

Director general thanked for his service in trying times

City agrees to retirement of Benoit Hurtubise

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

In a new business item, city council June 7 adopted a resolution to bid farewell to Benoit Hurtubise, the city's director general who has been on medical leave since February and is now retiring, according to Mayor Christina Smith.

"I really thank him for his service, especially through this past year," she said. "He was always concerned about the welfare of citizens and staff. He was a true gentleman and I wish him well."

Since the departure of Hurtubise, two retired directors general have returned temporarily. They are Duncan Campbell, as interim DG, and Bruce St. Louis, as interim assistant director general. (See February 16, p. 1.) It's expected the city will now search for permanent replacements.

Hurtubise, an electrical engineer, took over as the head of the city administration in August 2017 after joining the city in 2013 as director of Hydro Westmount. He had also served as assistant director general. He had been working for much of the past two years through the pandemic period and record-breaking capital works projects without an assistant director general.

Councillor Jeff Shamie presented the council resolution, stating that the retirement would be effective June 8. Hurtubise and the city had agreed to the terms of his departure and that he be paid all amounts due him under its Working Conditions and Remuneration of Management Personnel agreement.

Shamie, as commissioner of administration, added his own words of thanks to Hurtubise.

WRC pool opens on a grey day



Storms were forecast June 14 at 6:45 am, but that did not deter Margret Nicolai, who was first in line for the opening of the Westmount recreation centre's pool. (It has to be vacated during thunderstorms.) She was quickly followed by Ivana Djordjevic, Katherine Hope, Mariana Frank, Johanne Tremblay, Maureen Lafrenière and Andrew Sharp, who was the first man to show up. According to one woman, "It's very hard to get a reservation," while another said, "You have to be waiting with your finger on the computer key at 12 noon."

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

Includes 976 changes to items deemed inappropriate

Library among first to update native peoples' cataloguing

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The Westmount Public Library has materially completed a comprehensive two-year re-cataloguing and updating of its listings in time for National Indigenous Peoples Day June 21.

This has been a major project based on recommendations of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations, following the

report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2016.

The project includes replacing 976 subject headings related to natives deemed to be offensive, outdated or culturally inappropriate, according to Julie Bouchard, head of the library's systems and technical services. The project is her brainchild.

While the effort is on-going, she said last week, *continued on p. 3*

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Library unveils partial re-opening plan for July 5

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

After 16 months, the Westmount Public Library will start re-opening its doors to members on a limited basis July 5, Councillor Mary Gallery announced at the council meeting June 7.

"To ensure a safe environment for members and staff and to ensure physical distancing, a maximum of 20 people will be allowed inside at the same time with a limit of three per family," explained library

director Julie-Anne Cardella in a gradual re-opening plan that she presented to the council before the public session.

"This plan will enable members to browse, choose and check out their material and for staff to handle requests and questions," she told the *Independent*. Neither seating nor computers will be available.

"This will serve as an initial step in opening that is in keeping with the cautious approach the city has been taking to the library," she said.

Curbside service that was begun during the pandemic closure will continue for those who prefer it, but it will move inside. A complete list of what will be permitted or not will be included in the mid-month issue of the library's newsletter.

Familiar highlights

Requirements are those to which many residents have been accustomed in stores. These include wearing masks, disinfecting hands, social distancing, following direc-

tional signs on the ground, and waiting outside if the building reaches capacity.

As well, all material touched but not borrowed is to be put aside to be quarantined 24 hours. Entry will be allowed only at the Sherbrooke St. door on presentation of a membership card, with departure by the door to Westmount Park.

The library will be open Monday and Wednesday from 1 to 5 pm, Tuesday and Thursday 1 to 7 pm, and Friday 10 am to 5 pm.

Council okays \$260K in possible added costs

Greenhouses require more work than expected

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Reflecting additional work required on the city's heritage conservatory and frog pond during excavation, city council approved an additional amount of some \$260,000 after taxes to modify professional fees in two separate professional services contracts.

The previous net cost to the city after tax credits was \$5.7 million (see separate

story March 23, p. 3). The new total is now \$5.97 million, according to Bruce St. Louis, interim assistant director general.

'Unexpected'

The "unexpected work" was discovered during excavation work, explained Councillor Cynthia Lulham, who has been spearheading the project.

It includes issues related to the location and depth of drains in the basement and

of the outdoor infrastructure, conflicts with the existing infrastructure and the new electrical and mechanical conduits.

As well, a basement wall was found to have no foundation and a new staircase access to the basement was required to ensure code compliance. Also required are modifications to the ramp.

Not predicted

These conditions were unknown during

the preparation of the plans and tender documents, and were not indicated on any plans and "could not have been predicted," Lulham said. "However, these issues must be addressed in order to properly design and operate the restored heritage greenhouse."

Modifications to the two contracts involve those awarded to Affleck de la Riva architects and St-Denis Thompson Inc.

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A display showing some of the Westmount Public Library's books on native topics.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Library, cont'd. from p. 1

it has been largely completed by her team of four in time for this year's celebration of the cultures and contributions of native peoples.

The project began in earnest in March 2020 after a period of research and was an "ideal" project during the start of pandemic when many of the library personnel were working remotely, library director Julie-Anne Cardella said.

Info not censored

"There has been no censoring of historical information or roles played by specific people," Bouchard said last week. She stated rather the example of replacing such names as "Micmac" by "Mi'kmaq."

While some libraries across Canada – especially those in BC, Alberta and Ontario – have been undertaking such projects, she said, Westmount's is believed to be one of the first in Quebec.

"We spent time consulting with those other libraries and benefiting from their experience and work already under way."

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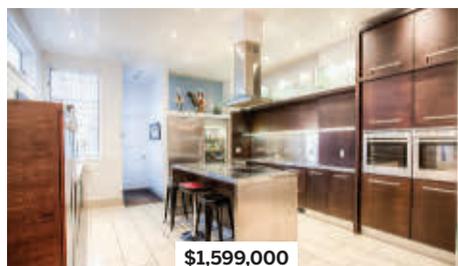
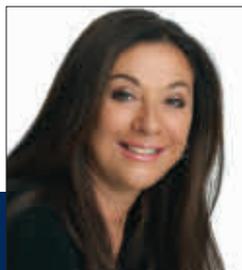
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To post replacement plan but focus on demo City decides to return to traditional demo posting

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The city will return to a longstanding procedure in its demolition process to post a preliminary plan for the replacement project as submitted by a developer while maintaining that the initial focus of a demolition hearing should be on the demolition aspect.

The decision to make both aspects public at the same time was revealed at the June 7 council meeting following an outcry during a demolition meeting on 325 Melville March 15 after the city had withheld details on the preliminary replacement project. This changed without notice a longstanding tradition. On May 25, however, it posted a newly received replacement plan.

“Thank you for reinstating what is required in the by-law,” said Robert Babczak of Melville during the June 7 council meeting question period. Opponents had cited the city’s own demolition by-law (see story March 9, p. 8).

Clarifying the reinstatement, Councillor Conrad Peart, as urban planning commissioner for permits and architecture, replied

that the reason to return to posting the replacement plan is “because we have traditionally done so.”

Nevertheless, the process would be separated into two separate steps: demolishing a building and a review of what would replace it, he and Mayor Christina Smith emphasized.

In response to another question on the issue from Samantha Hayes during the council’s question period, Peart assured her that public comments at the demolition meeting would be presented to the city’s Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) in its review of the replacement plan. “This is in keeping with how we have done this,” Mayor Smith said.

She reiterated, however, that “You will see the replacement plan, but the focus will be on the demolition file.”

In keeping with the city’s recent decision to make public a replacement project, its posting last week of a developer’s request for partial demolition and restoration of the Hillside armoury, included details of the replacement plan (see separate story p. 9).

WRC to open as cooling station in heat waves

Summer registration opens June 15 for Sports and Rec

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The go-ahead has been given for residents to register online for summer Sports and Recreation activities starting June 15 as Montreal moves to yellow, and then to the expected green, COVID alert level by the end of the month.

“If the yellow level persists a little longer, it should not change our summer plans,” department director Dave Lapointe said, “even if social distancing is required.” Hopefully as of this week, the youth soccer program will end the spring season being able to play games.

The summer offerings are “pretty much” the same as last year such as aqua fitness, Essentrics and hockey camp “but this year we’re offering breakdance for kids for the first time in the summer season.”

The pool was filled with water over the weekend June 4-6 allowing for the start of reservations for its opening this week.

Swim lessons not viable

Even though some municipalities such as the Town of Mount Royal are offering

swimming lessons, Lapointe said, Westmount will operate without them for the second summer because of the pool’s COVID maximum capacity of 75 and the requirement that a parent accompany each child in the water. This does not make it viable, he explained. It is more feasible in TMR with two pools, he explained.

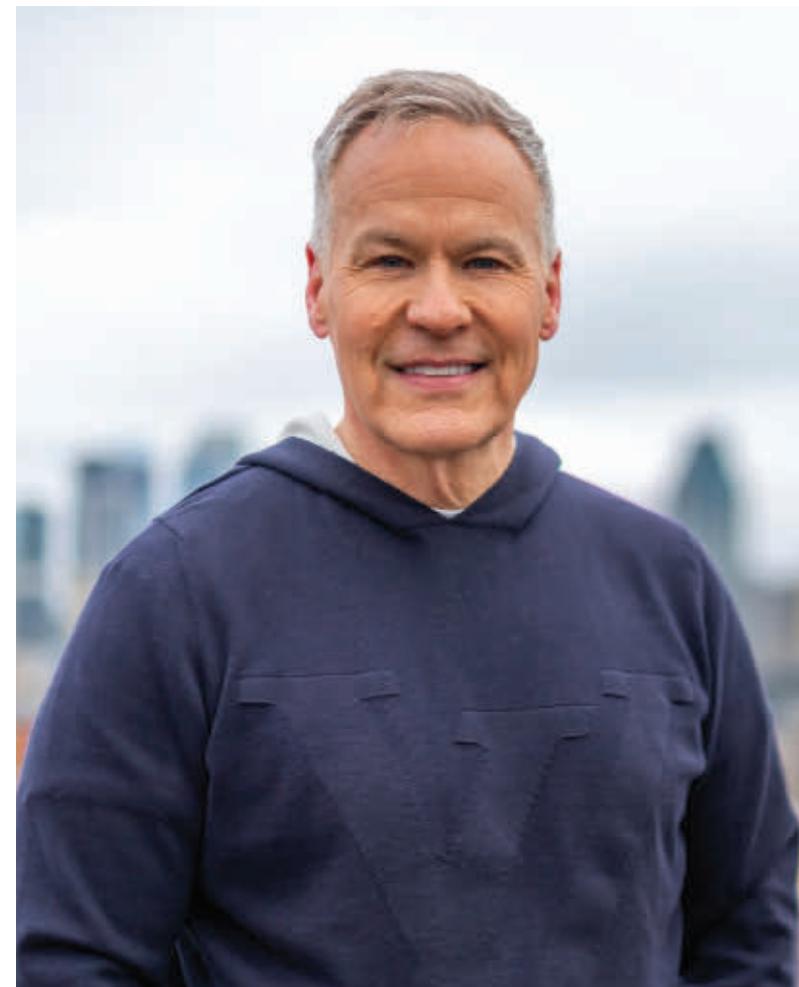
Westmount is maintaining its policy from last year that the pool be open as much as possible to allow as much time as possible for residents to cool off.

The Westmount recreation centre will open 8 am to 8 pm as a cooling station during heat warnings, Lapointe said. This plan went into effect last week even though it will not open otherwise to the public until the city allows the general opening of municipal buildings, Lapointe said.

We welcome your letters

We welcome your letters but reserve the right to choose and edit them. Please limit to 300 words and submit before Friday 10 am to be considered for publication the following week.

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Open letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

The media outlets publishing this letter are competitors. We publish news in every region in Canada. In both languages. We don't always see eye to eye.

So an open letter to you – and the prominence we're giving it in our publications – is unprecedented. But then so is the threat to news media in Canada. And, frankly, so shocking is the inaction of your government that it demands this unprecedented step.

For months, you and the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Steven Guilbeault, have promised action to rein in the predatory monopoly practices of Google and Facebook against Canadian news media. But so far, all we've gotten is talk. And with every passing week, that talk grows hollow and hollower.

As you know, the two web giants are using their control of the Internet and their highly sophisticated algorithms to divert 80 percent of all online advertising revenue in Canada. And they are distributing the work of professional journalists across the country without compensation.

This isn't just a Canadian problem. Google and Facebook are using their monopoly powers in the same way throughout the world – choking off journalism from the financial resources it needs to survive.

The difference is that other countries are putting their foot down. Australia's parliament – with support from all parties – has enacted comprehensive new legislation requiring the two web giants to negotiate collectively with that country's media. And they've backed up these new rules with enforcement teeth.

Time and again, you and your government have committed to similar action. The minister of Canadian Heritage has specifically and repeatedly committed to tabling legislation this spring. But after months of promises, there is still no legislation. And with the summer parliamentary recess approaching and the strong possibility of a fall general election, words alone will not sustain Canadian journalists through the long months of legislative inaction and relentless power plays by Google and Facebook.

Indeed, recently, Facebook announced

short-term commercial arrangements with a few Canadian media outlets. Until all news media in this country can negotiate collectively with Google and Facebook, the two multinationals will continue to use their market dominance to drive terms that are in their interests.

Let's be clear: Canadian news media are not looking for new funding or new taxes, or user fees. We're not calling for – and certainly don't want – restrictions or regulations affecting freedom of speech.

In fact, the health of our democracy depends on a vibrant and healthy media. To put it bluntly, that means that you, prime minister, need to keep your word: to introduce legislation to break the Google/Facebook stranglehold on news before the summer recess. It's about political will – and promised action. Your government's promise.

The fate of news media in Canada depends on it. In no small way, so too does the fate of our democracy.

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Atwater Library and Computer Centre Ready to serve Westmounters for a second century

With deep roots in the community, today's Atwater Library and Computer Centre is focused on the future. By upgrading our building and expanding our array of services, we continue to serve the evolving needs of Westmounters and others in the region. Digital literacy figures prominently in our programming, for good reason. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have helped countless seniors master their devices, while delivering more than 150 educational events online, including digital literacy courses and financial literacy sessions tailored to the particular needs of older members of the community.

Once the pandemic is behind us, we look forward to reopening our physical doors and renewing our collaborations with other Westmount-based community organizations, such as the Contactivity Centre and Manoir Westmount, to deliver the sorts of innovative programs that have proven popular with their clientele.

Atwater Library users who favour rhyme over reason can indulge in our virtual poetry readings, while others enjoy creative arts activities, book discussions, musical performances and our acclaimed weekly Lunchtime Series online, all at no charge.

To learn more about our inspired virtual programming and onsite services, visit us at www.atwaterlibrary.ca

The makeover of a Westmount "crown jewel"

Founded in 1828 as a Mechanics' Institute, the Atwater Library has roots in Westmount that extend back 101 years to 1920, when we moved into our then-new home at Atwater Ave. and Tupper St. The brick Beaux-Arts style building on Westmount's eastern flank is a designated National Historic Site.

During the pandemic, we have been working away behind the scenes to complete a 10-year, \$5-million restoration and upgrading of one of the crown jewels of Westmount's built heritage – financed primarily by the proceeds of a capital campaign co-chaired by Richard Pound and David Angus, along with grants from the government of Canada. Improvements include the installation of an elevator and air conditioning. Our restored historic venue will enhance our love of learning and the arts in an even-more-comfortable environment.

"The Atwater Library is a special Westmount, Montreal, Quebec and Canadian institution that remains loyal to its founding as a Mechanics' Institute. In its magnificent building, it radiates historical charm while modernizing its facilities. All year, Atwater Library programming fills a unique niche for our community: financial, digital, computer literacy; library and reading room; overflowing Thursday lunchtime lecture series; outreach of its skill programs for community partners. Under-recognized are its cheerful, engaged and devoted volunteer cadre from Westmount and Montreal. For many Westmounters, the Atwater Library is our cause célèbre."

— **Judith Kashul, James Coulton**,
Westmount residents

"I regard the Atwater Library as a vital lifeline to books, to creativity, to well-being, to poetry, to community, to art, to music, to cinema, to ideas, to knowledge, to thought, to laughter – and to the technical skills so crucial to a life currently lived largely on a computer or other electronic devices."

— **Marlene Chan**,
Westmount resident

"As a Westmounter and a professional writer, I have, on a thousand occasions, found tranquility, comfort and superb resources in the Atwater Library; I hope to find the same things there on a thousand more occasions in years to come."

— **Arthur Holden**,
Westmount resident

"The Atwater Library is much more than just an information centre, welcoming as it does so many Westmount and Montreal residents to enjoy an event, or learn a digital skill, or choose reading or listening material. In my role as a volunteer, I often see new friendships made among the clients, or old relationships renewed – and many a happy smile when a problem was solved with the aid of the remarkable library staff. It really is a treasure."

— **Diana Hendy**,
Westmount resident

"Atwater Library is one of my favourite walking destinations and a valuable nearby 'third place' for citizens of the south-east sector. Our well-read Westmount community is enriched by the excellence of their holdings, their emphasis on promoting literacy... not to mention enhanced access to current and older books popular with our multiple book clubs. June being National Indigenous Peoples' month, I'm reminded of how often I've tapped into this Library's rich Indigenous Special Collection."

— **Jean Williams**,
Westmount resident

"Libraries are a critical element of the culture and society of any community. With its almost 200-hundred-year history, the Atwater Library and Computer Centre is a shining example of a treasured resource that continues to evolve to meet the changing needs of the citizenry. The richness of its physical collections, which have afforded solace to so many in the midst of this pandemic, is complemented by its virtual component, which provides vital access and instruction to those who otherwise would not be able to connect to the net, enabling them to participate in the 'Brave New Technological World'."

— **Susan Ravdin and Wilfrid de Freitas**, Westmount residents

"Already designated a National Historic Site, the Atwater Library should also be recognized as a National Community Treasure. Over the 40 years we lived in Westmount and our 10 years in 'Westmount-adjacent' Haddon Hall, my family and I have been the beneficiaries of the array of community services the Library offers to young, old and all those in between. I particularly value the Lunchtime Series for its introduction of topics about which I know little or nothing, and its encouragement to read books I might otherwise have missed. May the Atwater Library live long and prosper!"

— **Diana Thébaud Nicholson**

"Its heritage building notwithstanding, today's Atwater Library is a vital cultural organization strategically situated near five residences that provide essential services to vulnerable men and women. It excels at offering community outreach and digital literacy to seniors, and to those whose lives have been affected by homelessness, mental illness, and addiction."

— **Susan Doherty**, writer and
Westmount resident

"For the Atwater Library to move to online services so quickly during the pandemic was truly appreciated. The Lunchtime Series gives me a chance to connect with others and explore new areas of interest. I am also thankful for the continued access to books that were unavailable elsewhere."

— **Dora Koop**, Managing
Director, McGill University,
Westmount resident

"The Atwater Library is so much more than a lending library – it's a hive of activity with everything from practical lessons on how to better use my mobile phone to lunchtime lecture series designed to expand my knowledge base. With the arrival of audiobooks on the Libby App, the Library is showing once again its versatility and ability to meet the needs of the community."

— **Cynthia Joy**,
Westmount resident

"The Atwater Library has been a cultural bastion for the city's English-language community, be it for the literary traditions it has upheld for a century or its very up-to-date digital resources, as well as literary displays and events, including the stimulating Lunchtime Series which I was recently privileged to partake of. The list of the services offered by this gem of a library is long and the benefits are numerous."

— **Gabriel Safdie**,
Westmount resident

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**CAN'T THE MAYOR
BE PHILANTHROPIC?**

It was disheartening to read in last week's letter (June 1, p. 9) from John Aylen, president of the Atwater Library board of directors, his mention that Westmount mayor Smith – presumably in response to the 30-percent cut in funding for the library – that “the city is not in the business of philanthropy.” Given that the dictionary defines philanthropy as “the desire to promote the welfare of others,” and that the word is synonymous with showing public spirit and being kindly disposed, one wonders indeed where her focus lies on this issue.

What Mr. Aylen did not mention is the fact that users of the non-profit Atwater Library are served for the most part by volunteers, whose hands-on “public spirit” comes without expectation of any monetary reward; that the library's well-supervised computer centre is open to non-members, as are frequent digital literacy and financial literacy workshops and lectures (all currently offered via Zoom), including such pre-pandemic speakers as Margaret Atwood; and that the long-existing annual membership for seniors still costs as little as \$20 year.

Finally, as Mr. Aylen also says, the Atwater Library has been “a Westmount institution for over 100 years” (and it's existed for the last 193 years).

Apropos of this fact, I quote from none other than Wikipedia's one-page profile, which tells us that the library is “the oldest subscription library service” in Canada. (Please note in the Wikipedia excerpt below the library's philanthropic origins, and that it is listed as a National Historic Site of Canada):

“The Atwater Library was home of the first Mechanics' Institute in Canada. It is also the oldest subscription library in Canada. It was first formed in 1828 when citizens recognized the need for educating workers for the number of industries that were expanding in Montreal. The Atwater Library is also the last Mechanics' Institute building in Canada serving its original purpose. The Atwater Library of the Mechanics' Institute of Montreal was recognized as a National Historic Site of Canada in 2005.”

RICHARD ORLANDO, SHERBROOKE ST.

**CAN'T THE COUNCIL SHARE
THE STANTEC COMMENTS
(ANONYMOUSLY)?**

The city refuses to release a synopsis of the comments from the survey on the Stantec design proposal for Westmount Park. Councillor Lulham, at the June 7 council meeting, claimed that residents were not asked to waive confidentiality when doing the survey. This is completely disingenuous. No one remotely wants their names, just an honest assessment of what

residents said.

Stantec provided an excellent summary of comments following the consultations more than a year ago. While in the most recent survey, residents concluded they were generally satisfied with the proposed Stantec design, they again qualified their approval with comments and suggestions for improvement. We have a right to know these views. However, both Mayor Smith and Councillor Lulham essentially asked us this time to put full trust in them instead. They said, “We are giving them due diligence, going through them all and taking note.”

Why am I not reassured by this?

This, potentially, is a recipe for a bad outcome and not how representative democracy works. Transparency is key to being a model community. Our residents have already paid for this survey. I ask that the city post a synopsis of the survey comments so that all residents can be truthfully and completely informed.

DENIS BIRO, BURTON AVE.

**IF WE CAN'T WALK ON TURF,
CITY SHOULDN'T DRIVE ON IT**

The Prince Albert Park is finally ready. Because there is new turf, those areas have been cordoned off and there are several signs advising us not to walk on the new grass.

There are no signs saying not to drive vehicles on the new turf but that is exactly what happens twice a year. Once in the fall and then again in the spring, a large truck drives exactly where the sign says not to walk. The boards for the hockey rink are brought in and taken out on a very heavy vehicle. Every year, the truck leaves huge track marks and the area becomes a mess of mud and water. It will happen again this fall except this time we will have all paid for the fancy gardening.

Why is our tax money spent so frivolously?

EVA ECHENBERG, CLAREMONT AVE.

**PROTECT THE PRIVATE TREES,
PLEASE**

An early heat wave [recently occurred],

just days after a grand old maple was felled in the yard next door, the victim of a swimming pool. How ironic and sad to lose this tree, just when it is needed most to help keep our neighbourhood cool. Straddling three adjoining properties, its expansive canopy supported important biodiversity, and provided welcome relief from our increasingly hot summers. This maple would still be standing if it were on my property or my neighbour's yard behind, each a scant 30 feet or so from where it stood. We valued that tree for the considerable health and environmental benefits only a mature hardwood can provide. The city of Westmount encourages planting a sapling as a replacement, though this is not mandatory. Even if planted, it will take decades to regain the benefits the mature, healthy maple provided to the community.

It is hard to fathom why removal was permitted at all. There was no sign of disease or decay, and the tree was not within the building site of the swimming pool. If the roots posed a possible risk, project plans could have been revised. The property is enormous.

I do hope the city of Westmount will better protect mature trees on private land, which are particularly vulnerable now, given the surge of construction happening around us.

ALISON STALKER, ARGYLE AVE.

**PROTECT THE PUBLIC PLANTS,
PLEASE (NOT THE CONCRETE)**

Whose brilliant idea was it to fill Prince Albert Park with (yet another huge and odd round shape of) concrete?

It seems the beauty of our parks is now lost to the 19th and 20th centuries.

The first, round slab of concrete was for a sprinkler-like system that zips up erratically, a delight to small children, but not exactly pretty like the fountain in Argyle Park. I am not expecting the Trevi fountain here.

Then a perfectly healthy 100-year-old poplar tree was killed – swept under the rug, for sure – with no public outrage but a few tree-huggers. Westmount's old-timer trees are regularly felled due to disease. Right. Like I buy that. Or correct me if I'm wrong.

The installation: a green monster jungle gym, as if to say “Let's put Disneyland in a small park, remove the sandbox that children have loved for centuries, and install a green, SUV-like machine.” At first, make it look like there's going to be a concrete border around the monstrosity, to be filled in with – if not grass and plants, as one would hope – but probably the newest fad: wood *continued on p. 9*

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

We are Westmount

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LETTERS: We welcome your letters but reserve the right to choose and edit them. Please limit them to 300 words and submit before Friday 10 am to be considered for publication the following week. Please check your letter carefully as we may be unable to make subsequently submitted changes. Letter writers should not expect to be published in every issue, or in back-to-back issues, or repeatedly in the same season or on the same topic. Please include your name and street for publication (or borough or municipality if you do not live in Westmount), but not your address (unless you want it published).

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Summer schedule

June 22 – issue
June 29 – no issue (Dominion Day observance)
July 6 & 13 – issues
July 20 & 27 and August 3 – no issues (regular summer break)
August 10 until Christmas – weekly issues

Calls for 73.5% demo to add 2 storeys – sound heard was ‘urgent work’

Demo meeting to hear new plan for Hillside armoury

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A webinar meeting to consider a new demolition application was announced last week for July 8. This is to hear a new proposal from the developer of the vacant armoury at 1-3 Hillside that is still in the process of its original SCAOPI request concerning a non-conforming project.

While Councillor Conrad Peart did not divulge details of the recent proposal at the council meeting June 7, he pointed out that a “demolition” can refer to either a total one or at least 50 percent of a building.

This latter situation was revealed by the developer the next day and was then shown on the city’s website as calling for 73.5-percent demolition of the Category II building. Residents have 10 days from June 8 in which to submit written responses.

“Our plan is to restore the building,” explained Maya Guirlando, development director for GroupImmo. “This means adapting it to residential use by creating many windows throughout and making changes to the walls including its structural integrity.”

This is described as allowing it to keep the same building volume and configuration, and achieve the conversion of the present industrial structure into a new residential five-storey LEED project with 27 units and parking while “reflecting the city’s requirement of saving the building in its original form, as much as possible.”

Reports to the *Independent* of hammer-

ing and work inside during the week of June 1 resulted from the advice of professionals to stabilize at least one of the walls, she told the *Independent*. “A masonry wall was detaching, so it was urgent work.”

In the initial permit application, which went through a SCAOPI public presentation and consultation February 11 last year, the building was described as being so deteriorated that the preferred option was to demolish it entirely and replace it with an eight-storey one of 37 units (see story February 18, 2020, p. 1).

“It will still need to continue through the SCAOPI process because we plan to add another two storeys,” Guirlando explained.

The demolition hearing is scheduled to take place on webinar July 8 at 5:30 pm.

Located across the narrow street from the Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG), it was built in 1910-11 for use as a riding school and stables. It served as a military armoury for 67 years. The army moved out in 2014 citing the building’s “deteriorating condition” (see story April 1, 2014, p. 1).

At the webinar council meeting June 7, Denis Biro, of Burton Ave. asked about the sustainability of the building “with regards to the character of Westmount and especially to the environment as the building is a major repository of embodied carbon.” Would the city carry out its own study?

Peart replied that the developer had “the right” to request demolition but that did not mean the city was encouraging it.



The new proposal for 1-3 Hillside from architect Maurice Martel. ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF GROUPIMMO.



Letters, cont'd. from p. 8

chips. Fence it with a steel gate till neighbours can't wait to get their children in there.

So we wait: April, May, June..... still fenced off.

Then in pours “soft” green concrete so, from afar, it looks like grass. So the kids on the monkey bars can land on their heads?

Not that I'm a fan of stupid, extreme safety measures, like the hideous, lugubrious plastic swings for small infants, or years of fenced-in prevention of tobogganing [at Murray Park], when finally, due to COVID, they found a way to make it safe.

My argument is: really, Westmount council, where's your sense of respect for living plants and their natural beauty?

Please, maybe look to the McCord Museum's photographs of the 1900s for design inspiration for our parks.

MICHELLE MACKAY SMITH,
SHERBROOKE ST.

BRAVO RE: COMPOSTAGE

Bravo pour vos initiatives au niveau des suivis du compostage (« Where does our food waste go? We can't find out, June 8, p. 20 »).

J'ai hâte de lire la suite car moi aussi je me demandes depuis longtemps où se retrouve notre compostage.

LUCIEN SAVARD, AVE. CLAREMONT

SENIORS: BE DETERMINED IN GETTING VACCINE

[Listening to the news, I became concerned about a long delay before my second COVID vaccine shot.]

I had my first shot at the CLSC Metro March 1. The second was scheduled for May 24 (within three months). That was cancelled. Next appointment: June 21 (very close to four months), cancelled!

I spent 45 minutes on the phone, 514.644.4545, in English, only to be told they were not booking second doses. This

was the end of May.

I was really very alarmed now for my second shot. I asked my daughter-in-law to book an appointment online in French. She did so, on May 26. I now have an appointment on June 21, in Ahuntsic, for my second shot. Not just around the corner

from Westmount!

Hopefully this will not be changed. To all my fellow seniors out there: stay safe, be determined, and don't take “no” for an answer. Seniors are worth looking after!

BEVERLEY HUTCHISON, KITCHENER AVE.



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infoWESTMOUNT

2021.06.15 • Vol. 2/12

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

Lundi 5 juillet

NEWSNEXT COUNCIL
MEETINGMonday, July 5th**Piscine extérieure ouverte**


La saison de natation 2021 a débuté le **lundi 14 juin** à la piscine du CLW. En conformité avec les normes de la santé publique, la capacité est réduite et les réservations sont nécessaires. Une carte d'accès aux installations sportives 2021 est requise. westmount.org

Outdoor pool open


The 2021 swim season began **Monday, June 14th** at the WRC pool. In accordance with public health guidelines, capacity is limited and reservations are necessary. A 2021 Facility Access card is required. westmount.org

COVID-19 : Montréal au palier jaune

Le 14 juin, la région de Montréal est passée au palier de pré-alerte (jaune), qui prévoit notamment la possibilité d'activités de groupe pour les finissants et l'ouverture des terrasses extérieures de bars. Plus d'informations : westmount.org et quebec.ca.

VACCINATION : Renseignements ou prise de rendez-vous : quebec.ca ou santemontreal.ca.

Sports et loisirs : inscription

L'inscription en ligne pour les activités d'été en présentiel débute le **mardi 15 juin**. Pour consulter la liste d'activités et vous inscrire, visitez westmount.org.

Réouverture du parc Prince-Albert

Après plusieurs mois de travaux, l'aire de jeux

pour enfants du parc Prince-Albert a été ouverte au public le 4 juin. Merci pour votre patience et votre compréhension.

Venez vous rafraîchir au parc King George

Il y a du nouveau dans le parc King George! Cet été, il y a cinq jets d'eau à la pataugeoire, et elle sera ouverte tous les jours de 8 h à 21 h.

Fermeture temporaire des toilettes du parc Prince-Albert

En raison de dommages et de vandalisme, les toilettes du parc Prince-Albert sont fermées pour une période indéterminée.

Bureaux municipaux : horaire d'été

Du lundi au jeudi de 8 h à 16 h 30
Le vendredi de 8 h à 13 h

COVID-19: Montréal yellow zone status

On June 14, the Montréal area was changed to pre-alert (yellow) status, allowing for the opening of outdoor bar terraces, the possibility of group graduation events, and more. Consult westmount.org or quebec.ca for more details. VACCINATION: Information or appointments: visit quebec.ca or santemontreal.ca.

Sports & Recreation: registration

Online registration for in-person summer activities begins **Tuesday, June 15th**. To consult the list of activities and to register, visit westmount.org.

Reopening of Prince Albert Park

After several months of work, the children's play area in Prince Albert Park was reopened to

the public on June 4th. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Come and cool off at King George Park

There's something new in King George Park! This summer, the wading pool, which will be open daily from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., features five water sprayers.

Temporary closure of comfort station in Prince Albert Park

Due to damage and vandalism, the Prince Albert Park comfort station is closed for an undetermined period.

Summer schedule for municipal offices

Monday to Thursday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Friday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

BIBLIOTHÈQUE**Service de cueillette sans contact**

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L'heure du conte en ligne

Découvrez des contes racontés par notre personnel à youtube.com/bibliowestmount.

Les marionnettes s'amuse

Vendredi 18 juin sur la chaîne YouTube de la Bibliothèque. Silly Story Sammy : Sammy and the Summer Stay-cation. En anglais.

Food and Foodways in Timor Leste

Vendredi 18 juin, 19 h sur Zoom. Conférence par David Szanto, PhD, spécialiste de l'alimentation et artiste. Inscrivez-vous sur Eventbrite. westlib.org

Quiz virtuel :**Fête nationale du Québec**

Mercredi 23 juin, 19 h, en ligne. Vous êtes invités à vous joindre à vos voisins pour célébrer la Fête nationale et tester vos connaissances de la culture québécoise. Vous pourriez gagner un prix provenant d'un commerce de Westmount. Événement bilingue. Inscrivez-vous à westmount.org

LIBRARY**Contactless pickup service**

Reserve items online or by email; you will have 3 days to pick up your items. Pickup schedule:
Monday and Wednesday: 1-5 p.m.
Tuesday and Thursday: 1-7 p.m.
Friday: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Book recommendation service

Fill out an online form to receive a list of recommended books. westlib.org

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Storytime online

Listen to stories read by Library personnel at youtube.com/bibliowestmount.

Silly Story Sammy

Friday, June 18 on the Library's YouTube channel: Sammy and the Summer Stay-cation.

Food and Foodways in Timor Leste

Friday, June 18, 7 p.m. on Zoom. Lecture by David Szanto, PhD, food specialist and artist. Register on Eventbrite. westlib.org

Virtual Quiz:**Fête nationale du Québec**

Wednesday, June 23, 7 p.m., online. Celebrate la Fête nationale and join your neighbours to test your knowledge of Quebec culture. You could win a prize from a Westmount business. Bilingual event. Register at westmount.org.



More election news

Council approves mail-in voting for voters 70+ on request

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

City council June 7 opted to take advantage of Quebec's newly permitted use of mail-in voting for voters aged 70 or over in the upcoming November 7 municipal election. This will be allowed in Quebec municipalities that adopt a resolution no later than July 1.

"I do think it's a very democratic step and I hope to see a higher turnout in this election," said Mayor Christina Smith as soon as the resolution was adopted. "I

think we should all be voting by mail. It's a step forward in trying to engage more people in the democracy of their municipality."

According to the city's resolution, moved by Councillor Mary Gallery in accordance with Quebec's act governing municipal elections, anyone can vote by mail who is registered as an elector on the municipality's list of electors and is 70 or older on the day of the election and has requested to do so.

It is not known how many people might

be eligible to avail themselves of this opportunity, or how many will make requests.

Also at stake is how this new procedure may affect the counting of mail-in votes and possible delays in election results being known on election night.

The long-standing city of Westmount tradition of announcing election results the same day in the council chamber may be a thing of the past as a result – if it would even be allowed by whatever social distancing restrictions may be in place come November.

Traffic diverted, tied up after contractors cause 2 gas leaks in same area

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Two gas leaks June 7 caused traffic disruptions, brought numerous fire and other emergency vehicles trucks to the area of Sherbrooke/Metcalf/Mount Stephen and left some residents without electricity from just after 1:30 pm to until 5:30 pm. Sherbrooke was closed off westbound, followed by the entire area.

"It was a busy, busy afternoon," said Public Security director Greg McBain. Patrollers diverted and detoured the traffic.

The first incident, reported to have been caused by a city contractor outside 440

Mount Stephen, generated a call from the fire department to Public Security about 1:25 pm and also brought out representatives of Énergir (the former GazMet). When power was shut down, traffic lights went out and public safety officers visited at least one apartment building to check on residents during the hot temperatures.

Residents were told that they were welcome to cool off at the Westmount recreation centre, which was open as a cooling station but "not many" were displaced by the heat, McBain said. One person who uses a supplemental oxygen tank was also checked on after fearing that it might run out.

Metcalf gas too, water line 'three'

The leak outside 371 Metcalfe was reported at 1:34 pm and was caused by a private contractor, he said. The exact location of the leak could not be determined initially and many fire crews were called in to help in identifying it.

In the midst of the already difficult situation, a temporary water supply line on de Maisonneuve at Kensington was broken, according to a nearby resident who described the entire area as "mayhem."

Victoria cyclist breaks clavicle in unknown circumstances

A cyclist of unreported age was taken to hospital after being found June 5 at 12:04 pm on the ground outside 660 Victoria, public safety officers said. This is just south of The Boulevard.

On arrival, officers found a doctor who had been passing by on the scene treating the victim for deep cuts and scratches to the arm and face as well as saying the man appeared to have suffered a broken clavicle. He had been riding a Bixi.

The victim stated that he could not recall what had happened and there was no information on his age or residency. He had not been wearing a helmet. Urgences Santé arrived two minutes after the officers and took him to hospital.

8 curfew tickets issued

Four men in their early 20s were ticketed \$78 each for being in the restricted area of Summit lookout at 2:10 am June 8 during the city's park curfew period. This is midnight to 5 am. One man lived in Westmount, the others in Montreal. Four other tickets were issued for the same offence the night before.

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PET PAGE

14- June 15, 2021

Happy Lou



*Westmount
A-dog-tions*

LYSANNE FOWLER

Here is Lou, a classic white-and-cream collie type with such a long stunning coat and sweet ears, and you can't miss his big curious eyes and engaging doggy smile. Lou is a happy-go-lucky guy, enjoying other dogs but not all that used to cats.

A gentle companion, all he wants is a



Westmount dog life, which is so great for our beloved pooches in the dog parks and on the Summit.

He is presently at the Montreal SPCA kennel, waiting for a new family with whom he will have memorable adventures. Lou is three years young, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and micro-chipped.

Lou presently has a sensitive tummy, and this is managed by a special food. As he settled into a new home life, he would be assessed again for food allergies. In this light, he is presented for adoption on a humanitarian adoption basis, with a reduced adoption fee.

Please refer to adorable Lou's identification number 47878659 when you visit the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com and fill out the adoption application for him on the attached link. Once submitted, you will then be contacted for a telephone interview, followed by a visit by appointment at the SPCA.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne

Nix & Thalia, saved from roadside box



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Who would think that Nix and Thalia, these most precious kitten girlies, were found abandoned in a box at less than a month old by the side of a road and absolutely starving?

Almost identical then and now, they were taken in by the volunteers at Gerdy's Rescues & Adoptions. They stole hearts,

these wee little ones, as they were saved and cared for with so much love, and are now quite the socialized little misses.

It would be wonderful if they could be adopted together. They are quite sweet and get along so well. Stunning with their beautiful black coats and sparkling eyes, Nix and Thalia are very healthy now, and on plan for their veterinary care in terms of inoculations, treatments and spaying.

Please contact the volunteers at the rescue at their email address info@gerdysrescue.org to find out more about them and have a chance to see more photographs of kittens at play.

Your neighbour, Lysanne



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Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

May sales: When data are a moving target

2017, according to our records), which brought the average price for April up to \$2,159,000 but the median price was \$1,800,000. Then in May, the average price was \$2,256,111 while the median was \$2,020,000, a more than 10-percent hike in the median.

As if that wasn't enough, in May the top price was \$4,000,000 for a house with a valuation of \$4,750,000, while April had one house that sold for more than double its tax value. We also note that the latest sale date in the May list is May 17, so we would expect that agents are again taking their time posting later sales agreements, which hopefully will come soon.

Inventory up!

On the other hand, the number of available listings for Westmount houses jumped from 61 in mid-May to 74 in mid-June, with increases in every price range (except \$10-million-plus). The number of house rentals is soaring, with 26 houses

rented by May this year, compared to 13 in the same time period last year and 21 the year before.

Condos

Only two condominium sales were posted in May, including one at 4700 St. Catherine St., which brought a price of \$1,875,000; the other was a flat in a former triplex on St. Catherine St. that brought \$601,000. Five more condo sales in April bring the second-quarter average price to \$935,800 so far, down from \$1,027,938 in

15 sales during the first quarter of the year. However, the average mark-up over valuation in the second quarter was 32.8 percent, up from 19.8 percent in the first quarter, so things are looking positive in this category, with June sales still to be added to the second quarter.

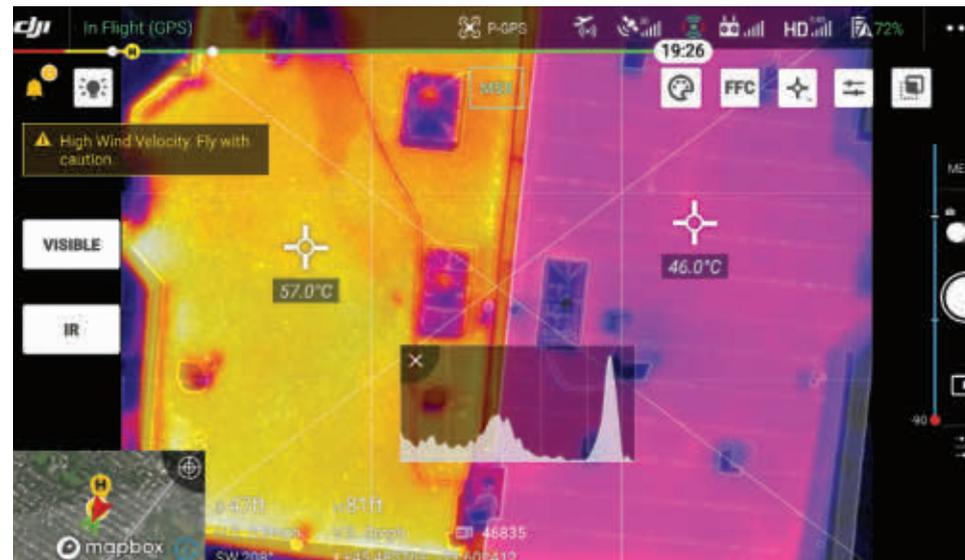
One co-op apartment at 4444 Sherbrooke St. was negotiated in May, one of seven sold so far this year, four of which were at 2 and 3 Westmount Square. Apartments there are selling for prices between \$810,000 and \$1,575,000.

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 May 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 bottom offers a picture of these trends over time.

Statistics for the most recent months in Westmount real estate sales show some confusion as late-posting agents added five more house sales to our April list, which now includes 12 of 15 sales at less than \$2 million, and then posted nine sales in May, of which five were for more than \$2 million.

The top April price was \$6,400,000 (for a house that had been on the market since

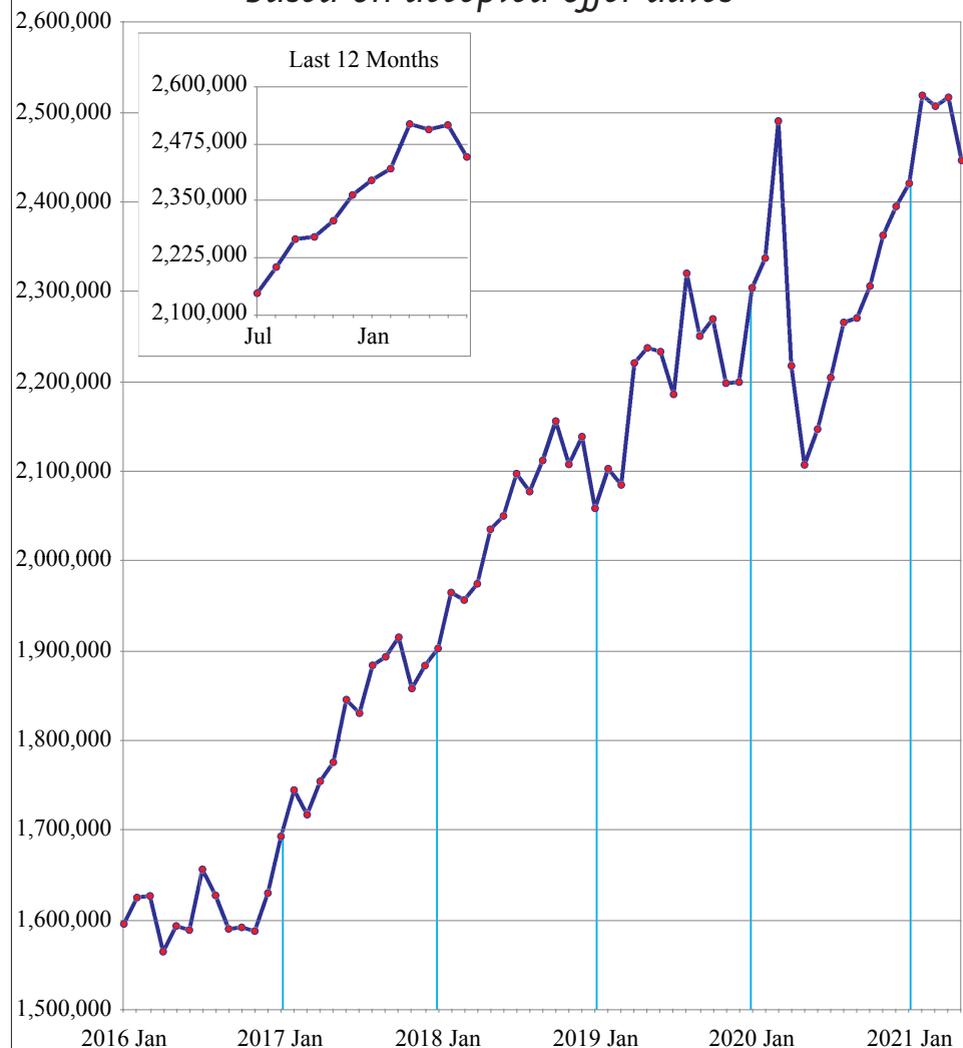
What a difference a roof colour makes!



Two Arlington Ave. roofs were photographed June 7 using an infrared camera: one black measuring 57°C, left; one white measuring 46°C. The government of Canada's website puts the maximum temperature for Montreal that day at 32.3°C.

PHOTOS: RALPH THOMPSON.

Average adjusted price for 'typical' Westmount house, by month, January 2016 to May 2021, based on accepted offer dates



A new mission: 'Westmount helps Montreal'

► From right, Welcome Hall CEO Sam Watts with Westmounters Mary Gallery – one of the city's councillors, Ross Fraser, Christy Grant, Nicolas Briere, Heidi Smith, Mary Murphy, Patricia Roman and Pam Brydges.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.



These Westmounters showed their support for the Welcome Hall Mission June 8 at its headquarters, which is located at 606 de Courcelle, 400 yards south of Westmount's border with St. Henri.

"We look like an album cover," joked one participant as they organized for this photo looking down Acorn St. More serious is the goal of the charity's "phase 2" promotional campaign over many media, namely to raise awareness and funds for its activities that "support those experiencing homelessness, young single mothers, families and at-risk youth," as described on its website.

Jennifer Roman of the Hero Strategy Group explained that the "slogan of the campaign is 'Montreal helps Montreal,' although in this case it is 'Westmount helps Montreal.'"

Phase 3 is scheduled for this fall.

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Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Walking for St. Raphael's

ael's where she was president of the board for 10 years. [According to its website, the firm has developed over 20 seniors' residences, and is also the developer of Liz, the



In spite of a seemingly endless halt to fundraisers, more than ever Westmounters are involved in many, many worthy causes, volunteering services as well as helping to raise funds.

One local res is walking to do just that. Paula Petrocelli sent me lots of information about her cause: Walk for Dignity. The event aims to raise money for St. Raphael's Palliative Care Centre, a non-profit charitable organization created to build and operate a palliative care home and day centre offering free, high-quality palliative care in one of the most densely populated areas of Montreal.

What is your event exactly?

On June 17, I am walking to raise money for St. Raphael's Palliative Care Centre, which opened in November 2019. But in March 2020, COVID was announced as a worldwide pandemic, which restricted us from organizing fundraisers. Walk for Dignity was initiated by Marie Michele Del Balso, former senior vice president of Le Groupe Maurice, the developer of St. Raph-

new seniors' residence being built on the corner of de Maisonneuve and Claremont in NDG.]

How long is the walk?

In memory of her mother, who died last month, Marie Michele will walk 65 kilometers all in one day to raise funds. I plan to support her in my separate one-day walk of 20 kilometers. Local res and co-lawn bowler Naomi Sharpe will be joining me on the first stretch along the Lachine canal. I plan to do the other 10k along a beautiful wooded trail behind the University of Montreal, along the Mount Royal Cemetery onto the Notre Dame des Neiges Cemetery. I will stop by my parents' grave and continue walking back towards St. Raphael's Palliative Care Centre.

What is your goal?

We wish to raise \$100,000 and to date have actually surpassed! We have received \$125,000 and we expect \$150,000 by June 17. Our walk is picking up momentum and people will be walking all over Montreal, including my granddaughter Juliana Ottoni, who graduates from ECS this year. She needs to do 10 hours of community work by the end of this semester so plans to walk 50k to get her credit. [Juliana's father, Marco Ottoni, is vice president of the St. Raphael board, so this is truly a family undertaking. Bravo!]

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Two Sandras reminisce

REMEMBERING THE 1950s: AN AGE OF INNOCENCE?

Different rules, different demographics and different choices

BY SANDRA FELDMAN

I was nine years old in 1950, and my first boyfriend was a tall, freckle-faced boy named Ronnie. We skated on the ice rink up the street at St. Cyril Park. Strauss waltzes played, and the skaters looked radiant under the stars. Then it was home to do our homework and listen to radio shows like *Our Miss Brooks* and *Life With Luigi* on CJAD.

Fear of nuclear attack and the communists prompted schools to teach us about hiding under desks. We heard about the Korean War, the Cold War, the McCarthy hearings and the executions of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg for treason.

To my mother, who had lived under communism in the Ukraine, their crime was both despicable and embarrassing: The Rosenbergs were Jews. We lived in a Jewish bubble of Outremont, and had almost no contact with our Catholic neighbours.

My father, Sidney, had just begun a clothing business, and both of my parents worked on developing it in the evenings.

My mother, Lily, wrote up invoices, orders and letters because – unlike my father – she spoke and wrote flawlessly in English and French. She also looked after her own mother, who lived a block away, and I learned some Yiddish by hearing them talk.

The students at my school were about 98 percent Jewish, but the teachers were

100 percent not. We sang hymns each morning, along with “God Save the King.” Christmas carols sung in the halls were delightful, as I loved to sing in groups. Skipping rope and playing hopscotch were the standard recess sports.

I was skinny and short, and I felt self-conscious when we lined up in the basement every day before school, arranged in order of height. I was always at the front. The physician assigned by the school board to examine us was Dr. Grant, a dour Scotsman who frightened me. He invariably pronounced me too thin, so I used to fill my pockets with stones. He would thrust a prescription for a tonic in my hand. I felt I had failed him.

My favourite teacher was Miss Simpson, a slight woman who wore her hair in a tight bun. She was quiet and kind.

Our gym teacher, Miss M., was not. Her temper was scary: She once grabbed a boy named Ralph by his hair and slammed his head against the wall. (There were no consequences.)

The female teachers were unmarried, as it was believed that married women were taking jobs away from men. The value system for me seemed to be: “No wife of mine will work unless I can’t support her.”

My mother was a traditional homemaker, but she looked back proudly on the years she had spent working at Eaton’s, at a time when Jewish shopgirls were rare. Female independence was her mantra:

“Don’t marry young. A college degree or two is most important. You can’t depend on a man. He can leave you, or get sick, or die. You have to earn your own way.”

She placed great value on the academic achievement of her children, but although I was a good student, especially in reading and writing, I was also shy and anxious. I never once raised my hand in seven years of public school.

To help me gain confidence, teachers would call on me to stand up and correct one of the boys in class – five of whom were named George – if they made a spelling mistake.

Remembering ‘Princess Elizabeth’

A highlight of these years was seeing Princess Elizabeth in 1951, during her first visit to Canada and before she became queen. She circled the track at Delorimier Downs several times as the crowd at the stadium cheered.

I began high school in 1954 at Strathcona Academy. The student body there was slightly more diverse. Non-Jews made up about a tenth of the class (though there were no black or Asian students), and there were Jews of Iraqi, North African, Syrian and Greek descent. One of the kids came from Kazakhstan; another was a refugee.

The teachers, hired by the Protestant School Board, were again exclusively non-Jewish. Some of the students teased them behind their backs and gave them nicknames: Bucky and Ducky (sisters), Fartin’

Fred and Burpin’ Bill (brothers) and Kootchie. Maybe that contributed to one teacher’s reliance on a small flask in his jacket pocket.

My friends and I talked about our schoolwork, our mothers, and, of course, boys. How to become popular with the other sex was a major topic of discussion. At 12, I was having clandestine sessions of limited necking with my boyfriend.

Almost twice as many boys as girls completed high school at Strathcona in 1953: 128 boys and 71 girls. Beside their photos they wrote of their future ambitions.

Twenty-nine boys wanted to move into professions (engineers, doctors, dentists, architects), compared with only four girls (occupational therapists, architect). Twelve girls, but no boys, wanted to become teachers. Twenty-three boys wanted to be businessmen or “to make money,” whereas no girls listed these goals; fourteen girls wanted marriage, motherhood, or “to get a man,” but no boys chose marriage or fatherhood.

But about the same percentage of each sex, twelve boys and six girls, said they wanted to pursue higher education. As the 1950s ended, there were stirrings of the social justice movements to come, with more opportunities for freedom of choice for women – including birth control. I gleefully anticipated leaving the confines of Outremont to attend McGill University in 1958. It felt like a rebirth, and the possibilities seemed endless and exciting.



From left, Sandra Hendlisz and Sandra Feldman on June 9.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

Two Sandras reminisce

REMEMBERING THE 1950s: AN AGE OF INNOCENCE?

Different fashions, different politics and different expectations

BY SANDRA HENDLISZ

In high school, I have a memory of my mother having a felt skirt made for me. The skirt had a basket with flowers coming out of it – flowers of all different colours. My skirt was the envy of all my friends and my mom was very proud. Fashion in the 1950s was very distinct as a result of World War II. During the war, there was not much contact with Paris, which was then as it is now the fashion centre of the world. At this time, women often replaced men in the workforce. After the war they returned to the kitchen but were expected to be stylish, fragile and feminine doing it.

When I went to McGill, we all wore high-heeled shoes and suits, and were carefully made up to have a peaches-and-cream complexion with bright-red lipstick and bright nail polish to match. The only exception to this style of dressing were the beatniks, who had pale colour lipstick and pale faces to match. This was the era where baby doll pyjamas were invented and that was the model for us. We were expected to

look like dolls. It is not a surprise that the Barbie doll was created during this time.

Fashion expectations – life expectations

This look was accompanied by similar expectations. Women were expected to have a job or a career only – in the words of my mother – as “something to fall back on” should the marriage end tragically through the death of a spouse. Divorce at these times was considered the domain of the floozies.

I have always been grateful that my mother agreed with my wishes to go to university. My dad thought it was a waste of time and his parents were encouraging me to go to secretarial school. When I went to McGill, I was a serious student and often left the weekend to socialize. If I did not socialize, my mother felt I was spending too much time studying and my chances of finding a suitable husband were diminished. When I socialized and my marks suffered, I was plagued with guilt as it was made clear to me that my father’s hard-earned money was spent on my education.

It was this dilemma that created a lot of angst. When I think of it now at least there were clear rules and boundaries set. Young people knew what to expect, what to do; there was not the range of choice that many have now.

Every family had a family member that was not allowed into the United States. During the 1950s, the fear of communism was very powerful there. There was a series of highly publicized inquiries into pro-communist activities. The best known investigator was Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, who was known for his strong stance on anti-communism. My aunt Reena was not allowed into the United States because it was suspected that she had communist leanings.

When I went to elementary school, my parents chose a Jewish school, but one they deemed to have no communist affiliations. I did belong to a youth movement that supported the kibbutzim in Israel and it was always worrisome for fear that the leanings of all these organizations would be too left wing.

Boys would call, visit

I remember staying at home and waiting for boys to call. When one did and my mother answered the phone, her voice would drop an octave as she gently came to call me. When a boy did come to the house – which was the custom when we had dates – the house was properly cleaned and every effort was made to ask the young man about his family and his scholastic intentions. This was always a tense time for us as my dad would often fall asleep and my mom had to wake him to participate in the quiz.

It is indeed a privilege to have watched the world change and evolve and to be given such an extraordinary number of choices. It is only from the perspective of the 1950s that we can appreciate the difference.

Retired Westmount High English teacher Sandra Hendlisz is a former Westmounter. Both Sandras attend the Congregation Shaar Hashomayim. See February 16, p. 22 for their previous reminiscences.



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