

Registration starts March 16 Sports & Rec. opens up more Zoom programs for spring

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The city's Sports and Recreation department is expanding its Zoom programs for spring registration, which starts online March 16. These will continue for the spring session, April and May, regardless of whatever loosening of COVID restrictions on team activities may be announced by the Quebec government, department officials said last week.

At that time, however, general skating and Stick & Puck were the only "active" activities being offered at the Westmount recreation centre (WRC), on changing schedules.

"It's not our typical 10-week spring program," explained department director Dave Lapointe, but even with any provincial government pandemic changes, "we're provid-

ing some new Zoom programs for youth and bringing back others in all age groups."

Meanwhile, "we're hoping we might be able to provide baseball and soccer" (see separate story, below).

Among the new Zoom programs are four of the seven being offered for youth. These include creative writing for ages 10 and over; Kids Boot Camp for all ages; soccer skills and drills for all ages; and one called "story time, sing-along and crafts" for those aged 6 to 9.

The 13 programs offered to adults include belly dancing and tap dancing, which had been offered previously but not in the recent winter program.

Four activities geared to seniors include fitness, gentle stretch and strengthen, gentle yoga *continued on p. 16*

Remembering COVID victims



The city had its flags at half staff March 11, including these at the Westmount Public Library, to remember all those who have died of COVID in the last year. Both the country and province also used this one-year anniversary of the World Health Organization declaring COVID a pandemic to commemorate the dead. See story, p. 3.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

Waiting for pandemic guidelines, hiring staff

City plans to provide last summer's rec offerings – at least

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

There are hopes the provincial government's restrictions on this summer's sporting activities will be less stringent than last summer, Sports and Recreation director Dave Lapointe said last week and the department is already planning ahead based on last year – at least.

The hiring of pool lifeguards and staff

for the youth day camps is under way, but "like last year, we're putting everyone on hold" until the requirements are known.

"We learned a lot from last year," he said, "and hope that this summer we'll be less limited in the numbers we can accommodate at the pool and at the camps," and maybe even provide soccer and baseball, he suggested.

The April 1 schedule *continued on p. 17*



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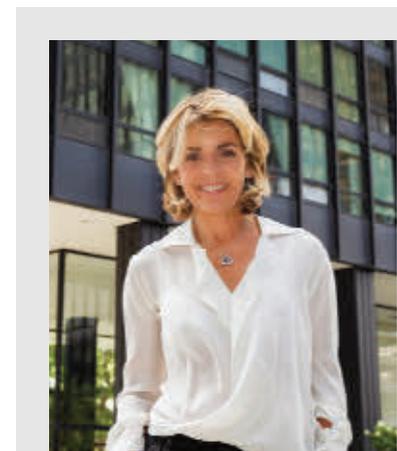


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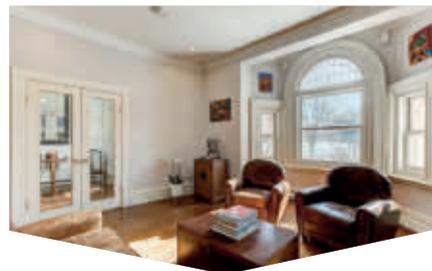

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Remembering victims of COVID City lowers flags in commemoration of year of turmoil

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

After a year of roller-coaster pandemic closures, partial re-openings and on-and-off restricted activities, Westmount joined municipalities across Canada in lowering all flags last Thursday, March 11. It was a national day of observance since it was on that day one year ago that COVID-19 was declared a world-wide epidemic by the World Health Organization (WHO).

After a year that for many led to isolation, uncertainty, grief and a toll on frontline workers, the topsy-turvy impact continued to provide an unknown return to regular municipal activities, programs and meetings.

Starting with the closure to the public of municipal buildings on Friday March

13, 2020, city officials were still left a year later grappling with the uncertainty whether or not some team sports such as soccer or even eventually hockey will be able to open this year (see separate stories, p. 1).

“I want to thank our city employees for their diligence, professionalism and flexibility,” Mayor Christina Smith said while pointing out their own family needs as they maintaining services, many of them in essential areas.

In response to a need to be “active for mental well-being,” at this time, the city this week, March 16, presented a Zoom program with motivational speaker Danièle Sauvageau (gold-medal winning Olympic coach of the Canadian women’s hockey team).



In this photo from the *Independent* of March 17, 2020, motivational speaker Danièle Sauvageau, right, who led the Canadian women’s hockey team to its first-ever medal in 2000, is shown with Margot Duffar, who was 9 at the time. Duffar was the first girl to be named Westmount’s player of the month, in January 2020. Sauvageau was to be presented in a Zoom feature from the city on the importance of being active and integrating physical activity into daily life.

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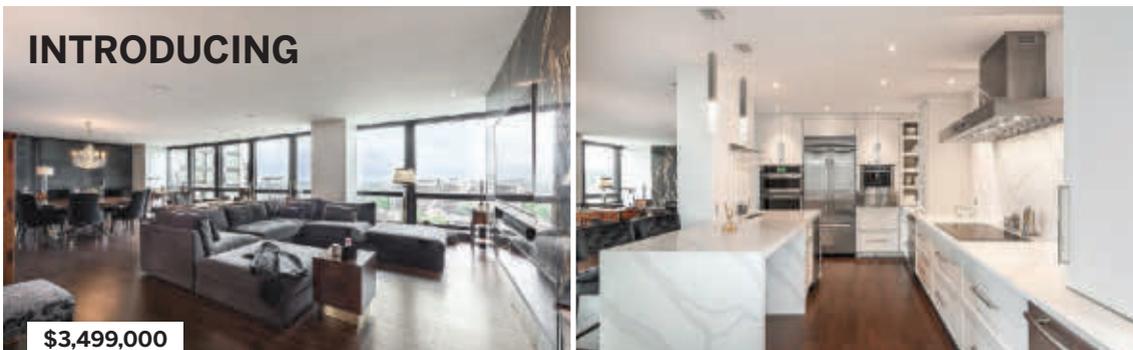
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Unveils its new logo

Westmount Soccer Club starts registering for 2021

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The Westmount Soccer Club is already planning for the 2021 season to build on the success of last summer's program, according to club president Doug Hamilton. Enrolment began last week at www.westmountsoccer.org for girls born 2006 to 2014, and boys born 2000 to 2014.

While awaiting official COVID go-ahead from the Quebec government and Soccer Quebec, which governs the league, "we do hope to start as usual sometime in May, and once again offer a full complement of age-level teams," Hamilton said.

Games got off to a late start last year in July due to delayed government criteria but they were able to continue until late September.

The club is an independent, parent-run organization that plays on Westmount's fields during the summer after the end of the city's spring league. It offers an intercity soccer program and structured development by trained coaches for younger players.

Anyone interested in coaching would be welcome and can apply through the club's website, Hamilton said.

"Although we had fewer teams last year,



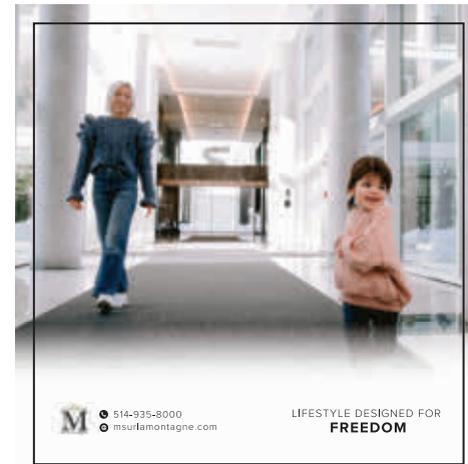
it turned out to be one of our most successful seasons, judging from a slightly higher satisfaction rate of 96 percent from our annual survey. Obviously, we can't predict the

impact that COVID will have this year, but if all goes well, we hope to have something close to a regular season."

He also hopes that an adult team can be formed. This one plays in an under-age-35 league during the evening and is open to all males born in 1999 and before. The games are played in other municipalities because they require lighted fields, which Westmount lacks.

This year, the club has a new logo after a competition in the fall to design a new one for its team jerseys and merchandise. The winning concept was selected by a committee of parents that included Mayor Christina Smith, whose younger daughter, Isabel, played on the U8 girls' team last year.

"The winner was a mother, Emel Ercengiz Umruk, and son Deniz who played on our U13 team last year after four seasons with our club. The Umruk family returned to Turkey late last year. Mr. Umruk had been the consul general here."



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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR:

ONE YEAR OF COVID-19

It is hard to believe that it is a year since the start of the pandemic. Last March it never occurred to any of us that today we would be living in our individual bubbles, working from home, physically distancing, wearing masks and washing our hands several times a day. I know it has been particularly tough on our seniors who have been confined to their homes and have gone a year without hugging their children or grandchildren.

While we must continue to be vigilant, the good news is that the recent launch of the public vaccination program provides hope and reason for optimism.

As we reflect on the past year, **I want to thank our City employees for their diligence, professionalism and flexibility.** While caring for their own families and juggling the demands of work, homeschooling their children and supporting elderly parents, they continued to ensure our needs were met. Our Administrative team rethought how to provide services and developed effective and customer-friendly approaches and solutions. The staff at Public Works kept our roads and parks clean, while Public Security shopped for seniors and checked in on our most vulnerable. The Library and Community events team taught us that the library is more than just books – it is the heart of our community. The Sports and Recreation team has done its best to keep us physically active, offering a wide range of programming on-line and innovating with initiatives like our new refrigerated skating rink in Westmount Park and toboggan runs at King George Park with man-made snow.

On a personal note, I wish to thank my colleagues on City Council for their support and their laser-like focus on finding creative solutions to the challenges we faced.

What has impressed me the most throughout this ordeal is the thoughtfulness and kindness of our neighbours. We are so grateful to our health-care workers, particularly those on the front lines who have put their own well-being at risk for the safety of others. We are full of admiration for staff at grocery stores and pharmacies, who have ensured we continue to benefit from essential services. We marvel at our local entrepreneurs, who have adapted and innovated in order to stay afloat. And, of course, we are inspired by the community spirit and compassion of Westmounters who have been reaching out to one another, checking-in on the elderly and buying groceries for shut-ins.

So many times, over the past year I have witnessed the absolute best in people. Seeing the Rabbi quietly shopping early in the morning for seniors at Metro. Hearing stories of younger residents making vaccine appointments for their elderly neighbours. Watching the teachers in our community go the extra mile for their students and use our parks and greenspaces as their classrooms. Residents making food for the community of Cabot Square and supporting the work of Resilience. These people are the heroes of COVID-19.

In looking ahead, I urge everyone to be vaccinated as soon as they are eligible. At the same time, let's begin thinking about Westmount after the pandemic and how we will incorporate the lessons learned into our programming and activities.

More than ever, we appreciate that our parks and greenspaces are the hub of our communal activities, that supporting our local commercial areas is critical to the vitality of our city and that on-line services are an effective way of reaching Westmounters.

But perhaps the most important lesson is that our strength is our community spirit and our commitment to supporting and watching out for each other, especially our most vulnerable.

Christina M. Smith
Mayor of the City of Westmount





Membres de l'équipe des Travaux publics



Membres de l'équipe de la Sécurité publique

MESSAGE DE LA MAIRESSE :

UNE ANNÉE DE LA COVID-19

Il est difficile de croire que cela fait un an que la pandémie a commencé. En mars dernier, il n'est venu à l'esprit d'aucun d'entre nous qu'aujourd'hui nous vivrions dans nos bulles individuelles, travaillerions de la maison, pratiquerions la distanciation physique, porterions des masques et nous laverions les mains plusieurs fois par jour.

Je sais que cela a été particulièrement difficile pour nos aînés qui ont été confinés chez eux et qui ont passé une année sans prendre leurs enfants ou leurs petits-enfants dans leurs bras.

Bien que nous devons continuer à être vigilants, la bonne nouvelle est que le lancement récent du programme de vaccination publique donne de l'espoir et des raisons d'être optimiste.

Alors que nous réfléchissons à l'année écoulée, **je tiens à remercier nos employés municipaux pour leur diligence, leur professionnalisme et leur flexibilité.** Tout en s'occupant de leur propre famille et en jonglant avec les exigences du travail, en faisant l'école à la maison à leurs enfants et en soutenant leurs parents âgés, ils ont continué à veiller à ce que nos besoins soient satisfaits. Notre équipe administrative a repensé la manière dont nous fournissons nos services et a élaboré des approches et des solutions efficaces et conviviales. Le personnel des Travaux publics a veillé à la propreté de nos routes et de nos parcs, tandis que la Sécurité publique a fait les courses pour les personnes âgées et s'est occupée des plus vulnérables. L'équipe de la Bibliothèque et des événements communautaires nous a appris que la bibliothèque est plus que de simples livres – elle est le cœur de notre communauté. L'équipe des sports et loisirs a fait de son mieux pour que nous restions physiquement actifs, en offrant un large éventail de programmes en ligne et en innovant avec des initiatives comme notre nouvelle patinoire réfrigérée au parc Westmount et les pistes de toboggan au parc King George avec de la neige artificielle.

Sur une note plus personnelle, je tiens à remercier mes collègues du conseil municipal pour leur soutien et leur capacité à trouver des solutions créatives aux défis auxquels nous avons été confrontés.

Ce qui m'a le plus impressionné tout au long de cette épreuve, c'est la prévenance et la gentillesse de nos voisins. Nous sommes très reconnaissants envers nos travailleurs de la santé, en particulier ceux qui sont en première ligne et qui ont mis leur propre bien-être en danger pour la sécurité des autres. Nous sommes pleins d'admiration pour le personnel des épiceries et des pharmacies, qui a fait en sorte que nous puissions continuer à bénéficier de services essentiels. Nous nous émerveillons devant nos entrepreneurs locaux, qui se sont adaptés et ont innové pour rester à flot. Et, bien sûr, nous sommes inspirés par l'esprit communautaire et la compassion des Westmontais qui se sontentraîdés, ont pris des nouvelles des personnes âgées et ont acheté des provisions pour les personnes confinées chez elles.

À maintes reprises, au cours de l'année écoulée, **j'ai été témoin de ce qu'il y a de meilleur chez les gens.** J'ai vu le rabbin faire tranquillement ses courses chez Métro tôt le matin pour les personnes âgées. J'ai entendu des histoires de jeunes résidents qui prenaient des rendez-vous chez le médecin pour leurs voisins âgés. J'ai vu les enseignants de notre communauté faire un effort supplémentaire pour leurs élèves et utiliser nos parcs et espaces verts comme salles de classe. Les résidents qui préparent des repas pour la communauté de Cabot Square et soutiennent le travail de Résilience. Ces personnes sont les héros de COVID-19.

Pour l'avenir, j'invite tout le monde à se faire vacciner dès qu'ils seront éligibles. En même temps, commençons à penser à Westmount après la pandémie et à la façon dont nous intégrerons les leçons apprises dans nos programmes et nos activités.

Plus que jamais, nous sommes conscients que nos parcs et nos espaces verts sont le noyau de nos activités communautaires, que le soutien de nos zones commerciales locales est essentiel à la vitalité de notre ville et que les services en ligne sont un moyen efficace de rejoindre les Westmontais.

Mais la leçon la plus importante est peut-être que notre force réside dans notre esprit communautaire et notre engagement à nous soutenir et à veiller les uns sur les autres, en particulier sur les plus vulnérables.

Christina M. Smith
La mairesse de la Ville de Westmount



Westmount Park United turns to 'Plan B' for sustainability

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Having failed to attract suitable proposals for non-profit projects to transform Westmount Park United Church into an economically sustainable community centre, the church administration is now turning its attention to a back-up strategy that they are calling "Plan B."

As previously reported by the *Independent* (September 24, 2019, p. 7), "Plan A" was outlined by pastor Rev. Neil Whitehouse at a public meeting held at the

The church is looking for an "existing non-profit that finds a synergy between its own existing mission and the opportunities at this site."

– Rev. Neil Whitehouse

church in August 2019 to explore the feasibility of turning the church into the Westmount Park Centre for Community, Peace and Ecology.

The church is facing the challenge of steeply declining church membership. A number of community organizations and groups were also depending on access to



Seen here on Sunday March 7 in the main church area at Westmount Park United, WPUC pastor Rev. Neil Whitehouse is leading a new plan to make the church more sustainable through partnership with community groups.

the building for their activities up until the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic last year.

As Whitehouse explained during the meeting about Plan A two years ago, no more than 50 per cent of the church's area can be dedicated to non-church activities if the church's tax-free status is to be conserved.

Plan A would have solicited projects proposed by individuals, whereas the proposals in Plan B would come from organizations and groups.

Call for proposals

A new "call for proposals" issued by the church recently welcomes ideas from co-operatives or non-profit organizations "wishing to inhabit and manage a beautiful, well-situated building" located directly beside Westmount Park.

"Applicants who hold dear the values of community life, care and protection of the

environment and/or reconciliation and peace-making would be seriously considered," states a preamble in the new plan. "Many other proposals would also be considered."

Explaining the difference between Plan A and B, Whitehouse said during an interview, "I think both have always been about social benefits.

"Plan A is a DIY [do-it-yourself] model from the church and the community. The other is *prêt-à-porter* or *clef-en-main* [turn-key]. With *clef-en-main*, there would be an existing non-profit that finds a synergy between its own existing mission and the opportunities at this site."

Whitehouse explained why the stakeholders at the church decided to move on from Plan A to Plan B. "The DIY depended upon individuals having the time and energy for an agreed mission of a not-for-profit, and bringing it into being and then putting it into practice," he said.

He said that "all of that was blown away really because individuals had to get on with their own lives" during the COVID-19 pandemic, "and we can't see actually a quick return to having that sort of stability."

Although a theatre company, Théâtre Ouest End, announced plans in early 2019 to use the church as its principal staging venue, Whitehouse said he didn't know what they've been up to lately and the church hasn't been accepting new event bookings since the onset of the pandemic.

Regarding the church's long-time tenant, the Contactivity Centre for senior citizens, he said, "In all the plans, we are working to ensure they flourish. We see them as a major expression of the mission of the church."

Interested parties wishing to know and see more may register for a live presentation to be held on March 17 at 10 am at Westmount Park United Church on Eventbrite at this link: <https://bit.ly/3b3B6Lu>.

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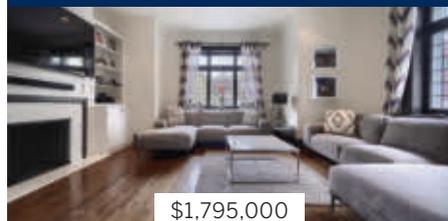


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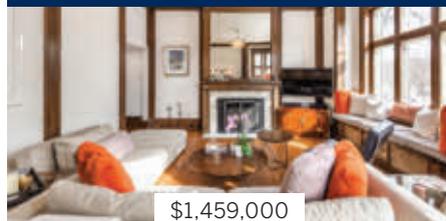


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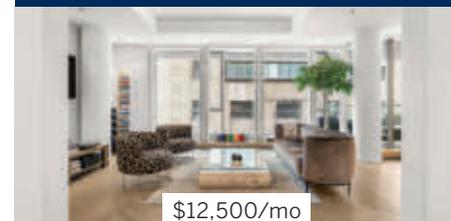


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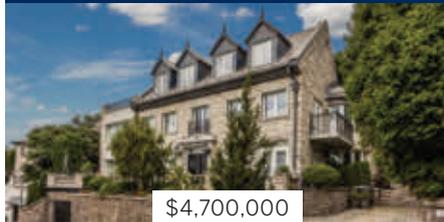
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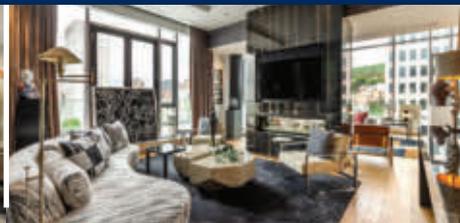
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We all want to know more about COVID-19 vaccination



There are many reasons to get vaccinated, including protecting ourselves from the complications and dangers caused by infectious diseases, but also to stop the return of infectious diseases that are avoidable through vaccination.

The COVID-19 vaccination campaign now underway is aimed at preventing serious complications and death from COVID-19. We also use vaccination as a way of protecting our healthcare system and getting back to a more normal life.

When did the vaccination campaign start?

COVID-19 vaccination in Québec began in December 2020 with the delivery of the first vaccine doses. Because the availability of vaccine is limited, categories of people deemed at higher risk of developing COVID-19 complications have been given priority. As more vaccine becomes available in Canada, the categories of recipients will be extended.

Order of priority of recipients of COVID-19 vaccines

- 1** Vulnerable people and people with a significant loss of autonomy who live in residential and long-term care centres (CHSLDs) or in intermediate and family-type resources (RI-RTFs)
- 2** Workers in the health and social services network who have contact with users
- 3** Autonomous or semi-autonomous people who live in private seniors' homes (RPAs) or in certain closed residential facilities for older adults
- 4** Isolated and remote communities
- 5** People 80 years of age or older
- 6** People 70 to 79 years of age
- 7** People 60 to 69 years of age
- 8** Adults under 60 years of age who have a chronic disease or health problem that increases the risk of complications of COVID-19
- 9** Adults under 60 years of age who do not have a chronic disease or health problem that increases the risk of complications, but who provide essential services and have contact with users
- 10** Everyone else in the general population at least 16 years of age

What supply strategy was used to acquire the vaccines?

The Government of Canada signed advance purchase agreements for seven promising COVID-19 vaccines with the following companies: AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, Medicago, Moderna, Novavax, Pfizer and Sanofi Pasteur/GlaxoSmithKline. The purchases are conditional upon approval of these vaccines by Health Canada.

To date, the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have been approved for distribution in Canada. Soon, other vaccines from these companies will be used to speed up COVID-19 vaccination.



COVID-19
Vaccination
operation

What types of COVID-19 vaccines are being studied?

There are three types of vaccine currently being studied.

- 1 **mRNA vaccines:** These vaccines contain part of the RNA of the virus which has the ability to make the S protein located on the surface of the virus. Once the RNA messenger is inside our cells, they make proteins similar to those on the surface of the virus using the instructions provided by the RNA messenger. Our immune system recognizes that this protein is foreign and produces antibodies to defend itself against it. The RNA fragment is quickly destroyed by cells. There is no risk that this RNA will alter our genes.
- 2 **Viral vector vaccines:** These contain a weakened version of a virus that is harmless to humans. Once in the body, the vaccine enters our cells and gives them instructions to make protein S. Our immune system recognizes that this protein is foreign and produces antibodies to defend itself against it. Once in the body, the vaccine enters our cells and gives them instructions to make protein S. Our immune system recognizes that this protein is foreign and produces antibodies to defend itself against it.
- 3 **Protein subunit vaccines:** These contain non-infectious fragments of proteins that mimic the envelope of the virus. Our immune system recognizes that this protein is foreign and produces antibodies to defend itself against it.

Will an mRNA vaccine alter our genetic code?

No. Messenger RNA does not enter the cell's nucleus or come into contact with the nucleic DNA. As such, it cannot alter our DNA in any way.

How do COVID-19 vaccines work?

When someone receives the vaccine against the virus that causes COVID-19, their body starts to defend itself against the virus. An immune reaction occurs which neutralizes the virus producing antibodies and activating defense cells.

Most COVID-19 vaccines in development prompt the production of antibodies to block protein S; the protein that allows the virus to infect the human body. This prevents the virus from entering and infecting human cells.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is composed of strands of ribonucleic acid (RNA) genetic material surrounded by a crown-like envelope with proteins that include the S (spike) protein, hence the name "coronavirus."



What side effects can be expected from injection with the COVID-19 vaccine?

Some minor side effects may occur, such as redness or pain at the injection site and fatigue, fever or chills. These symptoms are less common among vaccine recipients over the age of 55, are usually benign and do not last long.

As of now there are no known serious side effects from mRNA vaccines. While other random problems may arise, such as a cold or gastroenteritis, they are not related to the vaccine per se.

Because the vaccine does not contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus, it is not capable of causing COVID-19. However, people who come into contact with the virus in the days leading up to their vaccination or within 14 days of receiving the vaccination could still develop symptoms and get the COVID-19 disease.

As such, following health measures remains important until such time as a majority of the population has been vaccinated.

Why did it take 40 years to develop a flu vaccine but only nine months for one against COVID-19?

Past efforts, particularly during the SARS epidemic in 2003, advanced coronavirus vaccine research and accelerated the fight against COVID-19.

There are currently over 50 COVID-19 vaccines undergoing clinical trials around the world, the result of unprecedented scientific cooperation. Considerable financial and human resources have been invested in the development of vaccines that meet regulatory requirements in such a short span of time.

Public health and regulatory authorities in many countries, including Canada, are working hard to ensure that as many safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines as possible become quickly available to their populations.

Why are two vaccine doses required?

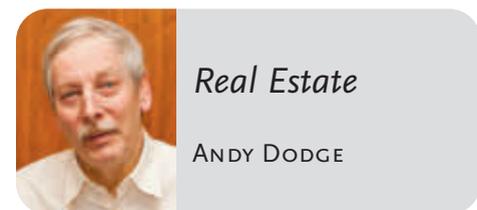
The second dose "reminds" the immune system to continue producing antibodies and ensures long-term protection. In current circumstances, where COVID-19 is spreading very fast, administration of the second dose may be delayed somewhat to be able to vaccinate more people with the first dose.

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

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Québec 

February sales: Prices still moving up



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 February 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.

Westmount sale prices in February this year maintained their upward movement and have almost reached the peak of March last year, just before the collapse brought on by the pandemic.

Volume in the first two months maintained the pace it set last year, noticeably low by historical standards but hardly devastating.

Seven one- and two-family dwelling sales were posted by local agents as having

been negotiated in February, lower than the 11 posted in January, though the number might move up as real estate activity increases into the spring months.

Prices in February ranged from \$1,325,000 for a small house on Greene Ave. to \$2,466,250 for a semi-detached house on Murray Hill; though none of the more expensive homes sold in the month, the average adjusted price of the “typical” Westmount home moved above the \$2.4-million level. So far this year, nothing has brought a price over \$2,900,000, but exactly half of all the residential sales in the first two months this year have been over \$2 million.

The first two months of the year have seen prices averaging 31.4 percent more than their municipal valuations. Since last October, average monthly mark-ups have been between 23 and 35 percent; in February, the range of individual mark-ups was fairly slim, between 12 and 41 percent, but in January one sale price was more than double the valuation, while another only cleared by 5.3 percent.

Still, it is important to note that no one- or two- *continued on p. 15*



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family dwellings have sold this year for less than valuation.

Condos

With March sales still to come, eight condominiums so far have sold in the first quarter of 2021, already matching the volume for the fourth quarter of 2020, but with a drop from 31 to 20 percent in the average mark-up over valuation; a serious mark-down at 200 Lansdowne Ave. in January pulled down the overall average. Condo prices in the first quarter (so far) have ranged from \$400,000 to \$2,045,000 and mark-ups are as high as 49 percent. Only two of the eight first-quarter sales were negotiated in February.

Adjacent

Three one- and two-family houses were added to the list of adjacent-Westmount sales in February, added to the six posted for January.

Prices in neighbouring areas so far this year range from \$565,000 for a small house on Rockledge Court to \$2,490,000 for a much larger house on Côte des Neiges Rd. – the latter selling at more than double its evaluation. The lowest mark-up for the two-month period is 17.75 percent, so in general mark-ups are higher than they are in Westmount proper.

The number of available house listings



200 Lansdowne on March 12.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

in Westmount didn't increase at all between mid-February and mid-March, though in fact the only price bracket to gain in numbers during that time was the \$5 million to \$10 million range, where the

numbers increased from six to 11 listings, while lower-priced houses were sold off and not replaced by similarly priced candidates.

The number of house rentals available

has jumped from 17 in mid-February to 24 in mid-March; by then, six houses had been rented in 2021 for rates between \$2,600 to \$12,000 per month.



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Westmount A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

Yes, she is in that in-between stage at a year and seven months of age, when they have so much intellect and a lot less silliness.

A bit older than a puppy but still in the age group where they are easy to train and



Young Sierra

integrate into a new family routine.

Cutest Sierra is waiting, hoping that life will change from the SPCA Montreal kennel space where she is safely being brought forth for an adoptive family. A precious young beauty, so lovely and affectionate, with the largest brown eyes and a keen gaze.

Sierra is very healthy, up to date with her inoculations, spayed and micro-chipped.

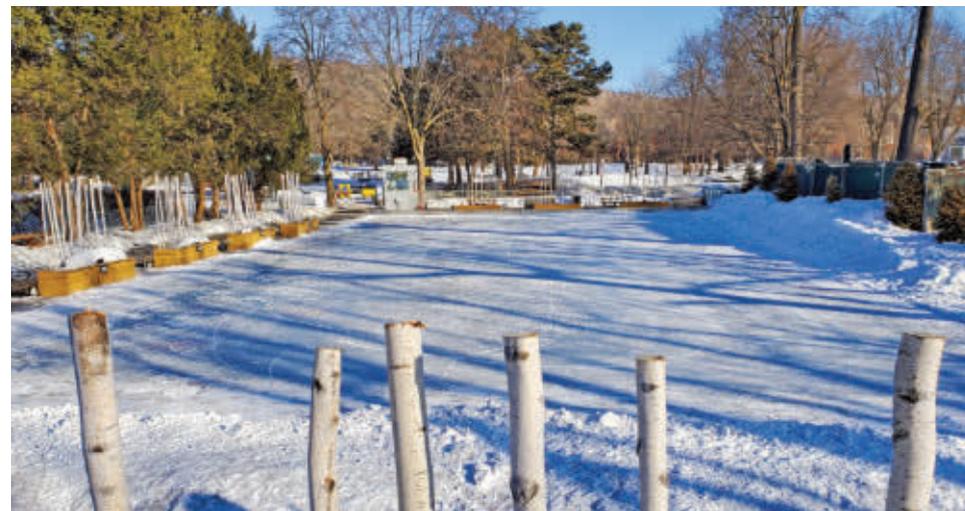
Please think of her for the Westmount

best canine life, with our dog parks and our Summit as spring is coming.

Please refer to her identification number 46540201 when you visit the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com and fill out the adoption application for her on the link.

Once submitted, you will then be contacted for a telephone interview, followed by a visit by appointment at the SPCA.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne



The Westmount Park rink the morning of March 15. All was quiet.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Sports & Rec., cont'd. from p. 1

and level 1 tai chi/chikung.

Details and times are described in the spring activities guide online except for general skating and Stick & Puck, which will depend on availability of the WRC rinks once March break is over and some school rentals are factored in, Lapointe said.

Refrigerated rink closed March 15

While the city's outdoor rinks will remain open as long as weather permits, dismantling of the rented, refrigerated one at Westmount Park was planned to take place March 15, after press time, according to the

contract, Lapointe said.

"Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has not loosened its grip and has forced us to continue to follow public health safety measures," explains Lapointe in the spring activities guide. "Due to these measures, the Sports and Recreation department has not been able to offer in-person activities and will not be able to for the foreseeable future."

"The past season's online activities have proven to be successful, so we have expanded our online programming via the Zoom platform."

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9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Elegant Loka

for adoption at 11 years of age, when she has always been in a family and needs to move on to new love as soon as possible.

Loka is very healthy, up to date with her inoculations, spayed and microchipped. Please refer to her identification number 46704617 when you visit the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com and fill out the adoption application for her on the attached link. Once submitted, you will then be contacted for a telephone interview, followed by a visit by appointment at the SPCA.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne

Summer, cont'd. from p. 1

for removing the ice in one of the two indoor rinks at the Westmount recreation centre will take place as usual. The unused one is typically used as a base for the day camps and their rainy day activities. "Once we receive further guidelines from the government of Quebec, we will be able to provide a guide for the summer activities."

This year, however, he said he doesn't want to rush registrations and be in the same position as a year ago when the department was faced with refunds resulting from changing summer restrictions.



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Programs and services for seniors

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FORTUNATE FOR PROVINCIAL,
MUNICIPAL, ÉNERGIR WORKERS

We are fortunate in our community to have such caring and efficient services.

On March 4, my wife and I had just received our first COVID vaccination at the Montreal General Hospital. Very efficient... we had an 8 am appointment and we were out by 8:30.

I was just starting work (I do voluntary tax returns for the NDG Senior Citizens Council) when the proverbial “s - -” hit the fan.

First, the electricity went off. Then the water went off, and then the gas went off. It was minus 10°C outside.

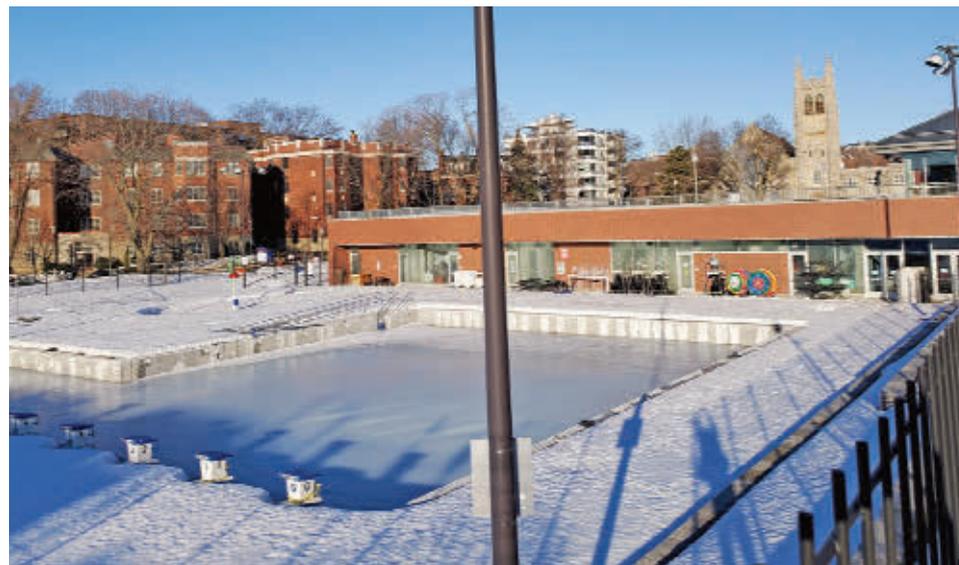
This was all due to repairs of a water pipe on Claremont (which had just been restored in 2018 – but that is another story) and, in the process, the gas line was cut.

At 4 pm, the electricity was restored and, a short time after, the water was restored – but no gas.

At about 10 pm, our doorbell rang (what dedication!) and the gas people were there to re-start our furnace and hot water tank. But we checked the gas stove and realized there was still no gas.

Luckily, our house is heated by electricity in some rooms. So, our house was not cold. We told the workers that it was not critical and they were grateful to go home.

The next morning, they returned early. Still no gas. The city, very thoughtfully,



The Westmount recreation centre and pool on March 12.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

called and said we could borrow electric heaters. We thanked them but said we were okay.

We were told that the gas problem was because, during the repair, some water got into the gas line and froze, thus blocking our supply (we are the last house on the street).

The gas people arranged a temporary gas line from our neighbour's house until the gas line can be fixed.

By the evening, everything was back to normal.

We want to say thanks to all the dedi-

cated workers of Énergir and the city for their help in resolving all the problems.

STEVE AND JAN WEIR, PARKMAN PLACE

THANKS FOR THE WRC!

A big thank-you to everyone at the Westmount rec centre (WRC) for opening the rinks for general skating and Stick and Puck practice these last few weeks.

I'm sure that I'm not the only one who has missed skating there since pandemic restrictions forced them to close in December. The refrigerated outdoor rink in Westmount Park is a lovely place for some low-key skating, but to move fast enough to feel you're getting some real exercise, nothing beats the big rinks at the WRC.

Hats off to everyone who made it possible for the rinks to re-open – the management, the people who run the Zambonis, the people who check you in at the door, the people who mop and wipe down surfaces after every session. Since they re-opened – and earlier in the pandemic too – the centre has been a clean, safe place to go, a place to get a bit of a workout and to get the COVID crabbiness out of my system, a place where the staff members are quick with a smile and a friendly greeting.

The pandemic has been teaching us all to appreciate the everyday things. I'm very grateful the WRC rinks are back – at least

Correction: *Faites!*

The incorrect conjugation of the French verb “faire” in the headline of the letter “Lettre ouverte à la Mairesse...” (March 2, p. 6) was the choice of the editor, not the letter writer. While one can find some instances of “faisez,” standard French would have read “Faites un partenariat avec YMCA.” – DP

for the moment – in our community's everyday life.

KATHLEEN KEARNS, ACADEMY RD.

COVID RECOMMENDATIONS
HAVE EVOLVED SINCE
'ONE-WAY RULE'

A recent letter (“Pedestrians, remember the one-way rule,” March 2, p. 6) sought to remind Westmounters of a suggested measure “early in the pandemic” to “walk/jog on the sidewalk that is on the right-hand side of the street.” Setting aside the fact that the exact recommendation as reported in the news (CBC report: April 10, 2020) was to follow the flow of traffic, something that makes little practical sense on a one-way street such as de Maisonneuve Blvd, the operative phrase is “early in the pandemic.”

In those early days, almost nothing was known about the virus and policy makers were struggling with their response to a dangerous and evolving situation in the absence of any reliable information. Recommendations at that time have since been revised/rescinded with new and better information.

The writer implies that adhering to such a measure today can “curb COVID-19 spread” despite there being no credible evidence to suggest that pedestrian traffic, i.e. when two people pass each other for a second or less on the street, represents a noteworthy vector of COVID transmission, if one at all. Perhaps this is why the city has long since abandoned its promotion.

IVOR KROL, DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

KUDOS TO MACCARONE

I am writing to commend Jennifer Maccarone, MNA for Westmount-St. Louis, for her proactive, timely and informative updates regarding the COVID-19 vaccination campaign.

Her weekly newsletter is composed in a bilingual and professional format, is easy to understand, and includes links to helpful resources. For anybody wishing to subscribe to Ms. Maccarone's newsletter, one only needs to click on the following link: <http://eepurl.com/hptC11>.

My positive impression of Jennifer Maccarone is founded not just upon her commitment to keeping her constituents informed, but also upon past experience. Whenever I have had reason to communicate with her, either she or one of her staff has addressed my concerns in a prompt and professional manner.

We are indeed fortunate to have Ms. Maccarone as our MNA.

CLAIRE PANET-RAYMOND,
BLENHEIM PLACE

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Squirrel feeding draws ire

This spot on de Maisonneuve between Prince Albert and Victoria, seen March 12, top, has been the site of food being dropped. Both squirrels and birds have been observed feeding there. The activity has drawn the ire of one local resident whose house has been damaged by squirrels chewing on the fascia boards at the roof line. She has complained to Public Security. She also picked up "about 10 lbs" of food before this photo was taken. A long time drop spot on Victoria between Somerville and Sherbrooke was still in use when the *In-Independent* checked March 15, bottom. It is illegal to feed wild animals in Westmount.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.



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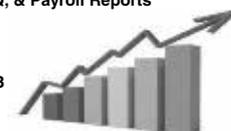


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This Christmas tree was seen on the north side of Sherbrooke between Vignal and Atwater on March 12.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.



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Return to Retail

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Story of a pop-up: Westmount Barbecue

age that is owned by my best friend Edouard Elkaim. The tenant that was in the location before was a Greek restaurant called Kavos, which did extremely well until the pandemic hit. After eight months of not being able to open his dining room, the owner threw in the towel. I hate seeing vacant storefronts along Sherbrooke St., so I called up some friends who own catering companies and event spaces. They were not very busy as you can imagine! They all loved the space so, along with Elkaim, we decided to set up a pop-up restaurant.

What is the menu?

The menu has changed a bit since we first opened a month ago. We have been really listening to what people want. (Lately, they have asked for octopus!) Emilie, our amazing chef, comes up with different specials

continued on p. 22



Once again driven by this “moment” – I grow tired of the word COVID! – Westmount entrepreneurial spirit has risen, phoenix-like, from yet another Sherbrooke St. empty space.

Speaking with Ankara Bonamy, I learnt that local res – and Montrealers generally! – have an exciting new concept to visit. And the restaurant seems to have been discovered already. Ankara and her team Scotch-taped some of their business cards to the outside of the window. By the end of each day, they had all been taken.

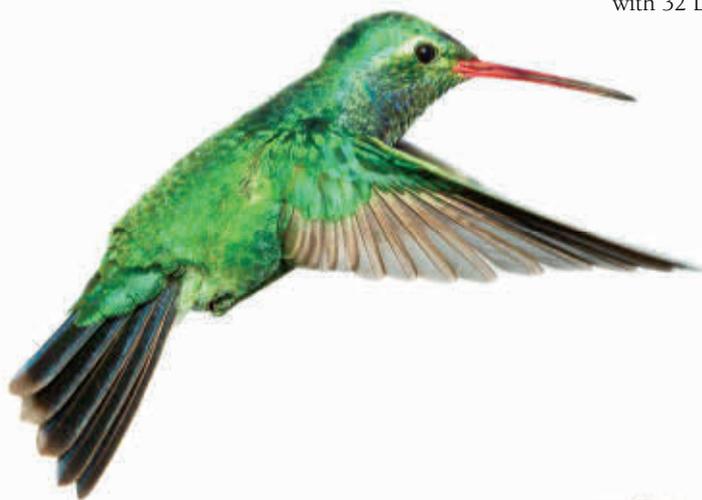
Ankara, how did you get involved with this pop-up?

I work mostly in construction, design and real estate. However I have always worked a little in the restaurant business. I design traffic flow for restaurants and commercial spaces and for the past five years I've had pop-up clothing stores in empty commercial spaces.

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Police Report

House burglar unfazed after coming face to face with owner

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

A burglary at a house near the corner of Kensington Ave. and Sherbrooke St. around 10:30 am on March 6 brought one of the owners face to face with the suspect, who wasn't the least bit deterred and continued to rob the residence.

Officers from the Montreal police department's Station 12 on Stanton St. responded to the scene within minutes.

They were met outside by a woman who

Barbeque, cont'd. from p. 21

every week. (She is a celebrity in the francophone culinary world and has been on several TV shows including *Les Chefs*) The menu is based mostly around Portuguese flavors. The main staple is piri piri rotisserie chicken. Emmanuel Goubard and myself are the "face" and main partners of the restaurant. One or both of us is always on site. On top of being an amazing chef, Emmanuel is also an event planner and owns Les entrepôts dominion, an event space. I would call our menu "Portuguese fusion."

When are you open?

For now, we are open from Tuesday to Saturday, 4 pm to 8 pm for pick-up. After curfew, we are on Uber Eats, Cheque Please and Skip the Dishes. Since we opened, there has been a lot of interest from other restaurateurs who might eventually lease the place when in-house dining resumes. Until then, we will stay as a pick-up, pop-up spot and if all goes well, we might even stay permanently.

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had been in bed sleeping, when she became aware of an intruder walking up the stairs to the second storey.

"At first she thought it might be her spouse," said Station 12 community relations officer Adalbert Pimentel, noting that her partner had gone out some time earlier and hadn't yet returned.

While it wasn't clear in the police report whether the woman or the intruder opened her bedroom door, shortly after it opened, the woman saw the suspect, who was wearing a black surgical mask, a tuque on his head and a dark coat.

She described him to the investigators as a white male, slim build and French speaking. She recounted that the suspect appeared to loudly utter a phrase three or four times alluding to "police."

After this, he proceeded to another bedroom where he rummaged through belongings and stole several items. The woman called 9-1-1 while the suspect was still inside the house and police arrived shortly after.

Among the stolen property the woman listed in an inventory submitted to the police was a watch, a mini computer monitor and other items. The investigators found footprints believed to be the suspect's, and images of the suspect were captured by a security camera.

The investigators don't know how the suspect entered the dwelling, although they didn't find any broken window glass or other signs of forced entry.

"Since there are no traces of infraction, it's possible a door was left unlocked," Pimentel suggested. "But I can't assume that. It's up to the investigators to determine."

COVID enforcement

In keeping with a mandate to enforce

the provincial government's sanitary regulations during the COVID-19 pandemic, Station 12 officers have been active over the past few weeks doing inspection visits at homes in Westmount where families and individuals are expected to quarantine up to 14 days after re-entering Canada following out-of-country trips.

On March 9, officers visiting the home near Greene and Dorchester of a family under quarantine found that everyone was present and accounted for, and all their documents were in order.

However, on March 5 officers visiting another dwelling in Westmount were told that a female resident who was supposed to be observing quarantine wasn't home because she had to go out to deal with an employment-related issue.

The officers, who are attached to the Montreal police department's morality section, told the family that a ticket with a hefty fine would be sent to her.

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