

CP machine propels gravel at houses, onto cars during rail-bed work

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Work to replace CP Rail's tracks at the foot of Clandeboye Ave. and Bruce Ave. got off to what proved to be a "rocky" start November 5.

It was around 12:30 am, during what had been announced as overnight work to replace tracks, when ballast began "pounding" against Mike Mossop's house at the foot of Columbia, shattering five windows and damaging his car. Ballast is gravel or coarse stone used to form the bed of a railroad track.

"We were woken up by the pounding

and the noise of the machine," Mossop told the *Independent*. "When I went to the front door, some of the rocks were pretty big, about two to three inches. It's just fortunate it happened at night. It was a serious situation."

Another house was also damaged at Greene and Prospect, he said, while eight cars were damaged by the flying rocks, according to Westmount city director general Benoit Hurtubise. When residents called CP police directly, the work was stopped, he said. No injuries were reported.

"Something had gone wrong with the machine in question, possibly a compressor," Hurtubise said.

A Public Security report from the morning after the incident lists damage to eight cars and one house, he said.

"I heard from a friend what had happened and went down there at 8 am," said Mayor *continued on p. 10*

More construction comes to southwest



These three white construction trailers (one at left, two at right) – photographed November 12 within 24 hours of their delivery – are on CP land in Westmount on the south side of St. Catherine at York St. The plot has recently been cleared, levelled and covered with fresh gravel. It is being rented to the contractor, Gerpro Construction, building the Groupe Maurice seniors' home in NDG at Clarendon and de Maisonneuve. The yellow trailer in the centre is on MUHC land south of the tracks and is part of "Projet Vendôme" (the pedestrian tunnel to the Glen hospital from de Maisonneuve in NDG). That equipment has never been visible until now. Residents were not told in advance, although Groupe Maurice will now be communicating directly with residents, Councillor Marina Brzeski told city council November 2 (see p. 17 for story). PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Don't miss our pull-out
Gift Guide
after p. 12

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On tap: Holiday edition of 'Staff Picks,' 3,500 more e-mags

New library services reflect COVID's hike in demands

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

To keep up with new requests and move forward into increased demand in the COVID world of digital services, Westmount Public Library announced last week a new holiday rendition of "Staff Picks," expanded the number of e-magazines and lengthened the loan time for "Fast Reads."

"The big news is that we have added

3,500 new magazine titles from around the world," said library director Julie-Anne Cardella. "We had 30 titles prior to purchasing the whole catalogue of RB Digital. Everything digital is very popular these days when people aren't going out as much."

Among the new e-magazines are *Family Handyman*, *Women's Health*, *Birdwatching*, *Canadian Cycling*, *Practical Photography* and *Hello!* *continued on p. 17*

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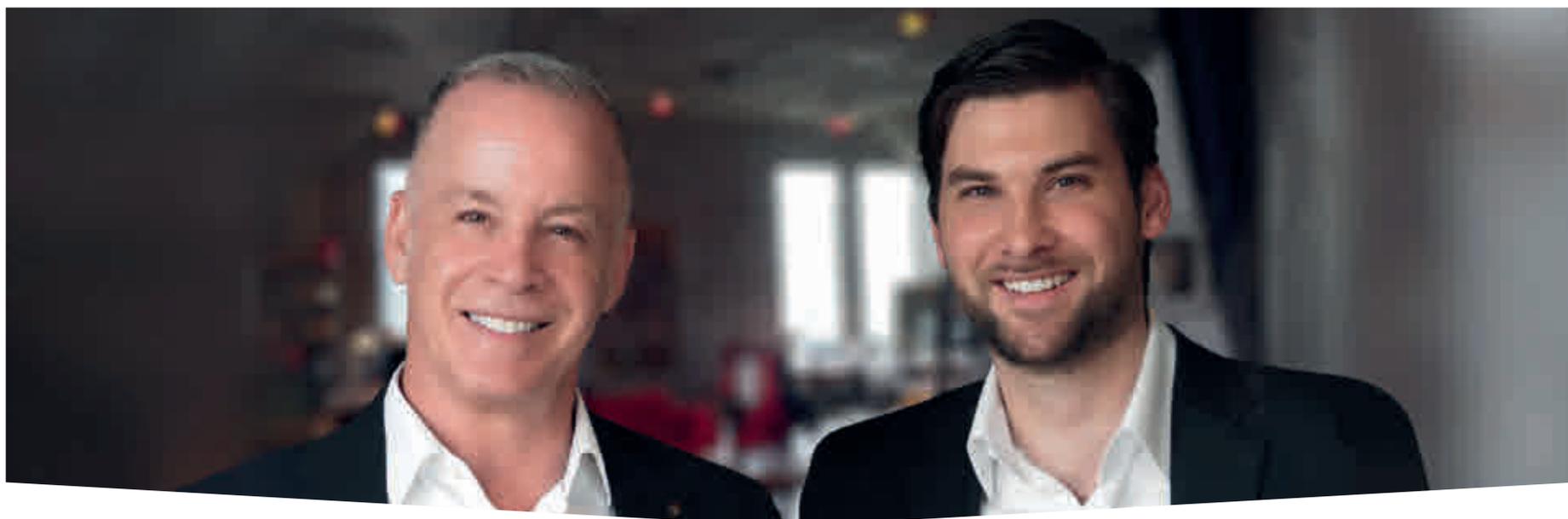
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BRIAN DUTCH

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Sherbrooke St. near Claremont on November 12. PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

City ushers in an early festive spirit with street decor

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

To hasten the festive spirit this year during the pandemic, the city had its street light decorations up and ready to go for November 12. This was two weeks ahead of usual, said city director general Benoit Hurtubise.

The council had requested the early start to the holiday season, he said, but he did not know when the Christmas trees outside city hall and in Prince Albert

square would be lighted.

“I think we all need a little cheer to make people happier,” said Councillor Cynthia Lulham, who had requested the earlier-than-usual lighting as commissioner of urban planning for zoning, economic development and parks.

The mounting of the lighted decorations in the Victoria, Sherbrooke, Greene and St. Catherine areas was carried out by Public Works as four or five days of record-breaking warm temperatures into the low twenties Celsius contrasted with one of the largest earliest snowfalls last year. That’s when 20 cm fell overnight November 11-12, closing most schools. Temperatures also plunged to minus 8 Celsius.

Manoir Westmount Thompson to retire, D’Angelo to take over

Manoir Westmount manager Tom Thompson will retire December 31, Susan Buscemi, president of the Sherbrooke St. seniors’ residence board, announced November 11.

He has held the job for 25 years and will continue as part-time bookkeeper.

Current assistant manager Gina D’Angelo will become the manager. She was recently recognized for 40 years’ service to the Manoir.

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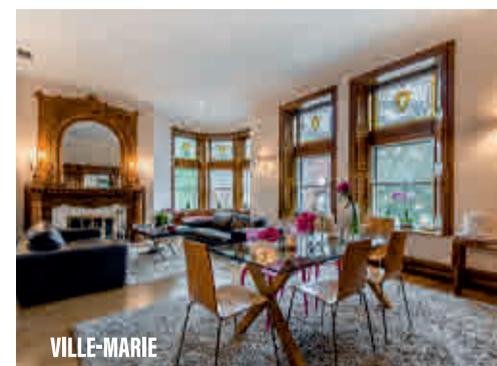
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Police Report

Burglars break window to rob Mount Pleasant Ave. residence

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

If the air seemed cooler than usual inside a home on Mount Pleasant near Cedar on the morning of October 31, the owners, who were absent overnight, would soon know the reason – a window broken by burglars to get in.

According to an incident report compiled by investigators from the Montreal police department's Station 12 in Westmount, the break-in and burglary happened sometime between 4:30 pm October 30 and 9:30 am the following day.

"The plaintiffs noticed that when they were walking toward the living room that there seemed to be a current of fresh air," said Station 12 community relations officer Adalbert Pimentel. "That's when they also noticed that a window was broken in the living room."

The window was located on the side of the house and was less visible from the street. The police officers at the scene looked in vain for an object that might have served to break the window, which measured three by four feet.

They were also unable to find traces of blood, from cuts the suspects possibly sustained from broken glass – which could have proved useful for DNA identification. However, surveillance cameras that the owners had installed in discreet locations recorded two suspects who were seen breaking the window and then entering.

To the surprise of the investigators, the surveillance footage showed the suspects crawling across the floor of the home's living room.

While this seemed to suggest, said Pimentel, that they were trying to avoid being seen from outside, they were also seemingly completely unaware that they

were being watched and recorded.

"These cameras today are so small that if you're not paying attention you won't know you're being filmed," he said.

The suspects proceeded to the master bedroom, where they searched through drawers, leaving the room in disarray. They left through the broken window. The property stolen during the heist included personal items such as handbags, a watch and sunglasses.

Pimentel said still images obtained from the security video might easily lead to the suspects' identification. He said they'll be processed by a police department specialist, then placed in a database that will be consulted regularly by police officers at other Montreal police department stations.

Nissan nicked

The owner of a Nissan who left his vehicle parked near the corner of St. Catherine St. and Kensington Ave. between midnight and 10 am on October 24 reported to police that it was stolen.

Although there were no eyewitnesses to the theft, the investigators found video footage taken by a nearby surveillance camera in which the car is seen being driven off towards Metcalfe Ave. at 5:16 am.

Using the security footage, the investigators were able to establish a basic description of the suspect and the incident is under investigation, according to Pimentel.

We welcome your letters

We welcome your letters but reserve the right to choose and edit them. Please limit to 300 words and submit before Friday 10 am to be considered for publication the following week. email us at: editor@westmountindependent.com

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MESSAGE DE LA MAIRESSE | MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

LES OPÉRATIONS DE DÉNEIGEMENT À WESTMOUNT 2020-2021

SNOW REMOVAL OPERATIONS IN WESTMOUNT 2020-2021

Alors que nous nous préparons à affronter le froid qui approche à grands pas, nous souhaitons informer nos résidents des changements que nous avons apportés à nos opérations de déneigement. Bien que le nombre d'employés soit maintenu, notre personnel sera divisé en quatre équipes et travaillera des horaires différents afin d'éviter les chevauchements. L'objectif est de minimiser les risques que les membres du personnel des Travaux publics soient infectés par le COVID-19.

Nous visons également à maintenir nos objectifs de déneigement, qui consistent à déblayer et à charger les chutes de neige des grandes tempêtes, dans un délai de cinq jours.

Pour atteindre ces objectifs, nous avons pris la décision difficile d'autoriser le déneigement de certaines rues la nuit. Comme c'est notre pratique, les premières rues à être nettoyées seront les secteurs commerciaux, les écoles et les voies d'urgence, suivies par les autres rues résidentielles. Nous sommes conscients que, parfois, le nettoyage de nuit peut perturber les résidents. Nous vous demandons de faire preuve de patience et de compréhension au cours des prochains mois.

Ces mesures permettront à notre personnel de nettoyer rapidement et efficacement les rues et les trottoirs, permettant ainsi à nos résidents de circuler sur des routes sûres et praticables, tout en assurant une saison hivernale saine à nos employés.

As we prepare for the fast-approaching cold weather, we wish to advise all residents of the changes we are making to our snow removal operations. While our staffing levels will be maintained, our crew will be divided into four teams and will be working different shifts in order to prevent overlap. The goal is to minimize the chances that Public Works staff members become infected with COVID-19.

We also aim to maintain our snow removal goals, which is to clear and load snowfalls from major snowstorms, within five days.

To meet these objectives, we have made the difficult decision to allow some streets to be cleared at night. As is our practice, the first streets to be cleaned will be commercial sectors, schools and emergency routes, followed by the remaining residential streets. We appreciate that, at times, night clearing may be disruptive for residents. We ask for both your patience and understanding during the coming months.

These measures will permit our staff to quickly and efficiently clear streets and sidewalks, allowing for safe and passable roads for our residents, while ensuring a healthy winter season for our employees.

Christina M. Smith
 La mairesse de la Ville de Westmount
 Mayor of the City of Westmount

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Many other items considered in condo project

Condition of Hillside armoury remains in limbo

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The physical condition of the Hillside armoury led off the question period at the virtual council meeting November 2 when an email from resident Denis Biro asked whether the city had carried out its own review of the building after receipt of a developer's report of it being in serious condition.

The building "is one of the things we are looking into," replied Councillor Conrad Peart, commissioner of urban planning for permits and architecture.

He pointed out, however, that because the project had to go through the SCAOPI by-law process for non-conforming projects, it had been reviewed under the city's nine-point evaluation system by the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), rather than considering demolition on its own.

At parking lot entrance at Academy Rd.

Food drive drop-off set up at WRC at certain times

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A safe location has now been found for people to drop off their non-perishable donations to Public Security's holiday food drive launched last week.

Public Security assistant director Kimberley Colquhoun said a collection bin has been set up at the Academy Rd. side entrance to the Westmount recreation centre off the parking lot. This is where an attendant is at the door between 3 pm and 10 pm Monday to Friday as well as 9 am to 4:30

"One of the things we look at is that the developer's [request] is proportional to the offering."

As for Biro's question of whether the city had carried out its own review of the building's condition, the answer was "No," and "nor would we. We review what is presented to us."

Peart had previously told the *Independent* that the city was continuing to review the submission, though the developer reported that under the initial PAC review, the city had rejected the need to demolish the armoury and that a new submission would be presented to the city "hopefully" before year end (see story October 27, p. RE-3).

The plan to construct an eight-storey condominium building on the site was based on the armoury's demolition (see story February 4, p. 1).

pm on Saturday and Sunday.

When the food drive was announced, a location was still being sought since the municipal buildings are essentially closed to the public during the pandemic.

Gift cards in envelopes addressed to Public Security can be put in the mail slot at city hall while cash donations will be picked up by public safety officers during their pick-ups of non-perishable food November 29 from front porches, all on request (see story November 10, p. 18).



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Guest column

Soldier, veteran, city employee Andrew Swan lived through World War II, Westmount history

This essay, entitled “Capt. A. W. D. Swan, E.D., B.Com. – Some Wartime Experiences, and Anecdotes as recalled by his son, Morley Swan – May 2020” was received by the Independent last week – just in time for our Remembrance Day coverage.

BY MORLEY SWAN

My father, Andrew Swan, was born in Ottawa on October 1, 1904, and grew up there. He was a Boy Scout during the First War, and then played his trombone in the band of the governor general’s Foot Guards.

After high school, he attended Royal Military College for a year, and then went to McGill University. While at McGill, he joined the COTC training as a cavalry officer.

He also met his future wife, Ruth Harrison. They both graduated in 1929, he with a BCom, and she with a BA.

In the fall of 1930, Dad was hired by the city of Westmount and was appointed city accountant soon after.

Ruth and Andrew were married on Oc-

tober 10, 1931. Their first apartment was on Park Place in Westmount. The building next door was the armoury of the Royal Montreal Regiment (RMR), a unit that had served with distinction at Vimy Ridge in the First War.

The RMR had an excellent brass band, and when it was band night down the lane Dad was thrilled. Dad decided to join the RMR (as a soldier, not as a bandsman), and was always delighted that his enlistment date was recorded as his son Richard’s birthday, September 15, 1932.

Training

The regiment trained for seven years leading up to the war as an anti-tank unit. When war was declared in September 1939, Dad had just turned 35 years old, and could have opted out of active service. But he must have weighed his options, and having been a soldier for most of his adult life, he decided his bigger responsibility to his family was to serve.

Here is Dad’s account of the mobilization from his earlier reminiscences:

“We were called out during the latter

part of August 1939, and the RMR (MG) was given a berth as a machine gun battalion in the 1st Canadian Division.

“On December 1, 1939 I was promoted to the rank of captain and given command of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Anti-Tank Company. Its personnel were to be drawn from the MG battalion and a whole platoon from each rifle battalion in the 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade, complete with subaltern.”

The regiment left for England on his son Chris’s second birthday, December 6, 1939.

England in the early 1940s

In anticipation of the regiment’s imminent departure for France, Dad’s anti-tank unit was inspected by King George and Queen Elizabeth.

This suggests that they were scheduled to leave for France in hours or days. Fortunately for the RMR, the French military and their British supporters succumbed to the German onslaught, and further deployments to France were cancelled.

To me, had Dad and his troops succeeded in getting to France they would have faced one of three options:

- they could have engaged the enemy, and died in battle,
- they could have engaged the enemy, been captured, and spent the next five years in a prisoner-of-war camp,
- they could have dropped all their equipment (after one of the worst routs in British military history) and attempted to reach Dunkirk, to be picked up by any British vessel, naval or civilian, that could cross the channel to save them. Amidst all the bad news at the time the Miracle of Dunkirk was looked upon as something of a triumph.

The tragedy of the last days in France was that the British forces lost over 68,000 troops. The miracle was that over 338,000 British, French, and Belgium troops were evacuated.

England: 1940-1944

During the interlude between Dunkirk in 1940 and the invasion in 1944, Dad had various experiences. One of the most memorable was, in the spring of 1943, he was selected to command a guard detail to escort a group of German prisoners-of-war to America.

On reaching New York, the job completed, Dad was allowed seven weeks leave, which, of course, were spent at home. One highlight of this summer was that Dad



The coat of arms of Andrew Swan.

took part in the first Davis family reunion in Carp, Ontario.

This tradition continued every five years into the 1970s.

On returning to England in the fall of 1943, Dad was delighted to be posted back to the RMR.

But then, in March 1944, the axe fell. Field Marshal Montgomery had been appointed c-in-c of their army group. The Canadian units complained to him there were not sufficient personnel in the Manning depots for them to bring their manpower up to war establishment quotas.

Monty’s fix was swift. He pointed out that in addition to the war establishment they were also carrying some supernumerary units. If these were disbanded, there would be enough bodies to fill all their vacancies.

Unfortunately, the RMR was supernumerary (I don’t understand why) and they were on the block.

I believe this is when Dad’s age caught up with him.

His seven years of pre-war training may have been a plus in 1939, but three years after Dunkirk all soldiers were now equally trained on the latest equipment and tactics.

The scene at the Manning depots must have been something like the hockey draft. The existing regiments were able to select from the pool the best players to fill the vacancies in their rosters.

And why would anyone choose a thirty-eight-year-old when he could pick from candidates ten to fifteen years younger? In the end, *continued on p. 10*



Their Majesties Inspect an Anti-Tank Battery

Capt. A. W. D. Swan, B.Com. '29, of Westmount, Que., anti-tank officer to the 3rd Infantry Brigade, who went overseas with the First Contingent from Canada, is walking with the King. From 1927 to 1929 Capt. Swan was a Lieutenant in the McGill Contingent, Canadian Officers' Training Corps.

This photo hung in the lobby of King’s School, located (before demolition) at Roslyn and Western (which was later re-named de Maisonneuve Blvd.), for the five years that Captain Andrew Swan was overseas. His children attended the school.

Remembrance Day at Vimy Park



Dignitaries positioned in front of the cenotaph before the ceremony with wreaths lined up in the background, before placement.



Members of the public unofficially present quietly social distanced and stayed masked during the Remembrance ceremony.



Highland piper James Ross from the Karnak Shriners Pipes and Drums warming up before the ceremony.



1 West Montreal Squadron trumpeter Anthony Encarenacion playing "The Last Post."



A salute to honour their fallen comrades.



Virginia Elliott placed a small commemorative stone on the wall surrounding the cenotaph on behalf of the 2nd Westmount Cubs.



What the public could see: in person (left) and shown in the city's livestreaming (right), Mayor Christina Smith dedicates the triangular greenspace around the cenotaph as "Vimy Park." A sign marks its name, which had been approved by city council in 2017 on the 100th anniversary of the World War I victory at Vimy Ridge in northern France. Many casualties were members of Westmount's Royal Montreal Regiment, whose chaplain (at right) conducted the service.

PHOTOS BY RALPH THOMPSON, EXCEPT BOTTOM RIGHT BY LAUREEN SWEENEY.

Swan, cont'd. from p. 7

the colonel at the RMR recommended Dad be posted to the civil affairs staff college, a move that recognized his civilian occupation.

Europe: 1944-1945

The Allies pre-invasion planning must have recognized that once they started liberating occupied Europe there would be no semblance of civil authority in place. Until national/local authorities could establish some form of peace-time infrastructure, the military would be responsible for this stability.

Hence the creation of Civil Affairs. Its role was to follow close behind the fighting troops. Once the Germans had been driven out of one town, the warriors moved on to the next one, and left the newly freed community to be administered by Civil Affairs.

Dad took the staff college course in May and early June 1944 and was mobilized to France in the fall. In the new year, the group was re-named Military Government. Its units followed the fighting troops through Belgium and the Netherlands, and into Germany in the spring.

After the Americans captured the city of Cologne, they passed its administration to the British. Military Gov. took advantage of Dad's municipal finance experience and

posted him as liaison officer with the city's finance department. Dad oversaw the work of the city treasurer. One can imagine the state that Cologne's finances must have been in after what they had been through. The job must have been challenging, but fascinating.

Homeward bound, to adoring fans

I have not seen this story in any of Dad's writings, but I do remember him telling it to me.

One day, in mid-August 1945, when Dad was toiling in Cologne, he was thumbing through one of the newspapers the army circulated to the troops to boost morale. In it, he came across a photo and a glowing article about a famous star. (Movie star? sports star? Who cares? Let's say it was a hockey star.)

The article raved about how this hero had given up his career to join the military and volunteer for overseas duty. Now that the war was over, he was being repatriated and returned to Canada to the delight of his adoring fans.

Dad folded up the paper, put it in his pocket, and drove his vehicle across northern Europe to his group's headquarters.

His colonel asked "What can I do for you?" Dad showed him the article, and reminded him that "I have been in England since December 1939. I have a wife and four children at home. When can I expect to be repatriated and 'delight my adoring fans'?"

Dad said the colonel, to his credit, only took a minute to declare: "Right. I'm posting you home. Get back to Cologne, get packed, and report to the Cdn Repatriation Barracks in Brussels. That is the start of the pipe-line to Canada."

Dad was home in Westmount in early September 1945.

Afterwards

When Dad returned to work at the city of Westmount, he was appointed assistant secretary-treasurer on November 1, 1945. Five years later, he was promoted to secretary-treasurer. He held this position until 1962, when with the approach of computers, the city decided it was time to split the secretary and treasurer functions, so that the treasurer could face the oncoming technology challenges as a full-time job.

Dad stayed on with the city for another two years, as city clerk, which comprised his former responsibilities as secretary. He then took early retirement.

Very soon after, as it happened, the position of secretary-treasurer at Harrison Bros. [later POM Bakery] suddenly became vacant, and Dad was invited to accept that position. He remained with POM for six years before finally retiring.

One event that occurred at the city just before his return, the city of Westmount



Some of the rocks thrown by the machine from the tracks, on Greene Ave. at Prospect St.

PHOTO COURTESY OF M. MOSSOP

Rail work, cont'd. from p. 1

Christina Smith, followed by Hurtubise. "It must have been terrifying to have your windows shattered in the middle of the night. We did not want the work to continue."

She said she was "in constant touch" with the office of Westmount MP Marc Garneau, who also happens to be the federal minister of Transport, "so they became involved." In the end, "we allowed the work to continue by hand but we not want them to use the machine, and they were very receptive."

"The situation was very well handled," Mossop said. "CP understood the severity of the situation."

Claim reports were given to affected residents.

Mossop is no stranger to transport-work

became the first Canadian city to apply for, and be granted a coat of arms. This exercise must have tweaked his imagination and eventually, he decided that as an individual he was as qualified as anyone to acquire his own coat of arms.

There are four heralds in Britain that grant arms. Because of the family's early Scottish background, Dad opted to make his petition to Lord Lyon King of Arms in Edinburgh. This petition was accepted and the grant was approved on June 9, 1960.

It is fun to note how Dad cribbed the format of his achievement from the city. (And why not? He worked and brought up his family in the same community.) In

issues as a member of the Turcot Bon Voisinage committee of Westmount, NDG and Montreal West, although that is a provincial government project unrelated to work by CP, a publicly traded company. He said the timing of the incident was particularly fortunate since pedestrians on Greene could have been injured by the flying ballast that hit the house at Greene and Prospect.

The work had been scheduled to take place from October 26 to November 12, Monday to Friday, from 8 pm to 6 am. This overnight time was to avoid disrupting the commuter train service. It was described as involving heavy machinery and railway equipment, which could cause a lot of bangs, idling engines, voices and alarms on reversing vehicles (see story October 27, p. 1).

each case, the shield is divided horizontally by an arched line, suggesting a mountain. In the top section there is the sun setting in the west, both elements taken indicate "WESTMOUNT."

In the lower half of the shield, the city displays reminders of its earlier development as a village and a town. Dad chose to depict a white swan floating or swimming.

Dad chose as his motto: *Sursum Corda*, "Let Us Lift Up Our Hearts." A coat of arms is a personal possession. When Dad died, since his oldest son Richard had pre-deceased him, these arms passed to Richard's son, David Swan.

Morley Swan still lives in Westmount.

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Needs Zoom presentation to city: developer 4898 de Mais. reports over half sold & waiting to go

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Now that the townhouse condominium project at 4898 de Maisonneuve is more than 50 percent sold, the work is ready to go on at Albert Square, as it is called. This is pending a Zoom presentation “kick-off” meeting by the developer’s realization team and the city’s urban planning department, developer Noam Schnitzer said last week.

“We’ve sold three of the six townhouses and one of the two ‘grand’ houses,” he explained.

The project at the intersection of Prince Albert was designed before the pandemic, but it provides private terraces and gardens for access to the outdoor space and privacy, he said.

“No one wants to be stuck inside these days.”

Latest request from Dan Lambert

Leave de Mais. bollards in place for winter, council asked

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

With winter looming, city council was asked November 2 to leave the bollards in place for the bike path on de Maisonneuve, as is done in NDG.

“To facilitate social distancing this winter, we ask that the bollards remain in place,” said Dan Lambert, president of the Association of Pedestrians and Cyclists of Westmount. “To reduce car traffic as well,” he added, “please install signs on posts indicating local traffic only.”

This winter, residents need to get out for fresh air and exercise in the face of COVID restrictions, he explained. The de

On the other hand, it also offers “the assets of a condominium” such as indoor parking with private interior access.

While Schnitzer had previously said in August that just under the 50-percent mark had been sold that he hoped to get started with construction this fall, he was waiting for the 50-percent threshold to be reached in order to get going (see story August 18, p. 3).

The permit, approved by city council August 5, 2019, has been in final details to build the proposed new stand-alone building on what has long been the parking lot of the office building at the corner. It would house two family dwellings.

Meanwhile, the former office building has been under conversion to create six townhouses by transforming it into what are three legal lots of two upper and lower dwellings in each.

Maisonneuve route is the most popular one for residents walking to Greene Ave., Alexis Nihon or downtown and “many walk in the bike path and the driving lane to social distance.”

In reply, Mayor Christina Smith pointed out that Lambert had discussed this in the past with Public Works. “What I understand is that the challenge [posed by] the narrowed street is for our [snow removal] trucks to get through.”

The question, however, would be brought back to the city’s Traffic Advisory Committee, she said. The bollards were already down by the time the *Independent* went to press November 16.



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 Info-Social 811

Pull-out section

Holiday Gift Guide 2020

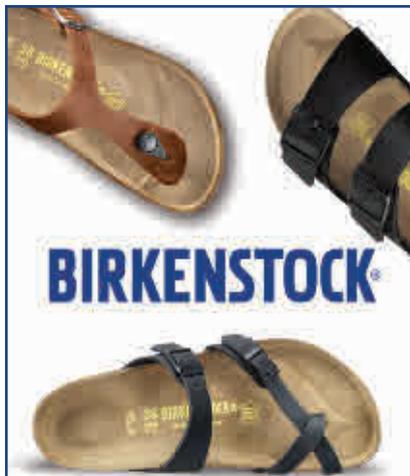
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Outdoor Skating is coming!



Two workers were installing the cooling mechanism for the outdoor skating rink November 10 in Westmount Park close to the playground area. One worker said it will be open from mid-November through to mid-March. Water was already being sprayed onto the cooling tubes November 12 (inset).

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.



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Masks can't stop toy shopping



Kayla Leblanc, left, and her best friend Mila Ruckenstein were not Christmas shopping November 14 in Westmount Stationery's second-floor toy section, but they did find the Hallmark musical goat quite appealing. Maybe it's those eyes! We think there was a big smile beneath the mask showing that 9-year-old Briac Williams-Jones took quite a fancy to several of the toys on Westmount Stationery's second floor toy store November 14.

PHOTOS: RALPH THOMPSON.


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Be there for yourself the way you're there for others



You are always there when your loved ones are going through difficult times. But don't forget about yourself—solutions exist to help you feel better.

The current situation may cause you distress. Experiencing various levels of anxiety in some spheres of life is normal. When this happens, you may find it more challenging to deal with your thoughts, emotions, behaviour and relationships with others. Most people succeed in adapting, but listening to your needs is vital. **Don't hesitate to do whatever is necessary to help yourself.**

Take care of yourself

- Rely on your personal strengths and have confidence in your abilities.
- Remind yourself of the winning strategies you used in the past to overcome difficulties. There is no one-size-fits-all solution! Each and every one of us must take steps to foster our own well-being.
- Enjoy life's little pleasures, such as listening to music, taking a warm bath, reading, exercising, etc.
- If you live close to nature, make the most of it. Breathe deeply and slowly as you walk.
- Learn to delegate, and allow others to help you.
- Ask for help when you feel overwhelmed. **It is not a sign of weakness, but rather a sign of strength when you are strong enough to do what is necessary to help yourself.**
- Lend a hand in your community in a way that respects your personal limits and public health directives. By helping others, you can improve their wellness and your own as well.
- Think about what has meaning and value for you. Reflect on the important things in your life that you can hold onto in hard times.
- Reduce the stressors in your life.
- While it is important to stay informed, limit the amount of time spent reading about COVID-19. Information overload can increase stress and anxiety, and even cause depression.



The *Getting Better My Way* digital tool

Getting Better My Way is a digital self-management tool for emotional health. If you are experiencing stress, anxiety or distress, this tool can help improve your well-being by identifying practical things you can do to feel better. Learn more at [Québec.ca/Gettingbetter](https://Quebec.ca/Gettingbetter)



Give voice to your feelings

- Keep in mind that having a range of emotions is normal. Feelings play an important role in life, and it is essential to experience them without passing judgment.
- Use words to express what you are going through. Do you feel alone? Are you worried?
- Allow yourself to share your feelings with a trusted friend or family member. It might also be helpful to write down how you're feeling or call a helpline. Find what works for you!
- Those closest to you may not necessarily be able to "read" you. Express your feelings.
- Leave space in your life for your feelings and those of your loved ones.



Make judicious use of social media

- Use critical thinking before sharing something on social media. Ill-advised information can have harmful effects and be detrimental to everyone's efforts in these times.
- Use social media to share positive actions.
- Watch videos that make you smile.



Choose healthy living habits

- Try to keep to a routine for eating, resting, sleeping and other daily activities.
- Take time to eat well.
- Go to bed at an hour that lets you get enough sleep.
- Be physically active on a regular basis, while complying with public health directives.
- Reduce your consumption of stimulants like coffee, tea, soft drinks, energy beverages, chocolate, etc.
- Drink lots of water.
- Lower your alcohol, drug and tobacco consumption, or simply say no to them entirely. The same goes for gambling.

Help and resources

We are all going through unprecedented times that can intensify our emotional reactions. For example, you might feel greater fatigue or have fears that you can't shake, or even have trouble just dealing with the day-to-day. Focus on these signs of a problem and, as soon as you can, contact resources that can help you to better manage your feelings and develop new coping strategies.

- **Info-Social 811**
Info-Social 811 is a free and confidential telephone consultation service available 24/7
- **Regroupement des services d'intervention de crise du Québec**
Provides 24/7 referral services for people in distress (French): centredecrise.ca/listecentres
- **Suicide prevention crisis helpline**
Crisis helpline that provides suicide prevention services 24/7:
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For a host of other helpful resources, visit Quebec.ca/gettingbetter

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What a difference a year makes: No masks! Colder weather!



Most in-person events have gone online this year, but last year, 6-year-old Charlotte Egger and her dad Patrick, were able to check out the wool and cloth rag dolls by Créations Nadine at the in-person, maskless Artisans' Westmount fair at Victoria Hall. Also last year, tobogganers took to the slopes at Murray Park November 16, inset, something not possible this year! PHOTOS: RALPH THOMPSON

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Zooka

to put this behind her. As seasoned dog owners, we know about skin sensitivity and food allergies! We discuss our dogs' diets and routines all the time and compare notes, so this is certainly not a big thing.

Zooka is up to date with her inoculations and spayed. She is available for adoption as soon as possible from the SPCA Montréal, a no-kill volunteer grassroots animal shelter that you can find out more about at its website at www.spcamontreal.com.

In its comments section under Zooka's profile, you can forward a note showing your interest, presenting a bit about yourself, your dog experience, and your contact information. Adoption visits are organized by appointment only at the moment, hoping that a scenic drive to St. Angèle de Monnoir on a beautiful fall Saturday for a visit would be a moment that could change a family's life with a loving companion!

Your neighbour,
Lysanne



Westmount A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

Zooka is a beauty, fully grown at three years of age this September. She is a terrier mix so, naturally, most active and keen on play! She is a very elegant shorthair, with a silver and brown coat and half mask, contrasted by her soft brown eyes and darker heart-shaped nose...

She is family oriented, waiting for her special adoption day from the SPCA Montréal kennel.

Zooka is a house dog, going out to play in a fenced yard and keen on an energetic walking routine. She is lovingly affectionate and keen on children who are a bit older, as it will be normal for her to need some quality time when she arrives in her new family. Zooka has a sensitivity to some of the kibble varieties and she is now on hypoallergenic food and allergy medicine



Quinoa



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

So lovely, Quinoa is a stunning cream-shaded domestic longhair with petite white booties.

Such a beautiful face, featuring huge green eyes and a perfect pink nose. Quinoa is a stunner, soft and affectionate.

She is waiting at the Montreal SPCA cattery for a new family that she can bring all her love to.

Quinoa is a very healthy eight-year-old, up to date with her inoculations, spayed and microchipped.

Her identification number is 46040497 and you can refer to it when you visit the Montreal SPCA website at www.spcamontreal.com and fill out the adoption application for her 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.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne

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Publié par la Ville de Westmount
Published by the City of Westmount**NOUVELLES**PROCHAINE SÉANCE
DU CONSEIL

Lundi 7 décembre

NEWSNEXT COUNCIL
MEETING

Monday, December 7

**Mise en valeur du parc Westmount****Présentation publique en ligne,
le 18 novembre de 19 h à 20 h 30.**

Venez assister à une présentation des résultats des consultations publiques et des concepts d'aménagement proposés pour la mise en valeur du parc Westmount.

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**Westmount Park Enhancement****Online Public Presentation on
November 18, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.**

Participate in the presentation of the results of the public consultations and the proposed design concepts for the enhancement of Westmount Park.

engage.westmount.org/westmountpark

Ateliers sur le bien-être en ligneJusqu'au 17 décembre, le Service des sports et loisirs de Westmount vous propose des ateliers sur le bien-être, les mercredis et jeudis. Inscription requise. westmount.org**Patinoire réfrigérée au parc Westmount**La Ville a procédé à l'installation d'une patinoire réfrigérée au parc Westmount. La glace sera ouverte au public pour le patinage libre uniquement et les mesures sanitaires préventives seront en vigueur. westmount.org**Nouvelles poubelles à Westmount**La Ville remplace les poubelles publiques de rue avec de nouvelles poubelles à doubles bacs pour mieux trier les ordures et les matières recyclables. westmount.org**Nouveau : collecte de résidus de jardin**Placez vos résidus en bordure de trottoir **avant 7 h le jour de collecte chez vous**. Utilisez des sacs de papier ou des contenants ouverts. Consultez la liste de résidus acceptés et l'horaire des collectes à westmount.org.**Vaccination contre la grippe : pas de clinique au Victoria Hall cette année**En raison de la pandémie, le vaccin anti-grippal sera disponible au CLSC par rendez-vous. Réservez en ligne à clcsante.ca.**Cours de loisirs en ligne à prix réduit**Des cours sur Zoom sont offerts à prix réduit pour le reste de la session d'automne. westmount.org**New Online Wellness Workshops**Until December 17th, the Westmount Sports and Recreation Department offers wellness workshops on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Registration required. westmount.org**Refrigerated Rink in Westmount Park**The City has installed a refrigerated skating rink in Westmount Park. The rink will be open to the public for general skating only and preventive sanitary restrictions will apply. westmount.org**New Garbage Cans in Westmount**The City is replacing its street waste cans with new double receptacles for garbage and recyclable materials. westmount.org**New: Garden Waste Collection**Place your materials at the curb **before 7 a.m. on your collection day**. Use paper bags or open containers only. Consult the list of accepted materials and the collection schedule at westmount.org.**Flu Vaccination: No clinic at Victoria Hall This Year**Due to the pandemic, the flu vaccine will be available by appointment at the CLSC. Reserve online at clcsante.ca.**Online leisure classes at a reduced price**Online Zoom classes are now available at a reduced price for the remainder of the fall session. westmount.org**BIBLIOTHÈQUE****Service de cueillette sans contact :
nouvel horaire**À compter du 9 novembre, le service de cueillette sans contact offert par la Bibliothèque publique de Westmount sera disponible : lundi de 13 h à 17 h, mardi de 13 h à 19 h, mercredi de 13 h à 17 h, jeudi de 13 h à 19 h, et vendredi de 10 h à 17 h. La Bibliothèque demeure fermée au public. westlib.org**Miel de la Bibliothèque en vente**

Le miel provenant des ruches d'abeilles sur le toit de la Bibliothèque est prêt à la vente. Il est disponible à la porte d'entrée durant les heures du Service de cueillette sans contact. Prix : 5 \$ par pot, seul le montant exact en argent comptant est accepté. Quantité limitée, maximum de 4 pots par personne.

Activités d'automneDécouvrez notre programmation d'activités culturelles et communautaires qui seront diffusées en ligne et sur les médias sociaux cet automne. westlib.org**Sessions en studio au Victoria Hall****Samedi 21 novembre et samedi 5 décembre à 19 h.** Une nouvelle série de concerts intimes en ligne, en direct sur le compte YouTube de la Bibliothèque. westlib.org**Ateliers d'écriture pour les jeunes (9+)****Mardi 17 novembre et mardi 1er décembre, 14 h 30 à 15 h 30** sur Zoom. Avec Andrew Katz, M.A. en création littéraire. Tu as besoin d'un carnet de notes? Nous en avons un pour toi. Places limitées; inscrivez-vous à westlib.org.**Ateliers de poésie avec Ann Lloyd**Lundi 23 novembre, 13 h 30 à 15 h 30 sur Zoom. Ouvert aux abonnés de la Bibliothèque. Inscription requise. westlib.org.**Club de cinéma de Westmount**Le club est maintenant en ligne! Inscrivez-vous au bulletin du club à westlib.org.**Besoin d'une carte de bibliothèque?**Demandez votre carte de membre à westlib.org.**LIBRARY****Contactless pickup service: New
Opening Hours**As of November 9th, opening hours for the Westmount Public Library's pickup service will be: Monday, 1-5 p.m.; Tuesday 1-7 p.m.; Wednesday, 1-5 p.m.; Thursday, 1-7 p.m. and Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Library remains closed to the public. westlib.org**Honey from the Library on Sale**

The honey from the Westmount Public Library rooftop hives is ready for sale. Available at the front door during regular contactless pickup service hours. \$5 per jar, cash only and exact change. Limited quantity, maximum of 4 jars per person.

Fall ActivitiesDiscover our wide range of upcoming cultural and community events that will be presented online and on social media this fall. westlib.org**Victoria Hall Studio Sessions****Saturday, November 21 and December 5 at****7 p.m.** A new series of intimate live concerts online on the Library's YouTube account. westlib.org**Writing Workshops for Tweens (9+)
Tuesdays, November 17 and December 1st,
2:30 to 3:30 p.m.** on Zoom. With Andrew Katz, M.A. in Creative Writing. Need a notebook? We've got one for each participant. Limited places; register at westlib.org.**Poetry Workshop with Ann Lloyd**Monday, November 23, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. on Zoom. Open to Library members. Registration required. westlib.org.**Westmount Cinema Club**The Club is moving online! Sign up for the Club's newsletter at westlib.org.**Need a Library Card?**Request your membership card at westlib.org.


ECOWatch

HEATHER BLACK

Westmount Park survey: Remember the environment



Mallard ducks amid garbage at the lagoon on July 26.

Following the November 18 online park-revitalisation presentation, a survey will be posted (see “Westmount Park consultation, designs presentation on Zoom Nov. 18,” November 10, p. 18). A call for feedback, this is also the time to consider anti-pollution measures and wildlife protection laws. With park overuse – and abuse – still fresh in our minds, it’s also important to ask: How can best park environmental practices – including activity zoning – be included within the new plan?

Refurbishment and regulations

As air pollution aggravates allergies and asthma and causes one in nine deaths annually, the question is: Will more trees and shrubs protect citizens? A recent *Nature* review article by Barwise and Kumar concludes that – although tree barriers offer the overall best protection – streets lined with low-level vegetation aimed at automobile exhaust height can mitigate pollutants.

As the city currently uses tap water to fill the pond, another question is: Can we return to the natural water course – now underground – a more sustainable practice? Other concerns include soil deposited into the pond during heavy rains as well

as possible contamination from run-off from the neighbouring tennis courts and exercise mats. Decomposing bread or seeds thrown into the water by duck feeders are also pollutants that endanger both pond life and our mallards.

As many municipalities require barriers around ponds over 60 cm to prevent drowning, another question is: Do we need a fence or hedge? Best landscape practices include plant barriers from cattails to berry bushes or prickly hawthorn. As teen vandalism includes smashed beer bottles in the pond, a plant barrier would also protect waterfowl.

Nature imperative

The federal Migratory Birds Conservation Act protects mallard nesting and foraging areas – and ducklings – from animal or human interference and noise. As many have witnessed ducks attacked with sticks, stones, slingshots, remote-control boats and drones, or chased by dogs both on and off leash the question is: What can be done? Effective park practices include a nature zone at or around the pond separate from the other activity areas – playground,

exercise, picnic/party, and dog run.

As many parents bring children to the park to collect leaves or watch ducks, a protected zone would encourage learning and pro-environmental behaviour. From my experience – I once designed a Parks Canada edukit for Fundy National Park – our sandpipers, damselflies or dawn redwood are of educational interest. A nature zone would also provide a quiet area to meditate, paint, read or even work – an important consideration in COVID-19 times.

A separate nature zone would also signal a respect for wildlife and trees – some residents strip bark off of oaks for their orchids or break off willow branches for a more symmetrical photograph. And if activity zones were enforced, it would also prevent vandalism – and overcrowding – within the vulnerable pond area. Among best practices, park ambassadors – city staff or volunteers – who remind new park-goers of regulations and report repeat offenders to Westmount Public Security.

As environmental sustainability – the subject of this column – is also a city goal, park refurbishment must comply with and improve the enforcement of current legislation.

But as our need for nature is well documented, ask: Do the new design concepts promote citizen health and well-being as well as our landscape heritage?



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THANK YOU FOR THE HONESTY

I would like to send a big “THANK-YOU” to the honest person who found my purse recently on the busy sidewalk of Sherbrooke St. and who brought it into the shop and staff at the Maison Christian Faure patisserie shop and for contacting my children.

In these stressful times, it is heartwarming to know that there are still honest and caring people who will go out of their way to do the right thing.

HEIDY VERMEULEN, A FORGETFUL SENIOR,
METCALFE AVE.

WHAT OUTDOOR BEHAVIOUR IS LEGAL IN A RED ZONE?

During this spell of wonderfully warm weather, I have seen many more people out on the streets and in Westmount Park, as well as enjoying the few terraces that have remained open.

What is recommended regarding masks and distancing?

The messages seem to be confusing, as I have seen gatherings of up to a dozen or more people, not masked, not distanced, in the park and on one particular terrasse. Is this acceptable?

As a person who is a walker, in a COVID-susceptible age group and who generally goes out at 7 am to avoid these people, does this mean that I should stay in after 8 am? Does the fact that these people are outdoors automatically confer immunity to themselves and others?

I ask this, as since my grandchildren are in school, and their mother worries about my husband and me, we are not able to see them.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

And I miss them.

Maybe it is a good thing that the cold weather will soon be here.

LYNN PECKNOLD, GROSVENOR AVE.

Editor's answer: I forwarded the body of your letter to the provincial Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and received the reply reproduced below. – DP.

In the red zones, outdoor gatherings are prohibited. Activities organized in a public place outside are also prohibited.

Remember that people must stay in their family bubble (made up of people residing at the same address) and maintain a physical distance of two meters at all times from people belonging to other bubbles. The desired goal is to decrease social interactions to stop the spread of the virus. As mentioned in a press conference, the MSSS asks Quebecers to show their usual good judgment.

So it is possible to go for a walk outside, but the distance of two meters must be respected with people who are outside our family bubble.

It should be noted, however, that the concept of “organized activity” requires a certain level of organization. It would be allowed, for example, to go for a walk with another person (while respecting the 2m distance), but not to organize a hiking activity bringing together families from the neighbourhood. It is necessary to exercise judgment on whether or not the gathering is organized.

Open-air meetings in a public place, such as a park, are prohibited.

You will find via this link the measures in force for the regions in red zones.

www.quebec.ca/sante/problemes-de-sante/a-z/coronavirus-2019/systeme-alertes-regionales-et-intervention-graduelle/palier-4-alerte-maximale-zone-rouge/

Best regards,

MARJORIE LAROUCHE, RELATIONS AVEC LES MÉDIAS, SERVICES DES AFFAIRES PUBLIQUES ET STRATÉGIES, MINISTÈRE DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX

YORK-AREA CONSTRUCTION NOISE CONTINUES – CONSULTATION NEEDED!

At 5:05 am on November 10, noisy earth-moving equipment was activated just inside the fence/train tracks area that runs parallel to St. Catherine St. facing numerous York St. homes. It was then manoeuvred out and ultimately loaded onto a large flatbed on the street with its motor running.

The earth mover had been parked there since 5 pm the previous day, when it was shut off after day-long digging (surprise!) in connection with *chantiers de construction* for the Groupe Maurice retirement residence project under way on Westmount's southwestern outskirts.

Who is responsible? Surely Westmount officials are aware when a large swath of the Glen is to be cleared. Whether located on Westmount territory or CP land, why did Westmount not take the initiative to inform area residents of this? An email from district councillor Marina Brzeski, a Public Works/Urban Planning notice in mailboxes or even the city's website would have sufficed.

And what of the overnight disturbance? A major piece of machinery could not have been moved the evening prior? It had to be at five in the morning?

What dismaying conclusion can I reach other than a culture of indifference at city hall to the impact that major construction projects have had, and continue to have, on local residents, homeowners and tenants alike.

Is “indifference” too harsh a word? Not from my experience.

How else to describe Westmount tolerating over the years a variety of construction-related noise that disrupts sleep at all hours, the most recent being overnight booming from Projet Vendôme equipment being driven into and parked in the Glen Yards, which ended only recently after about two months. And let us not forget the MUHC Glen hospital's ventilation noise debacle that forced local residents to pursue legal action to fix. We had to stand

on our own two feet to fight this while Westmount fiddled.

Once again, as I did in these pages recently (October 13, p. 6), I urge Mayor Christina Smith to hold a public consultation on the Groupe Maurice project, if for no other reason than to inform residents on what to expect in Westmount territory.

Is that too much to ask, especially after all the heavy construction noise this neighbourhood has put up with for so many years?

DOROTHY LIPOVENKO, YORK ST.

FREE DOG-SITTING (AND WALKING) AVAILABLE

Following my letter of November 3 (“Not-so-healthy Tank needs a home,” p. 20), I am writing to say that since the passing of my dog in September, I have totally given up trying to adopt a dog through the spruced-up descriptions of animals in the adoption column of the *Westmount Independent* or by applying to all nearby SPCAs because, apart from instant acknowledgements and promises, nothing more is heard from them and reminders are ignored.

As nearly all SPCAs in Quebec and even those in eastern Ontario are closed till the distant future, I would be pleased to be contacted by any reader of *Westmount Independent* who has to leave a pet dog alone during his working hours. Dogs that are healthy, friendly, mid-sized, toilet trained and naturally equipped for three half-hour outings in very cold winter days following a slowly ridden bicycle would be welcome.

This solution to a triple problem would be good for the owner, good for the dog and good for Stephen Chin.

STEPHEN CHIN, SHERBROOKE ST.
PIANOFORJOY@VIDEOTRON.CA
514.932.6875

NAME WESTMOUNT HIGH AFTER KAMALA

So many Westmounters are no doubt feeling pride after hearing that Kamala Harris, who graduated from Westmount High School in 1981, is the first woman, the first African-American, the first Asian-American, and the first Caribbean-American woman to be elected vice president of the US, thus becoming “the highest-ranking female elected official in United States history” [Wikipedia]. But even more importantly, Kamala Harris is a living example to young girls and women from all nations today and in the future of what they can achieve through education and the inner courage and determination to help make the world a better place.

That's why I propose – and I'm sure I'm not the first – that Westmount High School be renamed Kamala Harris High School.

Although she was not born in Canada,

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

mount usually treats its trees with more respect.

MEGAN DURNFORD, VICTORIA AVE.

POPLAR FELLING WAS ACT OF VANDALISM

Cutting down the 100-year-old poplar tree in Prince Albert Park was an act of vandalism.

This tree, besides being a beautiful landmark offering shade and escape from the heat, was also a shelter for wildlife.

The tree was sound and healthy, with no trace of rot or disease, and it should have been maintained.

The redesigning of the playground was also unnecessary. The old structure was about 10 years old only, and it could have been adapted for use by the disabled and not replaced with concrete and plastic that is visually very ugly and leaves nothing to imagination.

Sometimes less is more.

ANNA COATES, CLAREMONT AVE.

LET THE CHILDREN USE ALL OF PRINCE ALBERT PARK

From my window, I can see Prince Albert Park and today Westmount Security has locked the rink again. According to the city, the Prince Albert rink can only be used for skating. For reasons that are inexplicable, the rink space is out of bounds for two months of the year, before and after the skating season.

The rink takes up the entire playing field and now that work is being done to install a new playground at one end, there is even less space in Prince Albert Park. The park is very popular and is used by people of all ages. In the morning, two daycares come to the swings, at lunch people sit on the benches, during the afternoon and evening many children come to play.

of good read from your library,” is to be possibly launched on December 1, she said. While the “staff picks” can take place periodically through the year and “is always very popular, we decided to launch a special holiday edition.” The staff picks are to include “all types of materials such as movies, music, ebooks and print books.

The library continues to follow pandemic restrictions in place. This means that members cannot enter the building, which is typically known to attract up to 1,000 people a day as the city’s best-used facility.

“We want everyone to know that we miss them,” she added. The building has become unusually quiet, “inhabited” only by those members of the staff working rotationally, while others work remotely.

There are always people walking their dogs. On weekends, entire families use the park. With the field out of bounds, there is simply no room for everyone.

Can Westmount Security please leave the rink open so children and adults can use it as a playing field? We all want to enjoy our lovely little park!

EVA ECHENBERG, CLAREMONT AVE.

WAS MOUNTAINSIDE’S CHURCH STATUS A SURPRISE?

Cher développeur,

Nous avons appris que le zonage pour activités religieuses du bâtiment que vous avez récemment acheté ne vous convenait pas (“Revah: ‘Next thing is to prepare ... a major lawsuit’ – Developer says Mountain-side Church could become a mosque,” November 10, p. 1).

C’est contrariant, en effet. Se pourrait-il que l’architecture du bâtiment et le nom de Mountain-side United Church aient échappé à votre vigilance lors de la transaction? Nous comprenons votre impatience à construire et avons pensé à quelques pistes pour convertir cette propriété en plusieurs condos paradisiaques:

- Poursuivre votre vendeur pour vice caché. Il faut y croire...

Groupe Maurice to communicate directly with local residents, Cllr. Brzeski says

Westmount residents living near the Groupe Maurice seniors’ residence to be built at the NDG corner of de Maisonneuve and St. Catherine are to be communicated with directly by the builders during the progress of its construction, District 5 councillor Marina Brzeski said at the city council meeting November 2. She said this information had been relayed to Westmount during a presentation to the city. She specifically said this applied to the project’s neighbours on York St. near Claremont and St. Catherine.

- Entamer une procédure contre la ville. C’est peu charitable mais la catégorie 1 visant à préserver la valeur patrimoniale du bâtiment est en effet une source d’ennuis pour votre plan d’affaire.
- Continuer votre travail de prosélytisme afin que bientôt nous puissions rebaptiser la bâtisse Mountain-side United Condos ...

BARBARA DUCHESNE, AVE. METCALFE

I thought it might be significant to mention that the new Bernie Curtis Secondary School in Hamilton, ON, was named after an African-American who was “the first black professional quarterback in the modern era and the first in professional Canadian football, starting with the Hamilton Tiger Cats in 1951” [Wikipedia].

RICHARD ORLANDO, SHERBROOKE ST.

POPLAR DESERVED RESPECT

A few weeks ago, our family was very sorry to see that a majestic poplar near the playground in Prince Albert Park had been chopped down. Naturally, I assumed that this tree was diseased.

I asked our councillor, Conrad Peart, for more info [and received an email back].

According to Mr. Peart’s response [which contained information from city arborist Stéphane Galarneau], it is clear that the tree was cut down because it was *inconvenient* [in Galarneau’s words: “*Nous avions des travaux prévus dans le parc et même en tentant de le protéger le plus possible, les travaux allaient l’affecter.*”]

I was astounded to discover that this very special tree was not a priority in the construction planning process. West-

EMSB elections set for December

The only contested seat at the English Montreal School Board (EMSB), the constituency for which (Ward 3) includes Westmount, now has a new election date: December 12, 19 and 20.

Incumbent Julien Feldman (see October 13, p. 22 for profile) is being challenged by Irwin Rapoport (see October 6, p. 10 for profile).

The new election date and in-person voting format are being criticized by the Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) given the pandemic.

Library, cont’d. from p. 1

Notwithstanding the e-demands, however, even the requests for prize-winning and best-selling print books have increased to such an extent that the library has made changes. For instance, it has ordered additional copies and started extending its one-week loans of these “Fast Reads” to three weeks to get them into members’ hands quickly and for people who may not be available to read so quickly.

Magazines now loaned out for 1 week

Also, current issues of magazines, which previously couldn’t be borrowed, are now reservable online and are being loaned out. “People have been very happy to be able to see the current ones,” Cardella said.

Coming up: a new “Staff Picks – 12 days

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Westmount High cheers Harris



English Montreal School Board (EMSB) chairman Joe Ortona, bottom right, and interim director general Evelyne Alfonsi, right, joined students and the media outside the front entrance to Westmount High School on St. Catherine St. at 8:15 am November 9 to celebrate former student Kamala Harris, class of '81, who was widely recognized as vice president-elect of the United States of America on November 7.

"It's as proud as we could possibly be. It shows how successful the public system is here," said Ortona. "It just goes to show you can accomplish anything. We're very excited and I'm sure the students are ex-

cited too." Kamala Harris attended Westmount High School between 1978 and 1981 and has become the first female, the first black and the first South Asian vice president-elect of the USA.

Michael Cohen, the EMSB's communications and marketing specialist, said they hoped that if Harris came here, that she would visit her old school. A package of information will be sent to her current office in California and, in the meantime, a large banner celebrating her success will be hung beside the front door of the school.

PHOTOS: RALPH THOMPSON



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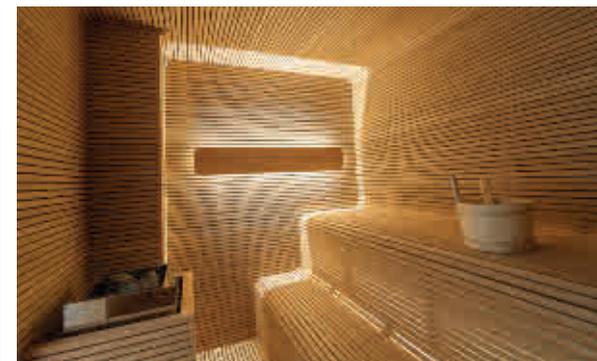
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Social Notes

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.

Westmounters Erika Ludwick and Paulina Flores Rutenberg co-chair the much-loved and delicious Toy Tea. Not only does this packed annual event showcase local choirs, but entrance is free, with the donation of a new wrapped toy destined to be delivered by the team's volunteers to children in need. This year, however, the event has to be online, as the sisters explain.

What is your event? Cause?

Our cause is a magical event called the Toy Tea conceived and founded by Westmounter Ginger Petty. Ginger had been a member of the American Women's Club, and the group used to hand out toys at Christmastime to children in need. Ginger thought the idea could be expanded to help

Fundraiser profile: Erika & Paulina



Sisters Paulina Flores-Rutenberg and Erika Ludwick at 2018's Toy Tea.

children in shelters across the island. In the early days of the Toy Tea, she remembers hundreds of Montreal women lining up outside her Westmount home, with toys in hand, nibbling on sandwiches and drinking tea. The tea eventually outgrew Ginger's home, and today we are so proud that her event, with such humble beginnings, now provides toys to thousands of children across Montreal.

It was to be held on what date?

For 29 years, the Toy Tea has been held the first week of December. For many years it was held at Tudor Hall in Ogilvy's. When that was no longer available, we held the event at the Ritz Carlton. However, for the past two years the Toy Tea found a perfect home at Victoria Hall! We will miss not being there this year and will especially miss the friendly team members at the hall who help us coordinate everything. They are amazing to work with!

How are you hosting this event now?

We are hosting a virtual showcase to be launched on November 25 at 4 pm. Due to physical-distancing protocols and modified school attendance, many schools are not able to conduct choir as usual. In order not to overwhelm school administrations, we are doing a "call out" to all student musicians, singers and dancers to upload a two-minute musical video to our website www.toyteashowcase.com by November

20. To participate, each performer should make a donation. They can donate online the equivalent cost of one new, non-violent toy. Also, this year we are offering people a chance to donate by purchasing a toy from our Amazon wish list linked on our website. We are encouraging parents, friends, grandparents who will view the showcase online to also donate through the website.

Participating stores, such as Westmount's James Boutique (4910 Sherbrooke St.) have offered to collect toys if supporters would like to drop off handpicked toys. And if something catches your eye while you are in the store, they are offering 10 percent off throughout the month of November. Greene Ave.'s Suetables has also offered to receive toys until the November 30 deadline.

We are especially pleased to announce a special guest performance by The Sam Roberts Band, nominated for 14 Juno awards, winning six, including "Artist of the Year" twice. Canadian rock singer-songwriter Sam Roberts did not hesitate to lend his support to make sure the Toy Tea carries on the tradition.

Donna Saker from The Beat 92.5 radio station will MC our showcase.

This year, more than ever, the children living in battered women's shelters need our support. Shelters are incurring higher

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expenses to protect their vulnerable community with health and safety protocols and victims are experiencing a greater threat as many are being confined to their homes with their abusers during the lockdown. Calls to some shelters have soared by up to 36 percent.

How did you (personally) shelter in place during the lock-down?

Erika: When we returned from spring break, we headed to Tremblant and basically stayed there until the end of summer. We experienced the changing seasons in the Laurentians, which was something we had always wanted to do and we spent a lot of time outdoors to get fresh air. We have a young puppy in the family so it was a good opportunity to train him. I also spent a lot of time on various webinars and, like everyone else, tried to perfect my baking skills. Unfortunately, I learnt bread making is not my thing!

Paulina: My husband and I have four teenagers, five years apart. Each has different interests and plays varying sports. We rarely had the chance to just sit around as we were always rushing and juggling everyone's schedules. With the lockdown, we were forced to slow down and reassess our lifestyle. We're a close family and have always carved out time for family dinners and movie nights, but the lockdown gave us the opportunity to bring out the puzzles,

convert the kitchen table into a site for epic ping pong tournaments and we even transformed our driveway into a pickleball court with chalk boundaries and an old garden fence for a net. I'm sure our chocolate Lab, Charlotte, didn't understand what was going on with all six of us home all the time, but she certainly loved the long walks outside multiple times a day!

Have you developed a daily routine?

Erika: Organization and routine are my personal mantras, so the lockdown was not altogether different for my family in that regard. Of course, having my daughter home from the University of Miami, and my son studying online instead of at Marianopolis has changed our household routine. Luckily, we all thrive with routine and my youngest daughter's school, The Study, has been successful at remaining open so she has been able to maintain some normalcy with that.

Paulina: Absolutely! Since the original lockdown, our home has become the virtual Montreal campus for Queen's University, Lower Canada College and Marianopolis as well as my home office. Routines and consideration for one another is key. Although, we've had our share of setbacks for sure! Like the time I inadvertently walked in on my son's presentation during Spanish class on Facetime, but I think that's to be expected.

How did you stay in touch during the lock-down? With friends? With supporters?

Erika: When possible, I would walk six feet apart with friends. Our goal was 10,000 steps per day. Tremblant was extremely quiet so it was easy to take over the wide streets. Our biggest competition were the deer who you could find roaming peacefully throughout the pedestrian village. We had regular Zoom calls with my parents and the rest of the family. We were a group of 22 on screen so we quickly learnt how to use the mute button. My dad taught Zoom karate classes and my mom Zoom Spanish classes to 12 grandkids! As the weather improved, we had "walktails" outside and enjoyed backyard BBQs whenever possible.

Paulina: Instagram is the easiest and quickest way to stay connected for me. The short entries and visual component of this social media platform appeal to my aesthetic and fits in with my busy life. A large portion of our supporters are women from our community whom I'm in touch with through Instagram already. We don't generally post on our Toy Tea Instagram and Facebook account during the spring and summer but right after Hallowe'en, right up until our event, we communicate consistently through these platforms. As for our donors (both corporate and personal),

we use email and to keep them informed about our endeavours and needs. Our school communities rely on our executive for information as well as a Toy Tea ambassador – a student from each school who usually speaks to choir members and directors on our behalf. This year, this will continue but on a virtual platform through e-assemblies, and info letters from schools to students and families.

Link for your event / cause supporters?
www.toyteashowcase.com

What do you miss the most living in our "smaller world" today?

Erika: As I mentioned, we are a very close family, so not having regular dinners all together is what I miss the most. And I miss the little things like not worrying about my dad's health when he has to operate, or hanging out with my mom and sisters on a Sunday afternoon. I miss Friday night dinners with my in-laws and getting to see my girlfriends for our monthly cooking group dinners.

Paulina: I miss getting together with my extended family and friends the most. I miss the gentle touch of my mother's hand and the strength and safety of my father's arms.

I cannot believe I have not hugged them since this whole crazy pandemic began in March!



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Mount Sinai Hospital Literary Breakfast Club goes virtual

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

A women's literary club that met for the past 17 years to raise funds for Montreal's Mount Sinai Hospital has successfully transitioned to "virtual" meetings on the web, in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ilona Eliakim, a former librarian at the Akiva School in Westmount, joined the Mount Sinai Hospital Literary Breakfast Club in 2009 shortly after retiring from the school after more than 25 years. She has been the hospital auxiliary's co-president for the past four years.

Eliakim said the literary breakfast club was the idea of club co-chairperson Ellen Fabian, who was known to come up with novel ways to fundraise, both for patient welfare and hospital improvements.

"One day, 17 years ago, Ellen had an epiphany," she said. "The late Robert Adams, book reviewer par excellence, decided to retire. Hundreds of supporters in the Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa regions had lost their literary guru."

The void left by Adams' departure resulted in the emergence of The Mount Sinai Hospital Literary Breakfast Club, said Eliakim. Ellen Fabian and literary club co-



Seen in this pre-pandemic photo from the Mount Sinai Hospital Literary Breakfast Club are some members of the literary committee. From left, Rhoda Bessner, Sheila Lackman (co-chairperson), Ellen Fabian (co-chairperson), Ilona Eliakim and Bea Schacter.

PHOTO COURTESY OF I. ELIAKIM.

chair Sheila Lackman, along with a devoted committee of 12, became the driving force behind the club's success.

According to Eliakim, the club is one of the hospital's most lucrative fundraisers, with a membership of almost 400 people from Montreal and well beyond. However, since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic last spring, the club has had to adjust and reinvent itself. Prior to the pandemic, five reviews a year were scheduled in a beautiful venue, she said, along with a mini breakfast buffet. The combination of breakfast, camaraderie, and engaging book talks, was the perfect brew, propelling the

club's popularity.

But with the emergency of the pandemic this spring, the spring/summer portion of the 2019-2020 series had to be changed, said Eliakim. As such, Zoom webinars became the new modality. The venue transitioned from in-person, to on-screen encounters with authors and/or reviewers.

"It's unbelievable how the momentum we had before has skyrocketed with Zoom," Eliakim said. "People seem to be desperate for this kind of a connection, while at the same time it allows for a continuation of the club."

"There are no limits now to membership attendees, many of whom hail from places beyond Montreal," added Eliakim, noting that authors and qualified professional reviewers can be recruited from anywhere around the world and are usually delighted to take part.

The Mount Sinai Hospital Literary Breakfast Club has five online gatherings planned until next June. The next, on November 25, will feature a review of American author Jeanine Cummins' novel *American Dirt* by Linda Shohet. For subscription information, call Barbara at 514.369.2222 x 1337.

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