawson College was also cleared, with students milling around until the after-



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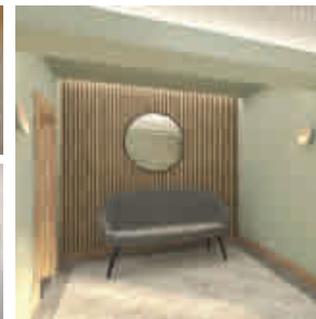
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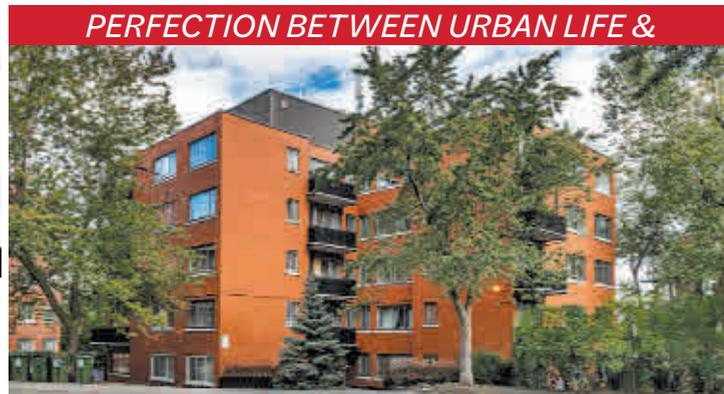
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Creating the city's first fully accessible playground

Council awards a second tender for Prince Albert Park

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

While work is still expected this fall to install new fully accessible play structures at Prince Albert Park, Councillor Cynthia Lulham said last week, council October 5 approved an additional contract for a maximum of \$174,285 for extensive reconstruction and landscaping.

This will include site excavation, installation of the anchoring material, new wheelchair accessible pathways, bike racks, ramps and concrete borders to contain the new rubber surfacing material that will replace the current wood chips. This new surface will enable the use of wheel chairs.

"This will be our first fully accessible playground," Lulham said.

The contract, which was



Looking east into Prince Albert Park on October 8.

awarded to Les entreprises Ventec, is considered to be the second phase of the work, some of which will be completed in the spring, such as removal of the construction fence, she said. "We're trying to get most of it done this fall," she said.

"It's exciting because it sets the bar for how we are treating our parks," Mayor Christina Smith said.

The play structures in two sections, for younger and older children, were purchased August 17 at a maximum amount of \$96,737 from Simexco Industries (see story August 25, p. 4).

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Finished so soon?



This broom, photographed on Prince Albert at Somerville October 6, seems to have given up the ghost. It would appear to have done some work filling up the garden refuse bags, but there is still a lot of fall to come!

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.



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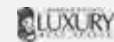


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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**CONSULTATION NEEDED
FOR YORK-DE MAISONNEUVE
CONSTRUCTION AREA**

*Open letter to Mayor Christina Smith and
director general Benoit Hurtubise*

It's 3:30 in the morning, the wee hours of Tuesday, October 6. Am I snug in bed getting the restful sleep I need to prepare for the busy work day ahead? If only! Wearing a robe on this cool but tolerable night, I'm standing at the entrance to the Vendôme construction project on St. Catherine just south of de Maisonneuve, and engaging in an animated discussion with several workers. A Public Security officer joined us later.

Here is the noise that shattered the overnight tranquility: At 1:52 am, large construction vehicles from Projet Vendôme rumbled into the Glen Yards, and as they parked (a process that lasted about 10 minutes), their shovels kept clanging and banging heavily to the ground.

Less than an hour later, a fork-lift spent several minutes roaring and manoeuvring into position on St. Catherine as it prepared to lift and move large rocks just outside the chain-link fence near the entrance to the Projet Vendôme job site [for the new entrance to the MUHC's Glen hospital]. To my surprise, I was told that these rocks were being moved (at this hour!) to clear a path for work that is soon to begin on construction of the retirement residence at de Maisonneuve and St. Catherine.

Did this noise finally come to an end?

Yes, around 3:45. And what was the reason for the silence? The fact that I went out there to complain and ask what was so urgent that this sleep-disrupting activity could not have been scheduled for earlier in the evening.

Would a one-shot occurrence be worth such a fuss? Certainly not. The fact is, during the overnight hours for about the past two months, construction vehicles have regularly been moving through the Glen Yards and, to the best of my understanding, parking there. What we hear is not just their powerful motors, but beeping as they back up, as well as clanging as their shovels strike the hard surface.

As if this weren't bad enough, we hear a 10-minute burst of noise, followed by a period of silence, followed by more noise, another period of silence, and so on – all starting anywhere between 1 and 2 am and usually wrapping up just after 4 am. Just as dismaying is the randomness of this activity: Sometimes a week can go by in blessed silence, and then it starts all over again.

Why is this overnight disruption permitted within Westmount's boundaries? Why is my quality of life collateral damage in the decade-plus of never-ending heavy construction in this neighbourhood? For years, we endured the day-and-night construction of the MUHC hospital. When that ended, we were subjected to the shocking noise of the hospital's ventilation system. This was fixed only after area residents were forced to take legal action,

when Westmount would not act. Then, in August 2017, Projet Vendôme began. And it's still ongoing.

I'd like to remind the mayor that during the MUHC ventilation noise debacle, we were told, time and again, that the source of the problem was not on Westmount territory – therefore, Westmount had no jurisdiction to enforce local noise by-laws. Well, what's the excuse for what's now happening overnight in the Glen Yards and on St. Catherine? Try sleeping with the crash of concrete jersey barriers being replaced at 3 am outside your window.

Even if beeping and other overnight noise related to heavy construction occurs just outside its jurisdiction, why do Westmount's administrations – both present and past – persist in the attitude that what goes on a few yards away from its borders has no impact on Westmount's residents or their quality of life?

Why does the councillor for this area, Marina Brzeski, advise calling Public Security for overnight construction-related noise disturbances? It is not the job of the kind and empathetic PSOs and dispatch staff of Public Security to negotiate the terms of any agreement between Westmount and the construction project managers regarding overnight noise in Westmount.

Nor is it my job to run outside in the middle of the night to put a stop to rock-moving, or to visit the job site to learn from the contractor that excavation work is responsible for dozens of heavy trucks moving east along St. Catherine during the day. It is also not in my job description as a resident to be responsible for emailing, phoning and buttonholing city officials in person about noise problems related to work inside or outside Westmount's boundaries.

I'd like answers about what is going on in the Glen Yards overnight and whether Westmount is prepared to enforce its own noise by-laws where jurisdiction does exist. And I strongly urge Mayor Smith to convene a public consultation – sooner rather than later – regarding the upcoming construction of the retirement residence in this area, as well as what may well be the construction of another major hospital in the Glen Yards [due to the possible move of the Montreal General Hospital].

DOROTHY LIPOVENKO, YORK ST.

**Correction: MUHC's Dream
Big targets \$200 million**

Contrary to what was reported in our October 6 edition (p. 10), the MUHC's Dream Big fundraising campaign is targeting \$200 million. – DP.

**SUPPORT, DON'T MOCK,
CYCLING ADVOCATES**

RE: Robert Cowling's letter "Cycling association needs members, elections for authority" (September 29, p. 6)

It is shameful to belittle someone who has volunteered so much personal time to improve the liveability and sustainability of our community. On occasion, I met Dan Lambert [the president of the Association of Pedestrians and Cyclists of Westmount or ACPW] this past winter while walking on streets around Murray Hill Park. He was taking notes on the sidewalk conditions of snow and ice. He relayed observed problems to Public Works so that it could remedy the situation. His work was a significant part of the much-improved walking conditions this past winter.

Regarding urban cycling, I have been told that he and other members of the APCW had met with a site supervisor and engineer of the Société de transport de Montréal (STM) at its de Maisonneuve work site above the Atwater Metro station. They were asked to give critical feedback on projected detours for cyclists around the work site. The resulting safe and commodious detours were the result of their collaboration.

It is easy to mock these days. It seems to be the political rage south of us. But when one does so as self-appointed chairperson to the ever-increasing number and size of vehicles on our streets [i.e. Cowling as president of The Westmount Association of Motorists for a Fair Voice in Reasonable Traffic Regulation], the bull in our china shop, it goes beyond the pale. And when it is tacitly endorsing this bull's determination to accelerate climate heating, it begins to be unacceptable.

My wish is that we had more engaged citizens like Dan Lambert and those of the APCW who have the perspicacity to envision a better future and the willingness to dedicate time to achieving it.

ROGER JOCHYM, LEWIS AVE.

**LET'S COOPERATE ON
TRAIN STATION**

It's good to see that the discussion of the re-use of Westmount's beautiful, historic station is still alive and that Heritage Montréal's Memento project will engage residents to an even greater degree (September 22, p. 9). Citizen participation is now key for heritage awareness, given that, a few years ago, Quebec transferred responsibility for heritage issues to the municipalities.

Under the policy guise of letting local issues get decided by local authorities,

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



The Westmount train station at the foot of Victoria Ave. in 1994.

sadly, the provincial government failed to transfer resources and expertise to help burdened municipal administrations reach viable solutions on heritage preservation.

Working with open-minded municipal councils, informed, imaginative and motivated residents have a role to play in the process of restoring and repurposing our familiar urban landscape. With regard to the Westmount station, this co-operation could have the possible benefit of a joint public/private venture.

BRIAN MERRETT, DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

COMMUNICATE BEFOREHAND ON TREE REMOVAL PLEASE

Residents around Prince Albert Park noticed early last week that a very tall crane

was working on one of the park's most majestic trees, near the park's east side. This was not unusual, as the same crew had removed two large and dangerous trees in August.

Surprise! The crew was not pruning, but rather, removing the mostly healthy tree.

The next day, even the huge trunk was down. (See photo from October 4.)

No daily user of the park was aware of the reasons for removal, although some had heard of a plan to upgrade the facilities for younger children.

I suggest that the city restore the good communications practices of previous administrations.

FRANK PHILPOTT, CLAREMONT AVE.



THANKS FOR RE-PAVING PATH

With reference to my letter of August 25 "Please fix the brick path" (p. 22), and strongly recommending that it be fixed as soon as possible, I am writing to thank the city for doing so. It is a relief to walk now on firm ground and enjoy the surroundings without fear of falling. Thank you.

MELANIE BAILEY, DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

OOPS, WHERE'S THE "L" – AND WHY THE "R"?

You report (September 29, p. 1) that it was a "barmy Sunday afternoon at the splash pad in Westmount Park." Now, there's many a time I was convinced that some Westmounters were barmy, but Sunday afternoons can only be balmy.

PETER F. TRENT, CÔTE ST. ANTOINE RD.

OOPS! PART 2

[A barmy] afternoon might appeal to mad dogs and Englishmen, but the rest of us would probably appreciate something more *balmy*. Sorry – I couldn't resist!

MAVIS YOUNG, MELVILLE AVE.

Editor's reply: I missed this one completely and would have deferred to these views, except that proofer Beth Hudson had caught and investigated it. She found, before pub-

lication, that "barmy" is a variant of "balmy" (e.g. Merriam-Webster, Dictionary.com) and so let it go. – DP.

MYSTERY GLOVE

I saw the story about the mysterious track marks on the lawn (September 29, p. 17). Well, the baby glove in this photo has been mysteriously sitting on our lawn for five days. Even a few neighbours have spotted it and were wondering. Location: Montrose near Mount Pleasant.

KAROLINA JEZ, MONTROSE AVE.



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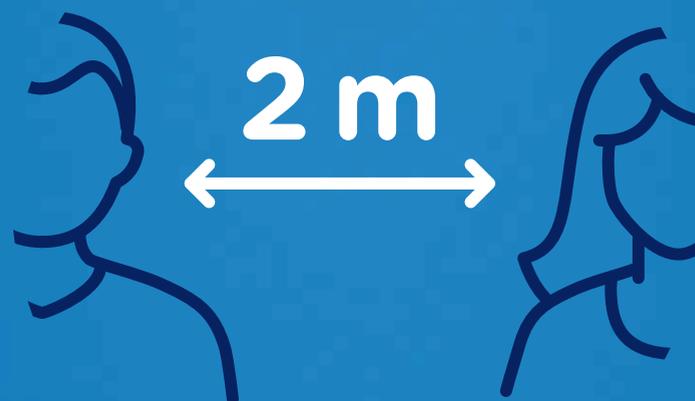
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Beasley's spotlight on the future of Westmount

Consultant: 2040 plan should focus on 3 'smart city' imperatives

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

In creating the kind of Westmount that residents will want and need for the next 20 years, the city's new urban master plan should be based on three essential "imperatives" that cities around the world are facing in determining their future, according to a well-known urban planner.

These "overarching" imperatives are "livability, sustainability and resilience," Larry Beasley said October 1 in a webinar presentation on "Imagine Westmount 2040."

"The world is finished with those old-fashioned land-use plans," he said, referring to Westmount's 20-year-old plan and patchwork updates that have been used as a development guide for zoning and building.

Designing today's urban plan is now "where a local government gets its act together and the citizenry ensures the issues it cares about become public policy," he ex-



Beasley presents his comments October 1 via webinar from Vancouver.

plained. The key to creating the type of community and separate neighbourhood modules moving forward is "to work with citizens, not city hall."

Beasley's presentation entitled "Addressing Westmount's Tomorrow: Making smart urban change" had previously been scheduled for a public meeting at Victoria Hall March 24 but postponed by COVID-19 closures.

His webinar presentation included numerous suggestions and a formula for "smart" cities focused on finding the right scale for neighbourhoods including their

identity, density, open spaces, alternative mobility, community facilities, green construction and renewable utilities.

"Your neighbourhood needs to be self-sufficient. This is the single most important component to be incorporated into a master plan," he said. Self-sufficiency means 15-minute walkability for food, a corner store, pharmacy and personal services.

He also stressed the importance of providing affordability of housing to attract young families as well as services for seniors so they can age in place and providing for a sufficient number of consumers to support the viability of retail and commercial districts.

As a result, he said, the new urban plan should take into account the shift in people's needs, some of which have resulted from the pandemic. These include more residents working from home as well as reclaiming streets for pedestrians and alternative modes of transportation.

The 3 keys

Exploring the three imperatives for a smart city, Beasley said that livability, "provides the kind of living people want, "so the art of designing urban plans is to tap into consumer preferences and trends."

Sustainability addresses a balance and harmony that features inclusiveness, diversity and equity that respect the planet and allow for the opening of cultural and economic doors.

Resilience encompasses a more resilient way of living and surviving in the face of unexpected happenings such as climate change.

"People want more protection against

the unexpected, such as COVID-19 has illustrated," he said. He cautioned, however, that "the pandemic won't last forever. You're designing Westmount for 2040."

He referenced and provided slides of many projects in some of the "more innovative cities" around the world such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, Stockholm, Helsinki, Melbourne, Copenhagen and Paris, showing various aspects of how they might be used in Westmount.

Tuning-up the plan

He also suggested some ideas that might be relevant to "tuning up" the current Westmount plan in terms of density, infill construction and affordability.

While Beasley had opened his presentation recognizing Westmount for having a well-developed heritage and strong identity, he said that its master plan review was "just the beginning."

He ended by saying "Westmount is a very important place, maybe a model in our country. So God speed as you move forward in your new master plan."

Statistics and details from Beasley's presentation can be viewed through his presentation now posted on the "Engage Westmount" website. It is accessible from the tab on the city's website homepage. The live-streaming feature was reported to have attracted 145 viewers who submitted 38 questions.

Hot new ideas in urban planning

Six "hot new ideas" in urban planning were highlighted by Larry Beasley for consideration by Westmounters in re-designing their urban plan. They are:

- The shared economy, such as shared housing and workplaces, will be a "game changer" – "you are going to be so surprised by what we are going to be sharing with one another in the next five years;"
- The 15-minute neighbourhood providing most services within a 15-minute walk;
- New forms for transportation such as personal mobility devices (scooter, etc.);
- Repossession of streets where cars are banished;
- Urban tranquility: measures to reduce noise such as leaf blowers and construction equipment;
- Two new trends "exploded" during COVID to re-shape cities: home-based work and e-commerce.



Elements proposed for a "smart" city.

Questions posted by 38 viewers

In moderating the virtual 90-minute Beasley presentation and question period, Westmounter David Hanna, an urban planner who sits on the city's Local Heritage Council, condensed and combined some of the 38 questions received due to time limitations.

The first one dealt with public transportation being mainly limited to "lower" Westmount whereas higher levels had no corner stores but many schools where parents drive their children to and fro. Beasley replied that this was "a land-use problem," created by some communities that have wanted "pure housing."

In answer to some other questions, Beasley addressed the inclusion of alternative transportation modes and climate change into the 2040 plan as well as the importance of trees, organized home delivery on specific streets and the dependence of retail and commerce on the number (density) of consumers rather than often-blamed high rents or taxes.

To a question on how to increase the introduction of sustainable vegetable gardens into public spaces, he pointed out that the rooftops of commercial and other buildings was one way to do this. "Green roofs should be *de rigueur*" in Westmount.

The last question presented asked about the shared economy, one of his six suggested "hot new ideas" (listed at right). Wouldn't this become more difficult during a pandemic? Beasley agreed but cautioned against overlooking the new trend. The shared economy, he said, is a "complete game changer" that is "sweeping the world" and will become a way of doing things here in the next five or 10 years.

Forced to end early, but enthusiastic: coach Hamilton

Westmount Soccer Club ends its 'best' season yet

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

The Westmount Soccer Club played its last game for the 2020 season September 29, two weeks early because of the red-level COVID restrictions, which were a challenge but much "better" than what had been expected, president Doug Hamilton said last week.

The "special season" got off to a late start after finally receiving the okay from Soccer Quebec to start training June 22 and then playing inter-city games two weeks later, he explained (see story July 2, p. 34). The club is independent of Westmount Sports and Recreation.

"We ended up with 220 players aged 6 to 18 on 11 teams. While this is around 15 percent fewer players than last year as a result of COVID, based on the enthusiasm of our players, and success on the field, many members would agree that this is our best season yet."

It involved extra health protocols: coaches and players took extra precautions with lots of hand sanitizing before, during and after games, Hamilton said. "Players were asked to try and keep apart, but some contact is unavoidable in soccer."

"Our two oldest boys' teams were playing in the higher AA divisions, and managed to end up in the middle of their divisions and would have qualified for playoffs had the season not closed two weeks early because of a decision by Soccer Quebec."

Club fields 4 girls' teams

Developing girls' soccer has been a priority. "For the first time, we had four girls' teams with our older ones now putting up fierce competition against the other clubs."

The season, in a "normal" year, would have run from early May to early September. This year, however, "started in July and had planned to continue to Thanksgiving."



Catherine Gagnon takes a shot on goal vs Mount Royal-Outremont team. She was the top goal scorer in the season for Westmount's U14 girls team.

COURTESY OF DOUG HAMILTON.

As a result of moving from orange to red COVID level of alert, the season stopped a little early with a few games left to play in the last two weekends.

"Our players were of course disappointed to stop early," he said, "but in total, we played almost 140 games and had over 200 practices. Our coaches, refs and volunteers did an amazing job pulling the season together and making sure the kids had so much fun outdoors in this unusual

COVID summer."

Now, the club is already thinking of

2021. Registration is open for 2021 at www.westmountsoccer.org.

Rink, cont'd. from p.1

Westmount Athletic Grounds for winter 2012-2013 while construction of the Westmount recreation centre was under way (see story January 29, 2013, p. 1). Its set-up proved to be a major challenge since the rink required special positioning and

levelling.

This time, however, installation of the rented rink is under the responsibility of the contractor and not Public Works since the contractor has much more experience doing this kind of work, Gallery said.

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Mancini first, second in BMX provincials



Kristian Mancini on Victoria Ave. October 8.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

This year, BMX cycling champion and Westmounter Kristian Mancini, age 8, took first place in his age category for the five-event Quebec cup (winning four of the five) and second in the one-day Quebec championship, “losing by an inch,” according to father Philippe. It was held in Pointe du Lac in Three Rivers on September 12.

Each event comprises five 280- to 320-meter races, so Mancini has competed in 30 this year, winning 27. A race lasts about 40 seconds.

“As training during the [COVID] confinement, we had 5-km rides every two days on the hills of Westmount and some skill-practice sessions with wooden modules that I made for jumps and tricks,” continued Philippe.

“For next year, Kristian’s objectives are:

- Be in the top eight at the world championships in Papendal, Netherlands,
- Win the Canadian championship in Calgary,

ignated as follows:

- debt reserve, \$9,276,000,
- pay-as-you-go, \$11,662,877,
- greenhouse, \$4,500,000,
- actuarial deficit, \$2,000,000,
- tree replacement, \$500,000,
- municipal elections, \$200,000,
- urban planning initiatives, \$495,000,
- commercial area revitalization, \$200,000.

- Win the Canada cups scheduled in Quebec and Alberta, and
- Win the Quebec championships and Quebec cup.

“Also, he may participate in a few races in the US for sponsorship matters.”

The *Independent* covered Mancini’s qualification for the Houston worlds tournament, scheduled for May of this year but cancelled due to COVID (see August 27, 2019, p. 1).

He is in grade 3 at St. Leo’s.



Retail Review

VERONICA REDGRAVE

More pizza, more fashion come to Westmount

Like mushrooms on wet grass, new local shops are popping up, and then some disappear.

Gentile Pizza – a next-door extension of the *uber*-popular Café Gentile (4126 St. Catherine between Greene and Gladstone) – opened October 8.

And also opened October 8 was the designer boutique Iris Setlakwe at 4925 Sherbrooke St. (near Prince Albert, where Sarah Pacini MAN was).

In Alexis Nihon Plaza, T Shirt Time closed.

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Buy locally to sell locally

Surplus, cont'd. from p. 1
plus and \$156,556 from what had been accumulated but never appropriated.

At the June 1 council meeting, \$200,000 of accumulated unappropriated surplus had been appropriated to commercial revitalization (see story June 9, p. 3). Surpluses allocated to specific projects or elements cannot be used for purposes other than those approved by council.

The appropriated amounts remain des-

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GOLDEN SQUARE MILE

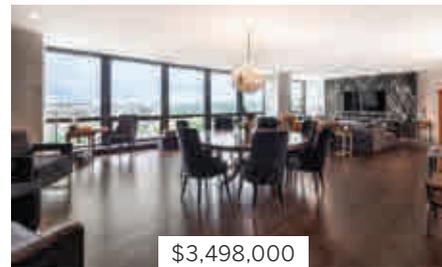
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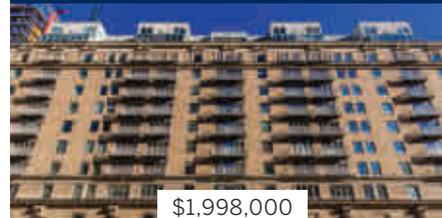


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An approach adapted to the different regions to limit transmission of the virus

It is now more important than ever that we follow health measures to limit the spread of the virus. It is essential that each of us remains vigilant and adopts good habits. Since the virus is not spreading everywhere at the same rate, a new tool has been implemented to show how the situation is evolving in each Quebec region. This four-level alert system will make it easier for you to keep track of the government's interventions.

We must contain the spread of the virus throughout Quebec. This is how we can retain some level of normalcy over the next few months. Each region can make a big difference in limiting the spread of the virus. Let's continue to protect each other.

Progressive regional alert and intervention system

The Progressive regional alert and intervention system specifies which additional measures each health region must take to slow the transmission of the virus. These depend on the alert level reached and are intended to limit the health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19, protect those who are most at risk and avoid overburdening the healthcare system.

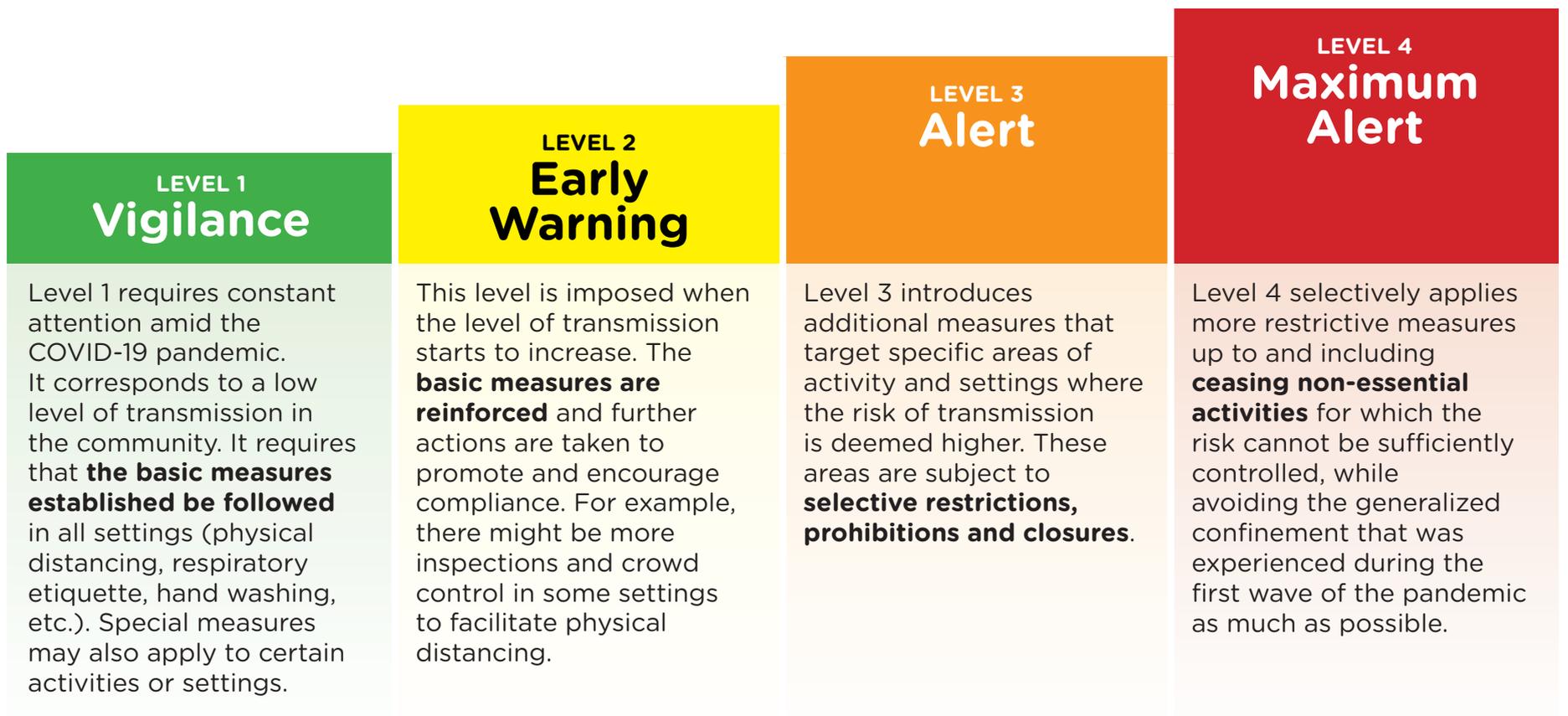
The alert levels are established based on the recommendations of public health authorities who regularly review the situation, taking into account the epidemiological situation, transmission control and the capacity of the healthcare system.

Don't forget that everyone must adopt behaviours that limit transmission of the virus. We do it to ensure that our children can keep going to school, to protect our seniors, to ensure the safety of our healthcare workers and to revive our economy. **Follow the basic measures at all times:**



- › Keep your distance
- › Wear a face covering
- › Cough into your elbow
- › Wash your hands
- › Adapt your greetings

FOUR ALERT AND INTERVENTION LEVELS



To find out the alert level in your region, consult the Map of COVID-19 alert levels by region at [Québec.ca/alertlevels](https://quebec.ca/alertlevels).

[Québec.ca/coronavirus](https://quebec.ca/coronavirus)

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Québec 

Robinson: 'Soldier's point-of-view important'**RMR remembers October Crisis**

Westmount's Royal Montreal Regiment (RMR) was a partner October 6 in the launch of "The October Crisis 1970," a virtual exhibition by Je Me Souviens marking the events' 50th anniversary.

Headquartered on St. Catherine St. east of the Westmount recreation centre, the RMR and le Royal 22ieme Régiment are partners in Je Me Souviens, a Canada Company educational program. Canada Company was founded in May 2006, "to protect the legacy of our soldiers and leverage their unique skillset and experiences to improve our nation," stated a press release the same day.

Kidnapping, murder

The crisis was triggered by terrorist attacks of the Front de libération du Québec (FLQ), including the kidnapping of British trade commissioner James Cross and the murder of Quebec's minister of Immigration and Labour, Pierre Laporte. The federal government invoked the War Measures Act in response, putting soldiers on the streets.

"The exhibition features interviews with veterans who served with le Royal 22ieme

Régiment and were deployed in October 1970. It showcases archival footage, interactive learning exercises and seeks to place the October Crisis within a larger historical context," stated the release.

"While much has been written about the October Crisis, we feel that this virtual exhibition provides a new and unique perspective by featuring the testimonials of soldiers who were there," Colin Robinson, the honorary colonel of the RMR, is quoted as saying.

Objective: 'balanced understanding'

"Our objective is to present eye-witness accounts that are engaging and accessible to high school students and the general public. No matter one's opinion of the October Crisis, we believe that the soldier's point-of-view is an important element in a balanced understanding of our history. We invite everyone to visit our virtual exhibition and hope that it will encourage discussion, debate and greater appreciation of the events of a half-century ago."

To see "The October Crisis 1970," go to jemesouviens.org/en/students/october-crisis/.



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Adopt Ouzzo, find Gandalf

9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER



Ouzzo.



Gandalf.

Here is the cutest little guy, stretching and waiting for his belly rub. Ouzzo is referred to by his foster family from the Montreal SPCA as a "ball of cuddles," yes simply adorable.

I agree that he certainly provides the promise of loving companionship to all in the family. This white-and-caramel domestic shorthair with huge green eyes and pink nose is six years old, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped.

Ouzzo's identification number is 45429821 and you can refer to it when you go to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com and fill out the adoption application for him on the attached link. Once submitted, you will then be contacted within 24 hours for a telephone interview, followed by a visit by appointment at the SPCA.

Poor Gandalf, he must have hidden when robbers seem to have taken out a screen and accessed his home. Gandalf stepped out to explore and has not re-

turned. He has never gone out, though, and now his curiosity has led him to run off in a panic and cower somewhere...

But where? Who has seen Gandalf?

So we neighbours, young and old, are all on the case. Stunning Gandalf is a large, all-white angora male, 10 years old with a big fur ruffle around his neck, stunning green-yellow eyes, and pink nose and toes. He is very friendly, probably a little anxious, and was last at home on Dorchester Blvd., near Greene, on Saturday, October 3 in the evening. Please contact Nancy Lepore at 514.909.5503 by telephone or by text. Her email is nancielepore@me.com and her Facebook is at Nancy Lepore.

Your neighbour (who is looking for Gandalf too!), Lysanne

Council adds 10% contingency to be 'safe'

Pool may have a few more 'micro' cracks, work reveals

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Repairs now under way to the pool at the Westmount recreation centre (WRC) could cost more than the original \$502,440 that had been awarded May 19 to Construction Madux inc. for repairs to the slab and walls of the swimming pool.

As a result, the city council October 5 approved an additional \$50,244 to bring the total to a maximum of \$552,685, taxes included.

"The contractor has just removed all the epoxy, as planned, which gives us a better visualization of the work to be done," city director general Benoit Hurbubise explained last week.

"We may have a few more micro-cracks to repair and we would rather be on the safe side and



The pool on October 8. The *Independent* counted six workers on the case.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

approve a larger contingency of 10 percent now than having to stop all the work until the next council meeting should we need a little more money to repair the pool."

In keeping with city policy, whenever a contract requires additional amounts, the increase is brought back to the council to ratify, this time as a new business item that had not been included in the agenda.

Open: Tennis courts, free skating at WRC

The city's tennis courts will stay open "as long as possible," Councillor Mary Gallery said in an opening report at the virtual city council meeting October 5. This is to enable residents to get outside given the new red-level prohibitions on group sports and leisure programs until at least October 28.

Despite these restrictions, however, individual sports continue to be permitted, resulting also in general skating being available at the Westmount recreation centre under a reservation system.

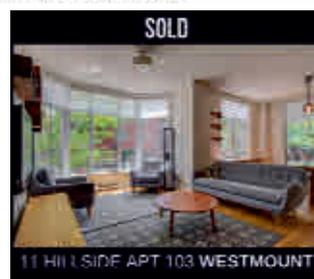


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Art Scene

HEATHER BLACK

Freefall: Nieminen's reflection on the future

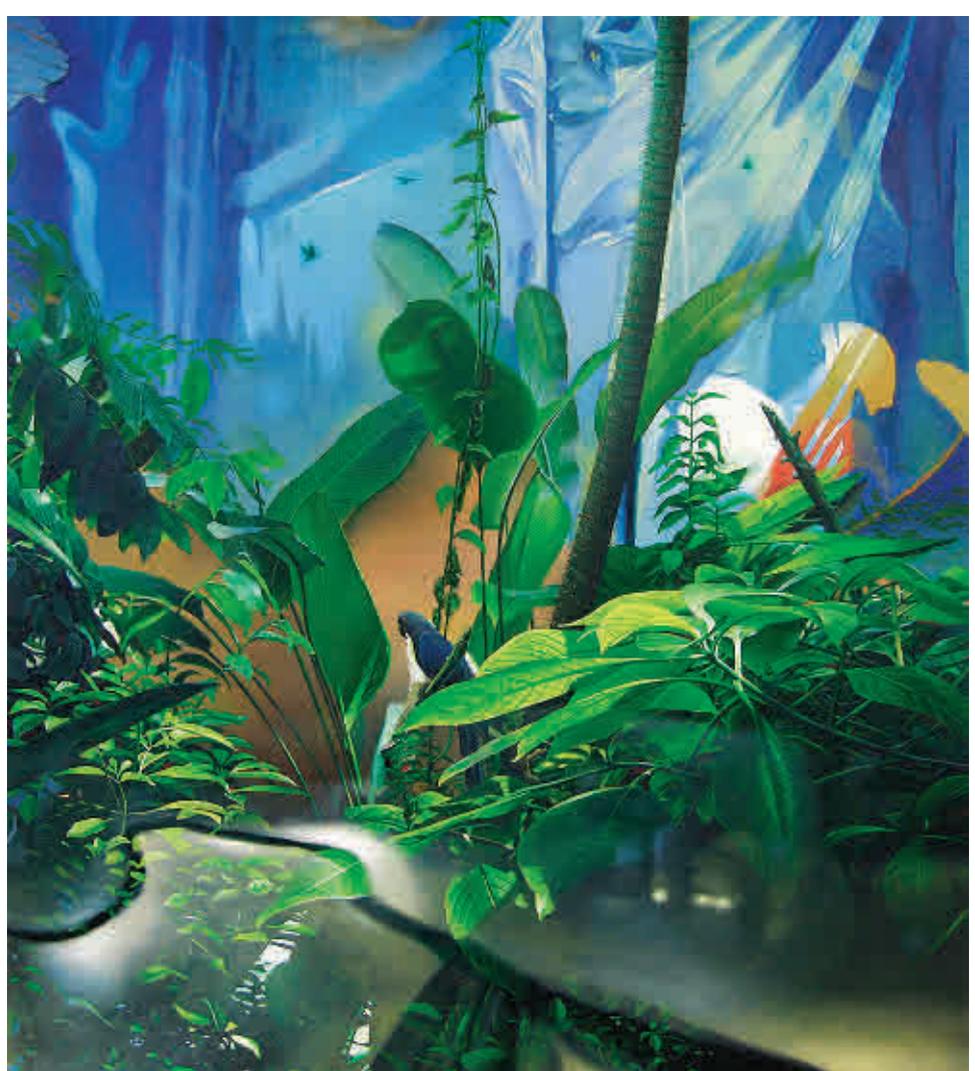
Freefall is the title of Erik Nieminen's intriguing exhibition now on at the McClure Gallery. With eye-catching imagery of birds, animals or humans within protective bubbles, his work warns of climate change and environmental degradation. Painted in oils, the artist's realistic style and consistent palette – cobalt blue and viridian green – create a visual continuity throughout the exhibition.

Nature as theatre

"Paradise Not Lost" depicts lush nature within a light-filled building. Although the title is a word play on John Milton's 1667 epic poem – and appears positive – the presence of a small monkey within the composition suggests otherwise. Depicted alone and with a fearful expression, this large-scale

continued on p. 20

"In the Looking Glass" by Erik Nieminen. ▶



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Remembering Jerry Miller (1934-2020)

Never stopped re-imagining, planning a future Westmount

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Jerry Miller, who chaired Westmount's Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) for eight years from 1989 to 1997 and later served another seven as a member, was laid to rest at a private graveside service September 30. He died September 28 at age 86.

Miller had steered the review committee (when it was called the Architectural & Planning Commission) through the development of the city's 38 character areas that define its streetscapes and the preservation guidelines for Category 1 buildings, among many other criteria.

It was also when plans were developed for the building of the 1995 addition to the Westmount Public Library and other projects such as development of Phase IV for Dawson College and design guidelines for development of the CPR train station site.

His subsequent seven years on the committee from 2003 to 2010 spanned the city's merger and demerger with and from Montreal, and he was involved in the review of early plans for the Westmount recreation centre (WRC).

Miller maintained his interest in city projects such as the creation of Prince Albert square and was a frequent questioner at public consultation meetings (see April 16, 2013, p. 5) until fairly recently.

Modest and listened

"He was a very modest man," recalled former mayor Karin Marks, who served as urban planning commissioner over some 10 years while a city councillor and sat on the PAC when Miller was its chair.

"He was an absolute delight to work with. He had a really great way with residents, listened and looked for compromise if possible, and they felt heard." She also recalled dance lessons at Victoria Hall she attended at the same time as Miller and his wife.

Suzie Chapman, who worked closely with him as executive secretary at Urban Planning and later at Sports and Recreation, described him as "such a nice man, such a gentleman. He was a great tennis player and he and his wife, Mary, were avid program participants. I used to have lovely chats with him and would often see him around Westmount."

Miller is survived by his wife, with whom he travelled extensively, son Michael, daughter Lisa, and two grandchildren: Rebecca and Benjamin Yedid.

Envisioned Victoria as a model street

In an interview with the *Independent* in



Jerry Miller outlined some of his ideas for the future of Victoria village to the *Independent* on Victoria Ave. April 26, 2013.

2013 after his retirement, Miller was still busy with ideas for the future of Westmount that included converting and revitalizing Victoria Ave. into a "*rue conviviale*" with reduced traffic and St. Catherine becoming "a more typical urban street" (see story April 30, 2013).

He foresaw a tunnel under the tracks at the abandoned railway station as a pedestrian and cycling underpass to link the Vendôme Metro station with the east end of the super-hospital site.

Acknowledging some of his ideas might be "far out," he said it was the time to consider the area's "full potential" and ensure that zoning and other preparations were in place. "Imagine 10 years from now the possibilities it presents if hundreds of people were to use the underpass and Victoria became a model street for pedestrians and cyclists."

At that time, he said he was trying to view the community not as an "insider," but as the Westmount Municipal Association's "shadow" for urban planning.

Architect and urban designer

Miller, obtained his degree in architecture from McGill in 1957 and a master's degree in urban design from Harvard in 1963. He was involved in the design of

many notable projects in Montreal. These included the Beaver Lake Pavilion, the Salle Wilfred Pelletier concert hall at Place des Arts, the McGill Sports Centre and the master plan for Expo '67.

The family has extended thanks to staff at the Cedar's Cancer Centre and the Royal Victoria Hospital ICU. Donations in his name were requested for the Quebec Pancreas Cancer Study c/o McGill University.



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LYSANNE FOWLER

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Your neighbour,
Lysanne

Timbit is a thief of hearts. Mid-sized, black, short-haired ... Maybe not the showy choice for a dog lover, yet the one to choose ...

He looks into your eyes and you cannot turn away from his big brown soulful gaze. He is so sweet and friendly, just a perfect pooch for a family.

Timbit is a playful three years old, ready to leave the Montreal SPCA kennel to snuggle in a dog bed in the corner of the kitchen, near the fridge of all good things.

He is very healthy, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped. Timbit's identification number is 45394622 and you can refer to it when you go to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com and fill out the adoption application



BUILDING PERMITS What's permitted

Council approves building 17 permits at Sept. 21 session

The following 17 requests for demolition, exterior construction, alteration and renovation were approved at the September 21 meeting of the city council. There were no refusals.

Approved

- 156 Hillside:** to rebuild an addition at the rear provided there is a continuous concrete foundation wall below the brick walls;
- 708 Grosvenor:** to replace windows;
- 23 Oakland:** to modify the interior plan, build an enlargement at the rear and a new terrace and modify front windows in bays according to those in the plan of the wall and to replace windows and doors;
- 612 Belmont:** to repair the front porch and balcony and to repair the garage at the rear;
- 28 Shorncliffe:** to reconfigure the front stairs and do landscaping in the front yard;
- 566 Claremont:** to replace some windows on the rear and side facades provided the material matches that of the existing ones to be conserved;
- 48 Aberdeen:** to replace windows;
- 645 Victoria:** to reconfigure the front drive-

- way and do landscaping work;
- 611 Sydenham:** to build an extension at the back of the south side and modify the terrace as a result;
- 479 Strathcona:** to replace the railing of the front staircase;
- 27 de Casson:** to replace the slate roof provided it goes to the edge of the roofline as per the existing;
- 625 Belmont:** to replace the privacy screen of a rooftop terrace on a garage following the repairs to the garage roofing;
- 16 Braeside Place:** to block up a side door opening and remove the canopy and block up a former air-conditioner opening provided that the new brick matches the existing in dimensions, colour, texture and pattern;
- 334 Grosvenor:** to do landscaping work and rebuild the rear balcony and the front staircase;
- 25 Winchester:** to replace windows and doors;
- 10 Willow:** to make an opening for a patio door at the rear on condition the proposed doors have only one division on the upper portion;
- 19 Springfield:** to build a swimming pool in the rear yard.

Art Scene, cont'd. from p. 18

work conveys species extinction and evolutionary decline as well as our contemporary disconnect with nature.

A parrot living within a glass ecosphere is the subject of "In the Looking Glass." Recalling Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*, the theme asks viewers to consider their own ecological action or inaction. In an era of global warming, both paintings suggest that nature preservation within artificial environments may become a new reality.

Sketches for "In the Looking Glass" reveal Nieminen's creative method. Starting with several pencil sketches where lines and shapes evolve into subjects and structures, a detailed charcoal drawing follows. A final colour sketch in oil on paper – a miniature and minimalist version of the final work – serves as a painting guide to convey his carefully conceived message.

Contrived environments

The painting "Clear Enigma" – although beautiful – also captures a sense of foreboding. In this painting, highway lights illuminate lush foliage below. A series of reflective orange dots high in the composition, however, suggest that the scene is placed within a protective dome. "Transmutation in the Big Blue" – an

underwater scene of divers photographing ambiguous sea life – is equally ominous.

In contrast, "The City Rests" is a shimmering street scene where citizens stand outside buildings or ride in a doubledecker tour bus. On the right, a blinkered race horse trots along a sidewalk – a symbol that all creatures exist for and conform to human needs. Placed within contrived or unnatural settings, Nieminen subjects – whether bird, animal or human – elicit viewer empathy and concern.

In these original and works, Nieminen asks viewers to question their own anxiety or discontent with lifestyle choices. A challenging exhibition open to interpretation, *Freefall* continues until October 24.

Also, the Visual Arts Centre's Art Hive is open to all and will be posted online October 24 at 2 pm.

Timely message

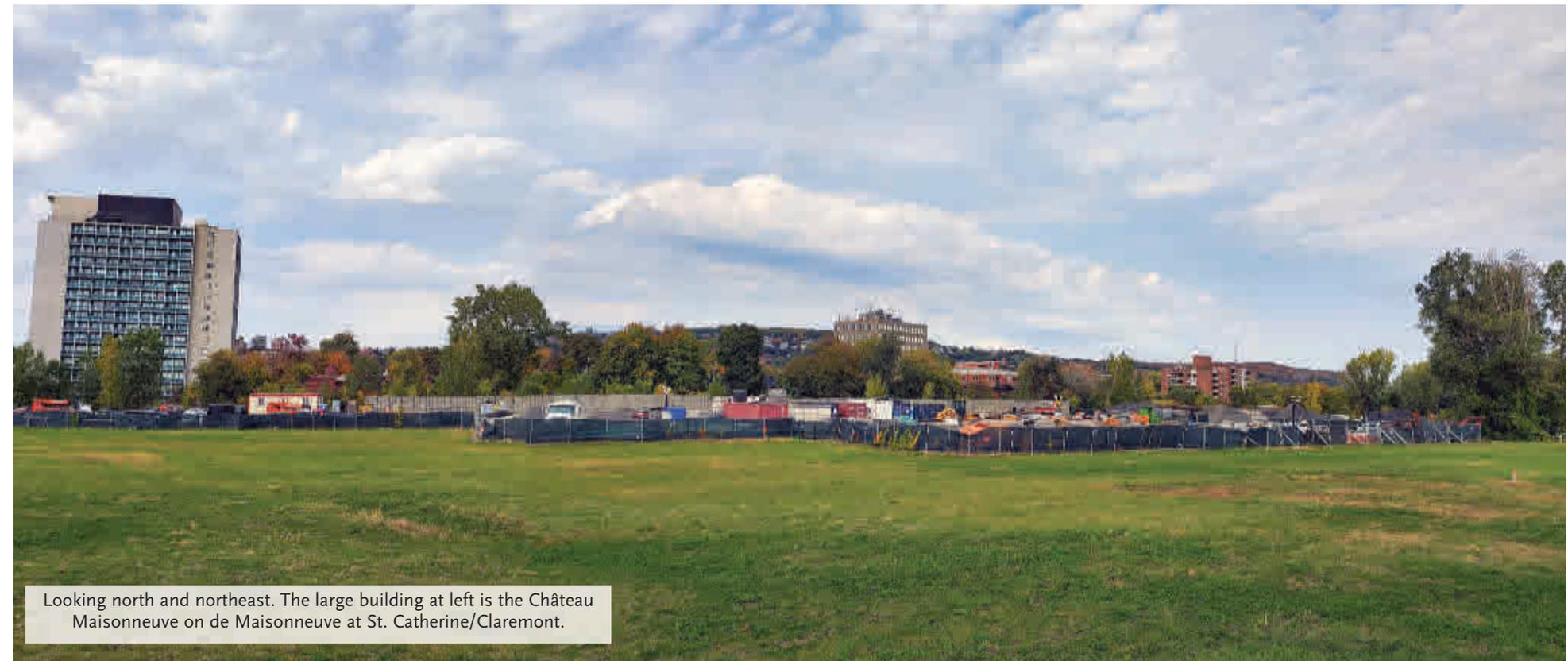
The term "free fall" – a skydiver opens his parachute at the last minute – describes both the risks of ongoing climate change as well as citizens' challenges during the current pandemic. To support programs, the Visual Arts Centre will hold the online auction – COVID Relief Fund – starting on October 19. For more on the project – and the 30 participating artists – consult the VAC's Facebook page.



625 Belmont on October 8

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

STM's 'Projet Vendôme' uses MUHC land in Westmount



Looking north and northeast. The large building at left is the Château Maisonneuve on de Maisonneuve at St. Catherine/Claremont.

Letter writer Dorothy Lipovenko (see p. 6) got us curious about what was happening on the portion of McGill University Health Centre's Glen campus that is in Westmount. For years, this undeveloped land has been used by the contractors that are building the new Vendôme/de Maisonneuve entrance to the hospital for the Société de transport de Montréal (STM). Last

week, we checked and MUHC spokesperson Gilda Salomone confirmed that this temporary use was ongoing. The foreground of all these October 7 photos is MUHC land in Westmount (to the east of the hospital), and the "middle ground" is in Westmount too, just viewed from a rarely seen northwards viewpoint.

The parking lot and work yard hug the

south side of CP train tracks. Just to the north are the "railway houses" on the south side St. Catherine and the long-closed Westmount train station at the foot of Victoria.

This MUHC land has long been talked about as a possible new site for "the Neuro" (Montreal Neurological Institute), which is currently downtown just east of where the Royal Victoria Hospital was and its former

building still is.

This land was also in the news recently as a possible new site for the Montreal General Hospital, which is currently downtown on Pine and Cedar.

Using Google's satellite photo, the *Independent* estimates the whole area (lot, yard and open field from p. 1) to be 310 by 150 yards, or approximately 9.6 acres.



Looking east across the parking lot and work yard. PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.



Looking northeast across the parking lot and work yard. The building at left is 245 Victoria Ave., which is between de Maisonneuve and St. Catherine St.

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zourikcleaning@gmail.com**EMSB school-board election postponed****Incumbent commissioner Feldman runs on his record**

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Julien Feldman, the incumbent EMSB commissioner for Ward 3 (Westmount/Sud Ouest), is pledging to pursue the board's fight against the provincial government's Bill 40, which would replace school boards with service centres, and Bill 21, Quebec's law banning the use of religious symbols by public employees, if he is re-elected.

Although the provincial government announced last week that the school board election originally scheduled for November 1 was postponed because of concerns over the spread of COVID-19, the *Independent* is providing coverage of the two candidates running in Ward 3 in anticipation of a new election date (see p. 10, October 6 for a profile on the other candidate, Irwin Rapoport.)

Feldman, who is running with Team Ortona, was first elected to the EMSB's council of commissioners in 2007 and was returned for a second term in 2014. In an interview, he described himself as a parent activist.

"Everything I've done at the school board has been as parent," he said. Feld-

man first became involved with public education issues as the governing board chairman at the downtown Bancroft School, which his daughter attended.

From the start, according to Feldman, parents were complaining about the level of French-language instruction their children were receiving.

He said he and other parents at Bancroft succeeded in upgrading the level of French teaching at the school by by-passing the EMSB's council of commissioners as well as the school board administration, and appealing directly to the ministry of Education "to get things that we needed."

Regarding Bill 21, Feldman says the law is stopping the EMSB from hiring qualified French-speaking university graduates for the board's French immersion and bilingual programs.

"It so happens that a lot of the young students who are coming out of the University of Montreal, UQAM and Concordia are recent immigrants and they wear hijabs or kippahs and we can't hire them," he said.

At one point after Bill 21 was passed, the EMSB decided to take legal action to contest Bill 21 as an infringement of Charter

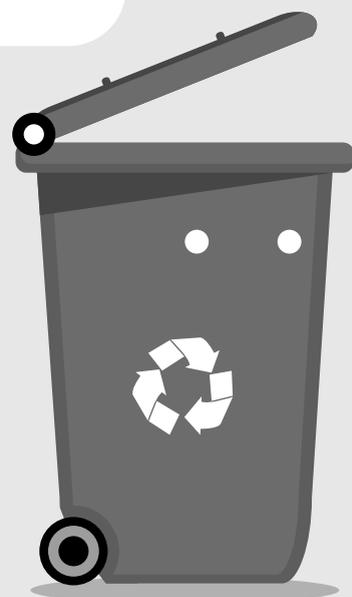
rights. With regards to this ongoing issue, Feldman said, "If people want to know whether we will continue the Bill 21 legal challenge, the answer is yes."

Feldman noted that if the EMSB is holding elections at all, it is largely because of efforts by the board, and allies such as the Quebec English School Boards Association, to contest Bill 40, which converted Quebec's French-language school boards into service centres, but has so far failed to do the same with their English counterparts.

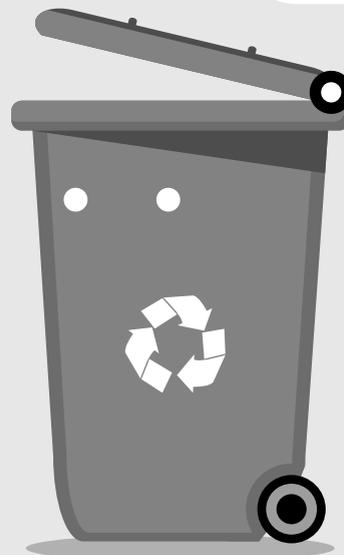
Feldman and two other commissioners played an instrumental role in the tumultuous events that led up to the removal of Sylvia Lo Bianco as vice-chair of the EMSB, followed by the resignation of Angela Mancini as chairwoman earlier this year.

"In 2016, we started writing letters to the minister, to UPAC, basically to anyone we thought would listen, and we discovered that a lot of people don't want to listen," he said. "But we also engaged people on Mancini's own team and they started listening. We asked our colleagues on the council to endorse us. And eventually they did."

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Police Report

Station 12 police investigating likely break-in and burglary

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Was it a case of burglary or did someone simply “borrow” a few items?

That’s what investigators at the Montreal police department’s Station 12 are trying to determine following an incident at a residential building on Dorchester Blvd. near Greene Ave., during which a laptop computer and two cats were either stolen by a burglar, or removed by an acquaintance who entered the apartment while the occupant was absent.

According to a complaint filed on October 6, the tenant returned to her apartment on October 4 around 8:30 pm after being away since October 3. “She noticed things that were unusual inside her dwelling,” said Station 12 community relations officer Adalbert Pimentel.

She saw that an empty alcohol bottle had been left on the kitchen table, although she hadn’t placed it there before leaving. “The bottle belonged to the plaintiff, but when she left, it had been put away and not on the table.”

According to Pimentel, the complainant also noticed that her two cats were missing. However, she told the investigators

that she wasn’t certain at that point whether the intrusion was the work of a burglar, or someone she knew who had permission to enter the apartment while she was gone.

But after noticing that a screen that normally covered a rear door was missing, as was her laptop computer, she started to suspect a break-in.

Pimentel said the investigators were waiting for the complainant to contact her cleaning lady, the only person authorized to enter her apartment.

“They’re still waiting for that answer to determine how to proceed with their investigation,” he said.

He advises anyone who has been robbed of an item containing personal information, such as a wallet, smartphone or laptop computer, to immediately contact a credit rating agency, like Equifax or Trans-Union, to deal with the fallout, which can include fraudulently-obtained credit cards and loans taken out under your name.

Major renovations lead to break-in

A house on Montrose Ave. near Forden Ave. where the entrances weren’t as secure as usual because of major renovations that

were under way had a break-in and burglary during the evening of October 7, during which a laptop, an iPad, a digital camera and electrical chargers were stolen.

“There were renovations going on at this particular dwelling,” said Pimentel. “And where there are renovations going on, the entrances aren’t as secure.”

The investigators believe the suspect or suspects got into the house through the garage entrance, which was temporarily boarded over with a wood barrier.

However, the house’s alarm system was still functioning, and at precisely 6:34 pm, it was triggered by the intruders. According to Pimentel, the owners were home and came down to the garage to see. After spotting some squirrels in the vicinity, they falsely concluded they were responsible for triggering the alarm system.

What had actually happened, Pimentel continued, was that the suspects, seemingly undeterred by the alarm, went to the basement and also the main floor area where they found and stole the electronic equipment they found there.

Fortunately, the home’s owners had a surveillance camera that was trained on the crime scene. “That will be an important el-

ement for our investigators,” said Pimentel, adding that the investigators were also waiting to hear if neighbours’ security cameras might have captured additional identifying images of the perpetrators.

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Télé Kpadé wins \$15k Forces Avenir award

Westmounter and McGill University medical student Victoire Difié Télé Kpadé has been awarded the *Personnalité par Excellence* award by Forces Avenir, a “non-profit organization whose mission is to recognize, honour and promote the commitment of students to projects that enable young people to develop their strengths and increase their level of responsibility and sense of belonging to their community.”

According to a press release dated October 8, Télé Kpadé “set up the Refugee Health project, designed to provide McGill

medical students with the cultural competencies required to better understand the needs of this community. As the regional director of the Black Medical Students’ Association of Canada, Victoire is dedicated to pinpointing the specific problems faced by marginalized populations and using scientific research and innovation to reduce disparities.”

There are currently 20 school boards, over 120 high schools and 17 universities participating in the programs of Forces Avenir.

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Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

As Social Notes depends on social events, which depend on gatherings, times have changed. But we'll meet again. Until then, we profile the disappointed but determined supporters of great causes to see how they are faring in our smaller world and learn their event's new plans.

Interviewee: Arlene Bratz-Abramowicz, committee member for 14 consecutive years of the Ball for the Children's. She was also co-chair of the ball in 2010.

What was your event? Cause?

The Ball for the Children's is the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation's most important fundraising event. It supports the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation's Healthy Kids Fund, which funds the hospital's most urgent needs and gives it the flexibility to direct funds where they are needed most, when they are needed most.

It was to be held on what date?

The Ball for the Children's was to be held on October 2, 2020. This year would

Cause: Ball for the Children's

Fundraiser Profile: Arlene Bratz-Abramowicz

have been its 21st edition.

Have you planned a new date?

As a healthcare institution, and because the health and safety of everyone are a priority, we have cancelled this year's edition of the Ball for the Children's.

In its place, we have launched the We Can All Be Superheroes Campaign. Since we held a masked ball last year, we hope people will swap their masquerade mask for a (Children's!) superhero one this year! This way, we can protect the kids who must visit the hospital, and we can help the hospital meet its most urgent needs.

How are you (personally) sheltering in place?

As part of Samuelsohn Ltd., I never stopped working! We were deemed essential from the start since, as a clothing manufacturer and retailer, we quickly pivoted to produce PPE (personal protective equipment) and masks for the provincial and federal governments. Other than some major changes to the way we operate – rules and regulations regarding masks, hand sanitizing and social distancing – a lot of my professional day-to-day has remained the same.



Have you (personally) developed a daily routine?

Absolutely! Mask wearing, hand sanitizing and social distancing are now ingrained habits. It rapidly became part of my daily routine. Now, whenever I enter a public space, I immediately look for the hand sanitizer. I don't even have to think about it – it's automatic!

Instead of cocktail attire, what are you wearing?

Different coloured masks, depending on my outfit and mood (either one of the

many styles of my Samuelsohn masks or my Children's one!), surgical gloves and shields. It's our new reality.

How are you (personally) staying in touch?

Well, the truth is, I haven't seen most of my friends in six months. Most interactions occur over the phone or via text messaging. During the summer, we had one or two friends over, but we stayed in the backyard, socially distant from one another.

Staying in touch is hard these days, but stopping the spread of COVID-19 is of the foremost importance to me.

Link for your event/cause supporters?

www.masksforthechildrens.com/

What do you miss the most about our smaller world?

I miss seeing friends, social interaction, travelling. But, most of all, I miss leaving the house and not having to worry as soon as I step outside. I miss not living with fear. I have hope that this situation will be resolved soon.

And, I cannot wait to be back on the dance floor for the 2021 edition of the Ball for the Children's!



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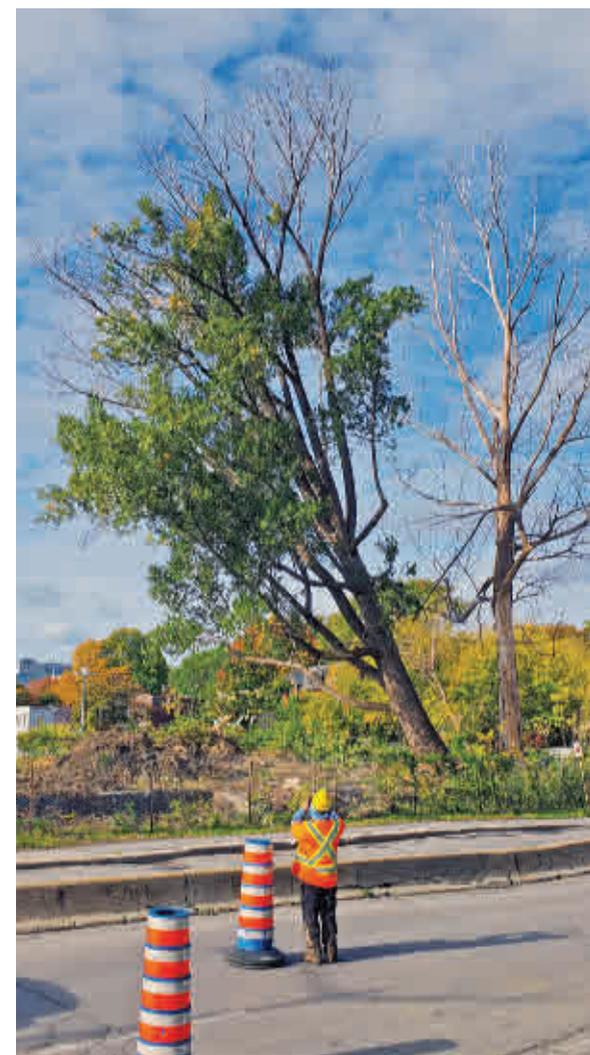
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Timber! Massive NDG tree comes down on southwest border



This tree, located just outside of Westmount in NDG on de Maisonneuve at St. Catherine, was cut down October 8 to make way for a 10-storey, Groupe Maurice seniors' home slated to have 360 units. See September 1, p. 12. There was one brief "crack" before the tree started to fall. The second, dead tree was taken down soon after.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.



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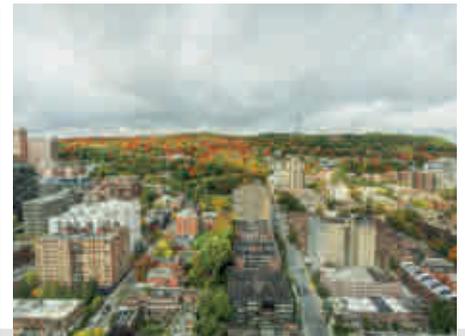


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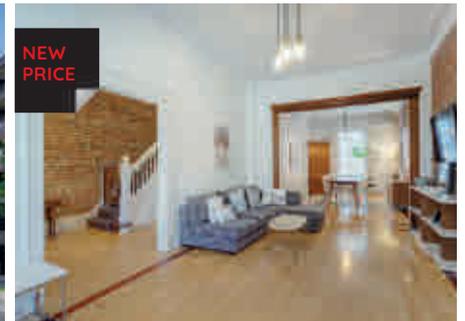
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