

Sports and Rec registration opens Nov. 23

Four programs make winter debut for 2021-2022

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

Four youth and adult programs are being introduced by the city's Sports and Recreation department for their first winter season. Registration for these and many other opens November 23.

The winter first timers are Groove for Kids 7-12, creative writing for anyone 10 years and up, as well as recreational basketball at youth and adult levels, Theatre Dance, and Ballroom Dancing: Solo Latino for people without partners.

"Every year, we try to offer what residents have been asking for," department director Dave Lapointe said.

The Solo Latino is being offered in response to people wanting it as part of a trend that has made its way into the competition world, explained Claude Danis,

program and community services coordinator.

"We've had a lot of demand. Apparently, it's up and coming in the ballroom dancing world and even at the competition level," she explained.

Recreational basketball was introduced for the fall session resulting in a "healthy" waiting list, according to its coordinator, Andrew Maislin. "In the fall and winter, there is limited availability to play basketball so we listened to the requests." When divided in half, the large gym at Westmount High, where basketball takes place, allows for a total of 32 players an hour.

Registration procedures

As of last week, the only change in procedure for the upcoming winter registration for *continued on p. 5*

Toastmasters are back, in person



Westmount Toastmasters president Charles Albaut, at the lectern, speaks during the group's first in-person post-pandemic meeting at Victoria Hall on November 9. See p. 13 for story.

PHOTO: MARTIN C. BARRY.

Usage at 50% vs. pre-pandemic

People 'coming back,' library gets colourful new book drops

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

With a gradual return to "normalcy," Westmount Public Library's book drops have been re-designed and installed November 9 closer to the Sherbrooke St. door and with a lively new colourful look.

"We are happy to have the book drops in their pre-COVID spot under the roof at the front door as opposed to on the front

lawn where the old ones had been relocated to provide physical distancing," said Lora Baiocco, online services and archives librarian.

"We're opening up more and more, and putting things back in place," she said.

The express sign-out near the exit (the Findlay door) is also working well after its launch November 1, explained library director *continued on p. 5*



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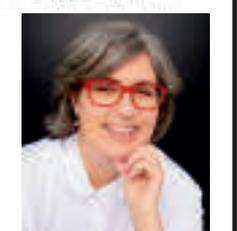
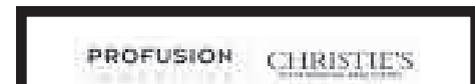
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Two separate incidents, two apprehensions

Suspicious overnight activity leads to arrest, ticketing of known offenders

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Overnight Public Security patrollers recognized and followed two known nighttime offenders in separate incidents a few minutes apart November 3-4.

One was a man already charged with breaking into vehicles at night, who had recently been given court conditions not to go out at night or be in Westmount. The other was a woman known by Public Security for trying to enter unlocked vehicles.

"This shows how effective it is to maintain patrols 24 hours a day," said Public Security director Greg McBain.

Starting at 11:21 pm November 3, an officer patrolling on Côte St. Antoine Rd. kept his eye on the man he knew by sight walking west until he headed into NDG at Claremont. While confirming the man's conditions not to be in Westmount, the officer received and responded to another call.

At 12:46 am, however, now November 4, the officer noticed the man returning to Westmount so parked on Lansdowne to

watch him as he turned north and crossed Westmount Ave. At that point, police were called and were guided to the man's location outside civic number 651, where he was intercepted and arrested. He was identified as a 51-year-old Montreal resident.

Woman caught in car

Meanwhile, at 11:59 pm November 3, a woman described by Public Security officials as known for stealing from cars was spotted on Sherbrooke at Redfern trying door handles of at least five cars before finding one unlocked in a driveway on Metcalfe.

While awaiting police, public safety officers intercepted her in the front seat of the car rummaging through the glove compartment. She was handed over to police but the car owner decided not to press charges. Instead, Public Security issued her a statement of offence (ticket). She was a Montreal resident.

To read about this incident from the police's perspective, see November 9, p. 18.

PSOs arrest graffiti pair after witness photographs them in action

A Westmount resident spotted two people writing graffiti on Alexis Nihon Plaza opposite 4022 St. Catherine November 5 at 10:44 pm and called Public Security, department officials said.

Officers caught up with the two, a woman and a man, as they walked along St. Catherine St. at Metcalfe and police were called. The witness came to the scene and identified them. The pair provided public safety offices with large fat markers they had used for the graffiti.

When police advised the PSOs they

were unable to attend, the two were issued statements of offence (tickets) under the Westmount by-law for \$152 each. Both were aged 20. One lived in Westmount, the other in Montreal.

We welcome your letters

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ROCHELLE CANTOR

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Letters, p. 8

Pet Page, p. 13

Dodge on
October real estate, p. 15

Social Notes:
Neuro's 'Brilliant Night,' p. 17



InfoWestmount, p. 12

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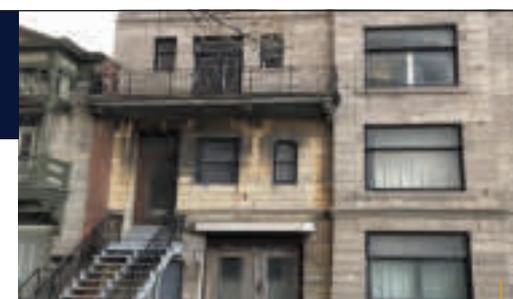
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Remembering, on the day



A group of approximately 60 people observed several minutes of silence at the cenotaph in front of city hall on November 11 at 11 am. There were no speeches or music, although Wilfrid de Freitas read "In Flanders Fields." He has been a proponent of observing Remembrance Day on November 11. Also participating were Westmount's director of Public Security, Greg McBain; personnel from the HMCS Donnacona and approximately 10 students from the École Internationale, part of a larger group that seemed to have been out of school for some other purpose.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.



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Samuel McKenzie chosen

First hockey player of the month for 2020-2021

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The city's player-of-the-month program for youth hockey was resumed last week after a pandemic hiatus with the naming of Samuel McKenzie, 17. He plays with the M18/U18 (Midget) Wings team of the Westmount Minor Hockey Association.

He was chosen for the month of October for "dedication to his team, respect and focus," said Sports and Recreation operations manager Andrew Maislin in announcing the choice of McKenzie.

'Exemplary skills'

"Samuel has demonstrated the exemplary skills that have earned him special recognition," Maislin told the *Independent*. "He is always attentive when his coach is instructing, first on the ice and always takes initiative."

Maislin said that when he was filling in for the coaches recently, "Samuel came out of the dressing room, asked me if I needed anything with regard to the line-ups and demonstrated, first hand, his leadership. It was impressive."

McKenzie began to play in 2011 in Novice A and has remained part of the city's



PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT SPORTS & RECREATION.

teams for this year, which happens to be his last season in minor hockey. "We look forward to seeing what he will accomplish in the future."

Highlighting positive influence

Westmount Minor Hockey is committed to serving the community by highlighting those whose talents have had a positive influence on their teams and peers, Maislin said.

"We believe it is important to acknowledge the opportunities and skills that minor hockey, and sports as a whole, can offer young people. Through hockey, children are able to develop sportsmanship, teamwork and discipline, which they can transfer to other areas of their lives, such as academics and community service."

History

The player-of-the-month program was launched two years ago with recognition of Jake Lubarsky (see story November 19, 2019, p. 1).

Dean Hopley was the last player recognized just as COVID closures began (see March 17, 2020, p. 3).

Sports and Rec, cont'd from p. 1

Sports and Recreation programs is that non-residents will be able to sign up for general skating and general (pick-up) hockey. Like everyone, they will be required to have a vaccine passport except for online programs, said Lapointe.

Entry to all the in-person programs continues to require the passport, with no exceptions or special accommodation regarding unvaccinated parents or guardians, even if they are accompanying younger children, he said. This is known to be a request of at least one parent.

All employees at the WRC have been vaccinated, as is required of volunteers.

Library, cont'd from p. 1

Julie-Anne Cardella.

This allows people who have placed their reservations to spend time in the library before picking up and checking out their material, she said (see story October 26, p. 1).

It eliminates line-ups at the circulation desk especially now that the library numbers are increasing.

Average attendance in October was 400 a day, compared to 800 to 1,000 pre-pandemic.

"50 percent isn't bad. I'm happy people are coming back."

See p. 6 for photo.



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New, but back 'home'



Newly designed book drops were moved to their original location last week at the Westmount Public Library's Sherbrooke-facing entrance. *See story on p. 1.*

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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Police Report**Suspect flees after failed Côte St. Antoine/Grosvenor home invasion**

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

An attempted burglary at a home near the corner of Côte St. Antoine Rd. and Grosvenor Ave. during the late afternoon on November 5 ended when the suspect failed to break down a side door and fled the scene.

A witness spotted the intruder outside the home between 4:15 and 4:45 pm and called 9-1-1 to report it to police.

After attempting to force the door open by ramming it repeatedly with one of his shoulders and his body weight, the perpetrator was seen running westward along Côte St. Antoine Rd.

However, a security camera captured images of the male suspect.

The owner of the dwelling was home at the time.

Wallet lost, found

A maintenance employee working at an apartment building near the corner of St. Catherine St. and Kensington Ave. on the morning of November 8 filed a complaint with Station 12 police that his wallet had possibly been stolen, although it was later found with all the ID and credit cards in place.

According to Station 12 community relations officer Adalbert Pimentel, the employee had stored his personal belongings, including his wallet, in a small locked room designated for maintenance workers when he arrived at 7:55 am.

However, by 10 am he realized the wallet was missing.

Although certain areas of the building were protected by security cameras, the maintenance workers' room was not one of them.

As well, it was determined that the door of the room had remained locked during

the time when the wallet had allegedly gone missing.

Some time after this, an employee of Westmount High School, which is a short distance from the apartment building, reported finding the missing wallet on the ground outside with all its contents in place.

"Nothing was stolen," said Pimentel, noting that the wallet may have been dropped accidentally by its owner at some point, but that there was no other evidence suggesting a theft.

Mystery damage to house's contents

A real estate agent reported on November 6 to police at Station 12 that a vacant house on Westmount's summit that he had been watching over was broken into and some interior furnishings were damaged.

According to the incident report, a glass-top table was found shattered on site and light damage was seen elsewhere in the house.

"It's hard to say when the damage was done," said Pimentel.

"The house had not been maintained for a while, so it's hard to say which damage was recent. But the shattered glass was recent."

The police investigator was unable to determine how the perpetrator entered the vacant dwelling, as no damage could be found on any door. However, "the front door was unlocked," Pimentel added. "But it's possible it was unlocked because there was another point of entry" and it was used as an exit.

Apart from the damage, nothing was stolen from the house, seeing as there had been few if any furnishings in it since the previous occupants left.

Outnumbered!

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SAVE THE ACACIAS, OR AT LEAST THE GROVE

I would like to rise in defence of the acacia trees in and around Murray Park. These acacias are part of an indigenous grove that rightly should be preserved or at least replaced by young trees of the same species.

I noticed your article in the *Independent* (November 2, p. 14), which mentioned the damage done to Murray Park's acacias. I, too, noticed the bark from the trees lying strewn about, several of which are on the city side of our lawn, and deduced it was not the beetles, but [something else]. And the city, according to the article, seems to believe [that some of the trees are dead]. I believe they are not dead, just the victims, as are many of our tree species, of recurring pests. Seemingly the beetles have struck before, as some much older acacias have had portions of their bare trunks painted with a black substance and subsequently have survived for many years.

We are in the midst of a climate crisis and we want to cut down trees?

My second point is that as these trees do eventually die, they should be replaced by young acacias of the same parentage so the indigenous grove can be preserved. The city maintains it cannot find replacements in nurseries, and it can only buy a variant of the tree. They should look on our lawns, where they re-seed and sprout almost as readily as grass seeds do, and subsequently grow very quickly.

We grow banana trees in our conservatory and can't raise our own acacias? Or ask Westmounters to donate seedlings

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



from their properties?

Their presence in late spring as they bloom perfumes the neighbourhood and their shade in summer is enjoyed by many visitors to the park.

GAIL JARISLOWSKY, MURRAY AVE.

MERCI POUR LES ARBRES

J'aimerais remercier la Ville de Westmount ou son Service d'Horticulture d'avoir planté, il y a quelques semaines, quatre arbres au coin des rues Windsor et Prince-Albert. Un arbre sur chaque coin. Je crois que c'est une initiative assez rare, mais, j'ose espérer que ça deviendra assez rapidement une norme. Merci encore. • I would like to thank the city of Westmount or its horticultural division for planting four trees at the corner of Windsor and Prince Albert streets a few weeks

ago. One tree on each corner. I think this is a pretty rare initiative, but hopefully it will become a sort of norm pretty quickly. Thanks again.

NELSON MORIN, RUE WINDSOR

PROPER MAINTENANCE AND AN INDOOR POOL, PLEASE

I strongly believe that grandiose projects have and are being pushed because they get attention and enhance career prospects. What we all need is proper maintenance of our cute little town. Roads that do not destroy cars, trees that do not fall on people/property, sidewalks that are safe for old and young, new building guidelines that do not bankrupt owners trying to keep up their properties, a park that serves the multiple needs of its citizens/birds/animals that congregate there; not an unusable showcase model.

And, we need a year-round pool for our young "Dolphins" and our older residents to stay physically and mentally healthy. A previous city administration managed to construct not one, but two, underground hockey skating rinks (the only ones in North America) and since then, the city administrations cannot even get the plans off the ground for a much-needed indoor pool. We are practically the only community on the island of Montreal without this basic essential.

What we are really good at is doing ill-designed surveys, keeping the findings secret when they do not support the council's collective opinion and ignoring what is most important to Westmount citizens. No one wants to live in a crumbling environment.

I knew Maria Tutino as a client when she worked at Télébec and afterwards as a friend. She was and is a go-getter and doer. I do not know for a fact, but I imagine she ruffled quite a few feathers during her long stint as mayor of Baie d'Urfé. Nevertheless, the majority of the citizens wanted what she had to offer to their town. This is the type of courage, that I, as a taxpayer, believe

we deserve here as well from our mayor and councillors representing our interests.

K. SUNNE, BURTON AVE.

Editor's comment: So renovating a park, six decades after its last major facelift, will make it into a "grandiose" "showcase model," but a new indoor public pool in a city that has never had one is a "basic essential"? One, both or neither of these things might be good (and/or depend on the details of the exact plan proposed), but these word choices are tendentious and, in the end, not descriptive of reality. Where's George Orwell when you need him? - DP.

LOWER THE FLAGS, REMEMBER ON THE DAY

I have just returned from the Westmount cenotaph, where I observed with many others, in the presence of four members of the Canadian Armed Forces, a minute of silence at 11 am on November 11 to remember our veterans and not break faith with them.

I was appalled that Westmount's mayor and councillors decided that they could move Remembrance Day ceremonies to November 6. Did they not realize that we remember the armistice on November 11 at 11 am each year because that is the date and time when it took effect? But that emotion pales beside the anger and outrage I felt when I arrived at the cenotaph to see that the city of Westmount had failed to lower to half mast the flags in front of city hall and at the Westmount cenotaph.

How can we expect generations to come to remember the sacrifice of so many, the context of that sacrifice and the need to avoid the horrors of war if our city fails to understand the significance of 11 am on November 11?

Shame on the city of Westmount! I trust that in the future it will observe Remembrance Day on Remembrance Day and show the respect that tradition and the public expect and deserve.

CATHERINE DUFF-CARON,
DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

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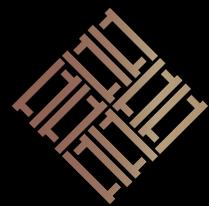
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Correction: Gallery councillor in District 6

Mary Gallery is the city councillor for District 6, contrary to what we wrote last week on p. 12.

As we wrote in our November 2 edition (p. 12), District 6 consists of the territory between Melville and the east city limits and from Sherbrooke south to de Maisonneuve with a "bump-out" down to St. Catherine that includes the large apartment buildings at 250 Clarke and 4300 de Maisonneuve as well as another involving the condos at 215 Redfern. It also includes #1 Wood and excludes Alexis Nihon.

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Overheard

Woman to woman, October 15, 5 pm: “Just like you can’t barge into a tenant’s apartment – just because he’s dating your daughter, you can’t just barge in.”

Prince Albert and Winchester, October 21, 4 pm: “I don’t mind if the dog barks, if he is saying something.”

Woman into her phone, Grosvenor and Sherbrooke, October 22, 12 noon: “I have had techs that were very good ones, and I have had ones that were trying to poke my brain.”

Man to woman, Grosvenor and The Boulevard, November 9, 8 am: “... for throwing rocks at ...”

One child to other children playing on the climbing equipment in Westmount Park, November 11, 10:40 am: “And who is Luke Skywalker ...?”

St-Jean wins council seat

Election results in Beaconsfield have Westmount angle

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Former Westmount city clerk and director of legal services Martin St-Jean was voted in as a councillor to serve the West Island community of Beaconsfield in its District 2 south of Highway 20 where he lives.

As city clerk, he had served as Westmount’s returning officer during the 2017 election.

St-Jean defeated an incumbent on a platform that included a call for city council members to play a greater role in managing city affairs.

He was quoted in the local newspaper as saying: “I think we need to re-centre and re-frame the role of councillors to allow them to have more influence on the direction and the orientation the city can take at a given moment.”

He also said the first step in improving transparency was to make information on important city issues more widely available to the public especially on hot-button issues.

History in Westmount

St-Jean resigned from Westmount in 2019 after reaching an agreement with the city (see story June 11, 2019, p. 1).

He had joined in 2015 after serving as a Montreal prosecutor during the Charbonneau Commission (see story and photo August 11, 2015 p. 2).

The re-elected mayor of Beaconsfield, Georges Bourelle, has been spearheading a legal effort by suburban mayors to reduce the suburbs’ share of Montreal agglomeration payments (*quotes-part*) to reflect services actually provided by the agglomeration.

More acacia news



Murray Park’s acacias have been in the news this month (see p. 8 and November 2, p. 14). In addition, reader Lena Atlas has noticed an acacia with what she contends is another type of tree growing out of it. Can readers provide the name of this species?

PHOTOS COURTESY OF L. ATLAS.

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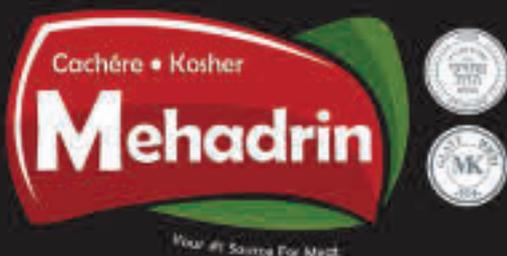
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Patinoire réfrigérée du parc Westmount ouverte

De retour à la demande populaire! La patinoire réfrigérée du parc Westmount est maintenant ouverte tous les jours de 8 h à 22 h pour le patinage libre. Le port du masque facial est recommandé. westmount.org

Réouverture de bâtiments municipaux

Les bureaux de l'hôtel de ville, de la sécurité publique et des travaux publics sont désormais ouverts au public. Le port du masque facial est requis. Les services municipaux sont toujours disponibles en ligne. westmount.org

Sports et loisirs : l'inscription pour les activités d'hiver débute le 23 novembre

Inscription en ligne seulement. Consultez le guide des activités à westmount.org.

Collecte de sang le 24 novembre

Mercredi 24 novembre, 13 h 30 à 19 h 30, Victoria Hall. Sur rendez-vous seulement : jedonne@hema-quebec.qc.ca / 1 800 343-7264.

Sondage - projet du parc Westmount

Les résultats du troisième sondage concernant le projet de revitalisation du parc Westmount sont disponibles sur engagewestmount.org.

Grippe saisonnière : pas de clinique de vaccination à Westmount en 2021

Il n'y aura pas de clinique de vaccination mobile au Victoria Hall cet automne. Le CLSC Métro offre la vaccination contre l'influenza sur rendez-vous seulement dans quatre sites. Réservez sur clicsante.ca ou à 514 270-1536. ciusscentreouest.ca

Élections municipales 2021 : résultats

Félicitations aux membres du nouveau conseil municipal et à tou.te.s les candidat.e.s qui ont participé aux élections. Visitez westmount.org pour connaître les résultats détaillés du vote.

Passeport vaccinal COVID-19

La preuve de vaccination contre la COVID-19 est requise pour certaines activités au Centre des loisirs de Westmount, à la Bibliothèque publique de Westmount et au Victoria Hall.

BIBLIOTHÈQUE

Visiter la Bibliothèque

Les documents suivants sont requis pour entrer à la Bibliothèque :

- carte de membre valide
 - passeport vaccinal (13 ans et +)
 - pièce d'identité avec photo (13 ans et +)
- Vous devez accepter les exigences et conditions avant de vous présenter. westlib.org

Système de réservations libre-service

Un nouveau système de réservations en libre-service est en place. westlib.org.

Galerie du Victoria Hall : exposition

Du 16 novembre au 14 décembre. Une exposition des oeuvres de l'artiste Mary Lou Freel. Passeport vaccinal requis.

Conférence - The Dawn of Egyptian Civilization: Egypt's First Pharaoh

Jeudi 18 novembre, 13 h, Victoria Hall.

Avec Hassan Elshafei. Inscription et passeport vaccinal obligatoires. westlib.org

Ciné-club : Minari (2020)

Mardi 23 novembre, 14 h, Victoria Hall. Inscription et passeport vaccinal requis. westmount.org

Discussions au coin du feu avec Mitch Joel

Mercredi 24 novembre, 20 h, sur le compte YouTube bibliowestmount. En conversation avec Nadia Lakhdari, auteure.

Fêtes en folie au Square Prince-Albert

Jeudi 25 novembre, 17 h. Joignez-vous à nous pour l'illumination du sapin, musique, chocolat chaud et encore plus.

Trousses de bricolages pour les enfants

Lundi 6 décembre. Pain d'épice. Inscris-toi à westlib.org. Le nombre de places est limité.

NEWS

NEXT COUNCIL
MEETING

Monday, December 6



Westmount Park refrigerated skating rink open

Back by popular demand! The outdoor refrigerated ice rink in Westmount Park is now open daily from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. for general skating. Face masks are recommended. westmount.org

Reopening of municipal buildings

The offices of City Hall, Public Safety and Public Works are now open to the public. Face masks are required. Municipal services remain available online. westmount.org

Sports & Recreation: registration for winter activities begins November 23

Online registration only. Consult the activities guide at westmount.org.

Blood Donor Clinic November 24

Wednesday, November 24, 1:30 to 7:30 p.m., Victoria Hall. By appointment only at igive@hema-quebec.qc.ca / 1 800 343-7264.

Westmount Park Project Survey

The results of the third survey concerning the Westmount Park revitalization project are available at engagewestmount.org.

Seasonal flu vaccination: no clinic in Westmount in 2021

There will not be a mobile vaccination clinic at Victoria Hall this fall. The CLSC Métro is offering the flu vaccination by appointment only at four sites on its territory. Book your appointment at clicsante.ca or at 514 270-1536. ciusscentreouest.ca

2021 Municipal Election results

Congratulations to the members of Westmount's new City council and to all of the candidates that took part in the election. Visit westmount.org to consult the detailed voting results.

COVID-19 vaccination passport

Proof of vaccination against COVID-19 is required for certain activities that take place at the Westmount Recreation Centre, the Westmount Public Library, and Victoria Hall.

LIBRARY

Visiting the Library

The following documents are required to enter the Library:

- valid membership card
- vaccine passport (ages 13+)
- photo ID (ages 13+)

You must agree to the requirements and conditions prior to your arrival. westlib.org

Self-Serve Pickup System

A new self-serve reservation and pickup system is now in place. westlib.org.

Gallery at Victoria Hall: exhibition

November 16 to December 14. A solo exhibition by artist Mary Lou Freel. Vaccination passport required.

Lecture - The Dawn of Egyptian Civilization: Egypt's First Pharaoh

Thursday, November 18, 1 p.m., Victoria Hall.

With Hassan Elshafei. Registration and vaccination passport required. westlib.org.

Film Club: Minari (2020)

Tuesday, November 23, 2 p.m., Victoria Hall. Registration and vaccination passport required. westmount.org

Fireside Chats with Mitch Joel

Wednesday, November 24, 8 p.m. on the bibliowestmount YouTube account. In conversation with author Nadia Lakhdari.

Prince Albert Square Holiday Happening

Thursday, November 25, 5 p.m. Join us for the tree lighting, music, hot chocolate and more.

Take & make craft kits for kids

Monday, December 6. Gingerbread. Sign up at westlib.org. Space is limited.



Honey Puppy

Westmount
A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER



2022 calendars available online now!

The stunning 2022 Montreal SPCA calendars are available for home and gifting through its website www.sPCA.com. They are ordered online and sent to your home directly, so please do not delay to make sure they are received in time for the holidays! The funds raised by the sale of their new annual calendar will allow them to help more animals in need, in their mission for animal healthcare, rescues and programs. Please order now!

Tiger kitten



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Yes, we are presenting young candidates for adoption from the Montreal SPCA this week, as it is so important to give them a chance at a caring and playful home environment where they grow up more confident.

Here is Tiger, as you can see a young classic shorthaired tabby cat in shades of grey and black. He has such fascinating green eyes, quite the contrast even though

he is still little!

Tiger is a very healthy kitten, up to date on his inoculation schedule, neutered and microchipped. He is available now at the Montreal SPCA cattery and it is important to note the new adoption procedure.

To enquire for Tiger's adoption, we must now refer to its website www.sPCA.com, then go to his adoption information page under identification number 49047725, and apply in the online form, which will lead to booking an appointment.

You will only be introduced to an animal awaiting adoption at the time of your visit, when well matched to your profile. There is no reservation process, so it is most important to apply for Tiger's adoption swiftly.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne



Toastmasters hold first meeting at Victoria Hall since pandemic

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

The Westmount Toastmasters held their first in-person meeting since the beginning of the COVID pandemic at Victoria Hall on November 9, with a few members taking part over a Zoom teleconference channel virtually.

While Toastmasters International was founded in the U.S. in 1924 for the purpose of promoting good public speaking and leadership, the Westmount Toastmasters held their first meeting in 1997.

Although people come to Westmount Toastmasters for a range of reasons, the club's current president, Charles Albaut, said his decision to join in early 2020 had a fair amount to do with challenging himself.

"It was about finding a new challenge and dealing with things that make me uncomfortable," he told the *Independent*. "And public speaking makes me the most un-

comfortable still to this date.

"That's why I like this environment that constantly challenges you," he added. "It has the added bonus of focusing on leadership, which is a huge and important aspect, and I think it helps me in a lot of aspects of my life."

Even though this was the first in-person Westmount Toastmasters meeting to be held since March last year the members managed to meet since then through teleconferences.

Non-English speakers improving command of language

What was clear from last week's meeting was that a significant number of the members are people whose first language isn't English, but who want to improve their command of the language through a disciplined method.

The meetings are highly structured and focus on members helping each other to im-

prove their public speaking abilities through speech-making, detailed criticism, friendly competition and confidence building.

"It really gives you the ability to focus on specific aspects of your public speaking skills that you want to develop," said Albaut. "You get to practise skills that you learn in a safe, supportive environment in front of an expert audience who give you good feedback."

Westmount resident Christopher Herten-Greaven has been a member since January 2018. After a health issue forced him into retirement, he found himself looking for something to do for self-improvement.

Olga Hanchuk, a founding member of the Westmount Toastmasters, remains a steady presence at the weekly meetings, providing guidance and mentorship to newcomers.

The Westmount Toastmasters meet every Tuesday from 7 to 9 pm in a room

on the second floor at Victoria Hall. Membership, which is payable in October, is \$258 annually, with four free introductory sessions for guests wishing to try things out before signing up.

See photo, p. 1.

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Azrieli Foundation announces \$50 million for Weizmann

Coming soon to Rehovot: Azrieli Institute for Brain and Neural Sciences

The Azrieli Foundation announced a US\$50-million donation November 7 to the Weizmann Institute of Science and Weizmann Canada “to help humanity unlock the mysteries of the brain,” according to a press release from the institute.

“The donation is among the largest of its kind for the Canadian-based Azrieli Foundation and will establish The Azrieli Institute for Brain and Neural Sciences at the Weizmann Institute,” continued the release.

The new entity will be located at the Weizmann Institute campus in Rehovot, Israel and will promote a full spectrum of neuroscience research, from basic “curios-

ity-driven” studies to “translational work of high clinical relevance.”

The Azrieli Foundation has already given approximately US\$30 million to the

institute. Weizmann Canada has an office in Westmount and its CEO, Susan Stern, was featured in a profile in the *Independent's* June 9, 2020 issue (p. 21).



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Westmounters: from left, top, Naomi Azrieli, chair and CEO of Azrieli Foundation at the November 7 announcement in Montreal, which occurred concurrently with an announcement in Israel. Anne-Marie Boucher and Mitch Garber. Susan Stern, CEO, Weizmann Canada, and Michael Stern. Below, Valeria Rosenbloom and Stephanie Azrieli, and Bobby Maruvada and Sharon Azrieli.

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October sales: Volume strong with lower prices



Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

Note: The following article relates to offers to purchase Westmount residential dwellings that were reported by local real estate agents as having been accepted in October, 2021. Because they are not final registered sales, the addresses cannot be made public, but give a good idea of current trends in local real estate activity. The graph at right offers a picture of these trends over time.

Volume remained strong but the raw average house price in Westmount actually dipped below \$2 million in October, as 13 sales agreements were posted by local agents who reported an average price of \$1,966,154, the first time the average price has been less than \$2 million since April 2020.

In addition, the October sales averaged 28 percent higher than municipal valuation, the lowest average mark-up since May, but once adjustments are made for extreme sales, the average adjusted price appears to be holding its own. For a house with an evaluation of \$1,936,000, the statistics tell us, owners might expect to get something over \$2,600,000.

In October, the highest price was only \$3,700,000 while another summit-area house price was recorded late for September with a price tag of \$5,125,000, thus making it the highest price for that month. The lowest October price was \$1,270,000. Significantly, only four of the 13 sales were priced over \$2 million, but the average mark-up over valuation was 28.6 percent and none of the sales involved mark-downs from tax value.

The average listing spent 73 days on the market, and perhaps more important, the median length of time was only 36 days – a little more than a month – meaning this is still a “seller’s market.” Bidding wars were not uncommon and few asking prices had to be reduced before sales were negotiated.

Condos

Among condominiums, six more were sold in October with an average price of \$1,061,667. The average has been over \$1 million since early last year, and the “adjusted” value of Westmount condos has been over \$1 million since the first quarter of 2019.

Condo prices ranged from \$500,000 to \$1,450,000; the highest mark-up was 35.6 percent, but there were two marked-down

Average adjusted price for ‘typical’ Westmount house, by month, January 2016 to October 2020, based on accepted offer dates



properties, one at 285 Clarke Ave. and the other at 200 Lansdowne Ave, the latter some 8.2 percent less than valuation.

As the holiday season approaches, listings (at least for houses) are starting to dwindle, down from 84 in mid-October to

81 a month later, though the number asking between \$1 million and \$2 million actually grew to 18 from 14. Another 11 houses are available for rent, down only one in the past month, for houses asking rates between \$3,000 and \$14,900.

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Schwey tells Rotarians that seniors pay their way, despite increase as percentage of population

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Do Canada's senior citizens use up the country's health care resources to an extent some might consider excessive?

That was the question that crusading seniors' advocate Linda Schwey wanted an answer to.

"I didn't think so," she told the Westmount Rotarians during their weekly noon-hour webcast on October 27.

"But it looked as though we were being blamed for it," and seniors were getting "a bad rap," she continued.

Schwey, a former federal Liberal Party of Canada candidate in Châteauguay who is currently policy chair for the Quebec wing's Seniors Liberal Commission, said her research suggested seniors were living longer and were in better health than 50 years earlier.

Health care dominating budgets?

However, she said Canadian society's overall attitude towards public health care began to change when the focus shifted to rising costs, and predictions were made that provincial budgets would consist almost entirely of public health care expenses in the future.

"Now, I even at that time thought this to be incorrect and or exaggerated," said Schwey, while adding that she wasn't able to refute the argument. But the more she looked into it, the more it seemed to her as though calculations and policies were being made based on statistics from the 1960s.

Among other things, she took issue with the idea, based on the observation the workforce was shrinking, that there wouldn't be enough of a tax base left to provide support for public health care "and that we were slowly heading towards a crisis."

She also maintained that evaluations of



Linda Schwey on the October 27 webcast.

the situation were being made based on suppositions made in the early 1960s.

"Is it possible that what five workers accomplished in 1960 could easily be done by two workers in 2017?" she wondered, while noting that the influence of immigration also didn't seem to figure much in the other side's arguments.

While Canada's population was 17 million in 1960 when seniors accounted for 7.5 per cent, by 2017 the population had reached 33 million of which 15 per cent were seniors.

"When no one was looking, the senior population in Canada grew from two million in 1975, to over six million today," she

said, noting that seniors now account for 17 per cent of Canada's population.

By 2030, it is estimated they will number 9.5 million and will be 23 per cent of the population.

Schwey's theory is that with the federal and provincial taxes they pay, "seniors probably pay for their own health care or close to it," she said.

Another of her theories is that "seniors are a largely self-supporting group in the population who through their longevity and good health manage to contribute income taxes, but especially sales taxes, which provide the health care they need."



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Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

A Brilliant Night shines again

Many of their family members had been treated by **Dr. Kevin Petrecca**, chief of the department of Neurosurgery at the McGill University Health Centre and head of the Brain Tumour Research Centre.

The volunteers decided to support Petrecca's cancer research. Thanks to their efforts, in 2020 his lab published the results of the largest-ever single cancer cell RNA sequencing project in the esteemed journal

Nature Communication. For the first time, researchers detected a cell type from which all other cancer cells develop.

By targeting this cell, it may be possible to halt or reverse cancer growth. Added to the \$5.1 million net raised since 2015, the evening's impressive result of \$948,577 will help move the research forward.

Honorary committee members were **Sébastien Fournier**, vp Corporation Fiera Capital; **Ivan Boulva**, vp development, Cadillac Fairview Corp. Ltd. (husband of co-founder Marie-Claude Lacroix, in memory of their son Francis Boulva); **Madeleine Paquin**, president/CEO of Logistec; Dr. Kevin Petrecca, chief of Neurosurgery at the MUHC and group leader of The Neuro's Brain Tumour Research Centre (in attendance with his wife **Myriam Douville**); **Lorena Cook**, co-founder Sarah's Fund, Cedar's Cancer Foundation; **Olivier Boulva**, partner Kiera Capital Partners and **Frédéric Gauthier**, president RunSSoft Technologies.

Noted amidst the chic crowd were **Mario Rigante**, BMO regional president, Quebec, BMO Private Wealth; **Dax Da Silva**, CEO Lightspeed; **Luc Bisailon**, managing director national client group RBC; **Tony Fata**, president Sager Foods; **Éric Montminy**, *continued on p. 18*



Aniele Lecoq, Brigitte and David Eidelman, Guy Rouleau, Monique Polak, Pierre Gfeller and Alexandre Le Bouthillier.

Finally, a fundraising event!

And what an elegant affair it was. A Brilliant Night, the Neuro's annual brain cancer fundraiser, was the first in-person version of the event since the beginning of the pandemic.

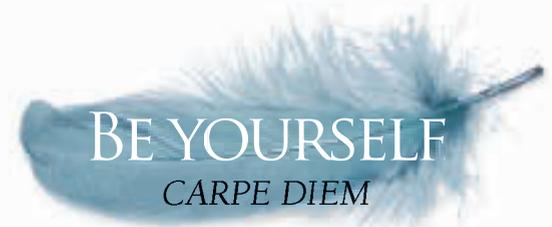
Adhering to health restrictions, the organizing committee chose the indoor-outdoor Jardin Royalmount as the venue. Crowds were kept to a minimum by dividing the event into two timeslots, and participants wore masks when not eating or drinking.

After cocktails, the evening proceeded with a theatre performance (written by Trevor Barrette and directed by Jonathan Peterson) based on survivors' and families' accounts of their experiences with brain cancer.

A Brilliant Night was co-founded in 2015 by Westmounters **Suzanne Wexler** (soon joined by her sister **Alana Wexler**), **Heidi Small** and **Marie-Claude Lacroix** after losing family members to glioblastoma, a deadly form of brain cancer with low life expectancy.



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Social notes, cont'd from p. 17

president Normandin Beaudry; **Joyce and Alan Schwartz**, executive vp Dorel Industries; **Aniele Lecoq**, executive director of philanthropy, The Neuro; **Brigitte and Dr. David Eidelman**, vp health affairs and dean of the faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at McGill University; **Dr. Guy Rouleau**, director of The Neuro, with **Monique Polak**; **Dr. Pierre Gfeller**, president/executive director MUHC; **Alexandre Le Bouthillier**, co-founder/COO, Imagia and long-time Neuro supporters **Suzanne De Grandpré** and **Lucy Riddell**.

Also seen were **Michèle Plourde** and **Eric La Flèche**, president/CEO Metro, Inc.; **Mitch Kendall**, Kendall Family Foundation; and **Peter Lombardi**, chair Construction C.A.L.

Westmounters enjoying the night included doctors **Abraham Wexler**, **Brian**

Potter (with **Lea Cristante**), **Howard Schwartz**, **David Hauerstock**, and **Vincent J. Lacroix** and his wife **Cynthia Carsley** with their son **Maxime Lacroix**.

Main sponsors were BMO Banque de Montreal, CIBC, National Bank, Desjardins, Morris and Rosalind Goodman Family Foundation, Constructions CAL, Courchesne Larose, Les Entreprises d'Électricité EG Ltée., Logistec, Metro, Plomberie Charbonneau Inc, The Rossy Foundation and KPMG.

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Sébastien Fournier, Ivan Boulva, Madeleine Paquin, Dr. Kevin Petrecca, Eric La Flèche, Alexandre Le Bouthillier and Peter Lombardi.



Michèle Des Groseillers, Suzanne Wexler and Caroline Savoie.



Marie-Claude Lacroix and her husband Ivan Boulva with Wendy Sculnick.



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PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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