

Council meeting opens with call for solidarity with Ukraine

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The March 7 city council meeting opened with a passionate plea for solidarity “with the people of Ukraine” from Councillor Jeff Shamie who chaired it as acting mayor during the absence of Mayor Christina Smith over spring break.

“The situation in Ukraine reminds us of how fortunate we are to live in Westmount, Quebec and Canada,” Shamie said. “City council meetings like the one we are holding tonight are at the heart of our democracy.

“We on council are privileged to have

the opportunity to serve, and citizens are fortunate to have the right to come forward to share their views.”

In the past two weeks, he said, in “the unwarranted and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine” by Russia “we have all watched in awe the courage of the Ukrainian people as they, at great personal risk, have stood up for democracy and their independence” and have been “horrified” as energy and food were cut off and civilians bombarded.

“We as Westmounters stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine,” he continued, asking residents to donate and support the various Ukrainian relief efforts.

And at home: Province’s Bill 96

Meanwhile, he said, “a respectful and civilized debate is critical to building a better Westmount and ensuring we effectively meet *continued on p. 2*

Do you know where in Westmount this is?



City council does. See p. 5 for coverage of its plans for the area.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Court backs city on Mt. Pleasant permit refusal, p. 8

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City to seek photo radar to reduce highway noise in ‘short term’

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

City council adopted a resolution March 7 asking Transport Quebec to install photo radar on Highway 136/720 on the stretch between Atwater and Hallowell.

This is a 70 km/h speed limit zone where cars go so fast at night that it sounds like drag racing, Councillor Kathleen Kez told the *Independent*. She said she test-drove it herself, was unable to go at the

speed limit and had to go with the flow of traffic – at 110 km/h.

The resolution asks for the photo radar “to reduce roadway noise.” This, according to Kez, is at least in the short term until the city’s request for a sound barrier can be resolved after the current feasibility study (see story, July 13, 2021, p. 5). “Of course, we want the sound barrier,” she added.

She said there is a for- *continued on p. 2*



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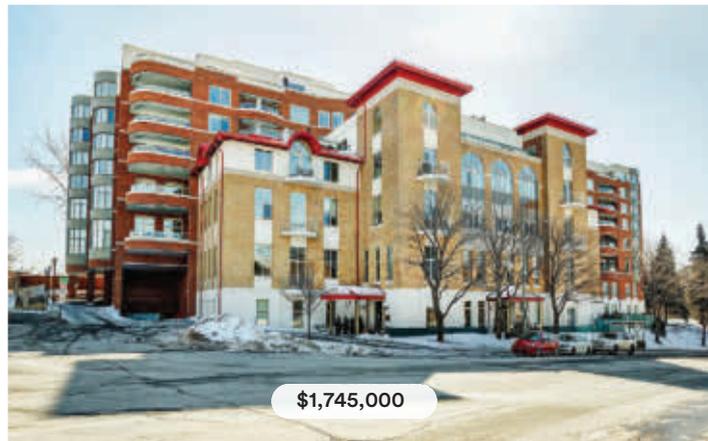


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Added patrols follow car break-in at summit

Additional preventative patrols in the morning are being added around Summit Woods to help deter the theft of items from parked cars, Public Security officials said last week. This follows a call March 6 at 9:50 am concerning a car parked with a window open and the alarm sounding.

When officers responded, the alarm was still on and the incident was turned over to police with no further details.

The incident is similar to others in the area that have occurred when dog walkers leave their cars for at least 30 minutes to walk in Summit Woods, said assistant director Kimberley Colquhoun.

"It's a reminder to everyone when leaving parked cars to place all belongings out of sight and lock the doors," she said.

Spring graffiti removal starts

With the melting of snow revealing winter graffiti, specialized crews are coming out to remove it in a number of places that have been covered up by snow, Public Security officials said last week. Patrollers have been taking inventory of locations they spot graffiti.

Council, cont'd from p. 1

the needs of our residents. In looking ahead, I encourage all of us to become more engaged in the debate about what type of Quebec we want to build together.'

"I think I speak for all of us on council in saying we were disappointed to hear our premier defend the cancellation of the Dawson College project because priority has to be given to French CEGEPs.

"Bill 96, which is currently being debated in the National Assembly, will have a far-reaching impact on the lives of Quebecers. In the name of promoting the use of French, it pre-emptively uses the notwithstanding clause to over-ride the Quebec and Canadian charters of human rights and freedoms.

"It touches on commerce, employment, education, access to public health services, expression in a range of contexts, and the operation of the legal system."

Photo radar, cont'd from p. 1

mal application form regarding requests for photo radar. "It's something I've been pushing for since before the [November 2021 municipal] election." She said that city director general Hadi Hakim had looked into the matter and found there is an established protocol for such a request. "It sounds like an easy fix for the noise."

He asked residents to consult the brief on Bill 96 submitted by the Association of Suburban Municipalities (ASM) "to learn about the position taken by the city of Westmount, particularly in relation to the provision of municipal services." It can be found on the AMB/ASM website.

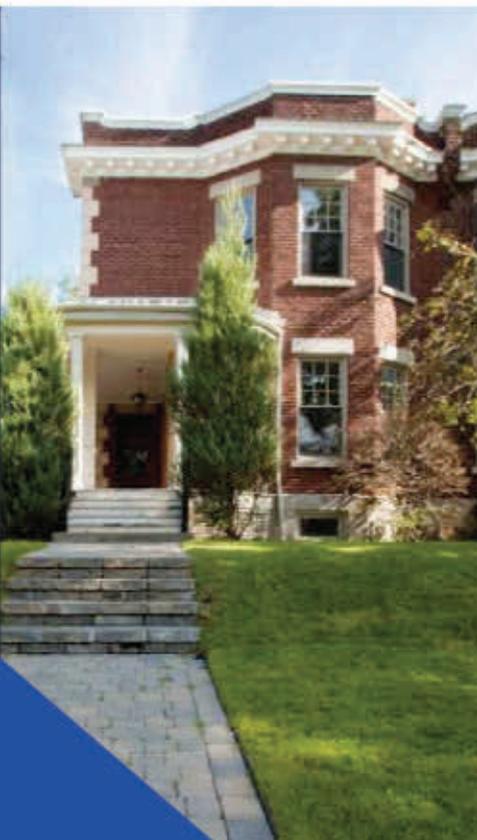
Shamie also related personal recollections of the late Donald Johnston, who served as Westmount's MP from 1978 to 1988 and died February 4 (see also February 15, p. 6).

He closed by relating "good news." This, he said, "is probably the first time in two years where our response to the pandemic has not formed the heart of the mayor's opening remarks. City staff are gradually returning to the office and city programs and services are ramping up."

Westmounters' willingness to help their neighbours during the pandemic demonstrates "what makes our community special. And one last plea. The pandemic has been really hard on our local businesses. Please shop locally whenever you can."

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53 tickets issued in Feb. for illegal handicap spot use



One of the two handicapped parking signs in front of the Westmount Medical Centre, as seen March 11. PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

A total of 53 tickets were reported to be issued by Public Security during the month of February for cars illegally parked in zones reserved specifically for holders of handicap permits. Each ticket, including the fine and administrative cost, totalled \$118.

One of the “trouble spots” is reported to be on Sherbrooke St. west of Clarendon in front of the McDonald’s where there are a couple of handicap zones. These are spe-

cifically located for people suffering mobility challenges who are going to the Westmount Medical Centre at 5025 Sherbrooke, explained assistant Public Security director Kimberley Colquhoun.

“People are usually very upset to get such a ticket when they decide to park at a vacant spot to run in to use a bank machine for example,” she explained.

But many complaints are being received for people taking advantage of a vacant space without thinking of the problems they may be causing others, she said.

Letters, p. 6

Pet Page, p. 19

Dodge on February real estate, p. 17

Police Report, p. 20

Retail Watch: Coiffure Spa Westmount adds staff, p. 21

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Unofficial strike #10

Truck hits Greene Ave. bridge, again



The CP rail bridge over Greene Ave. near Prospect St. was hit by a northbound truck March 8. The *Independent* is considering running it as a news item when a week passes and the bridge is not struck. This is a rare instance of a vehicle making it through after hitting the bridge. They usually get stuck. A CP worker told a passer-by that another hot spot for strikes is the Guy St. overpass.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WILLEM WESTENBERG.

Non-exhaustive list of Greene rail bridge strikes

- February 14 northbound truck (February 15, p. 18)
- February 7 northbound van (February 8, p. 3)
- December 16 northbound truck (January 11, p. 7)
- October 13 northbound truck (October 19, p. 18)
- October 6 southbound truck (see Oct. 12, p. 3)
- September 29 southbound truck (Oct. 5, p. 17)
- September 23 northbound truck (Sept. 28, p. 23)
- August 12 northbound truck (Aug. 24, p. 21)
- November 5, 2020 northbound truck (Nov. 24, 2020, p. 4)

Unofficial record for shortest time:
6 days between strikes



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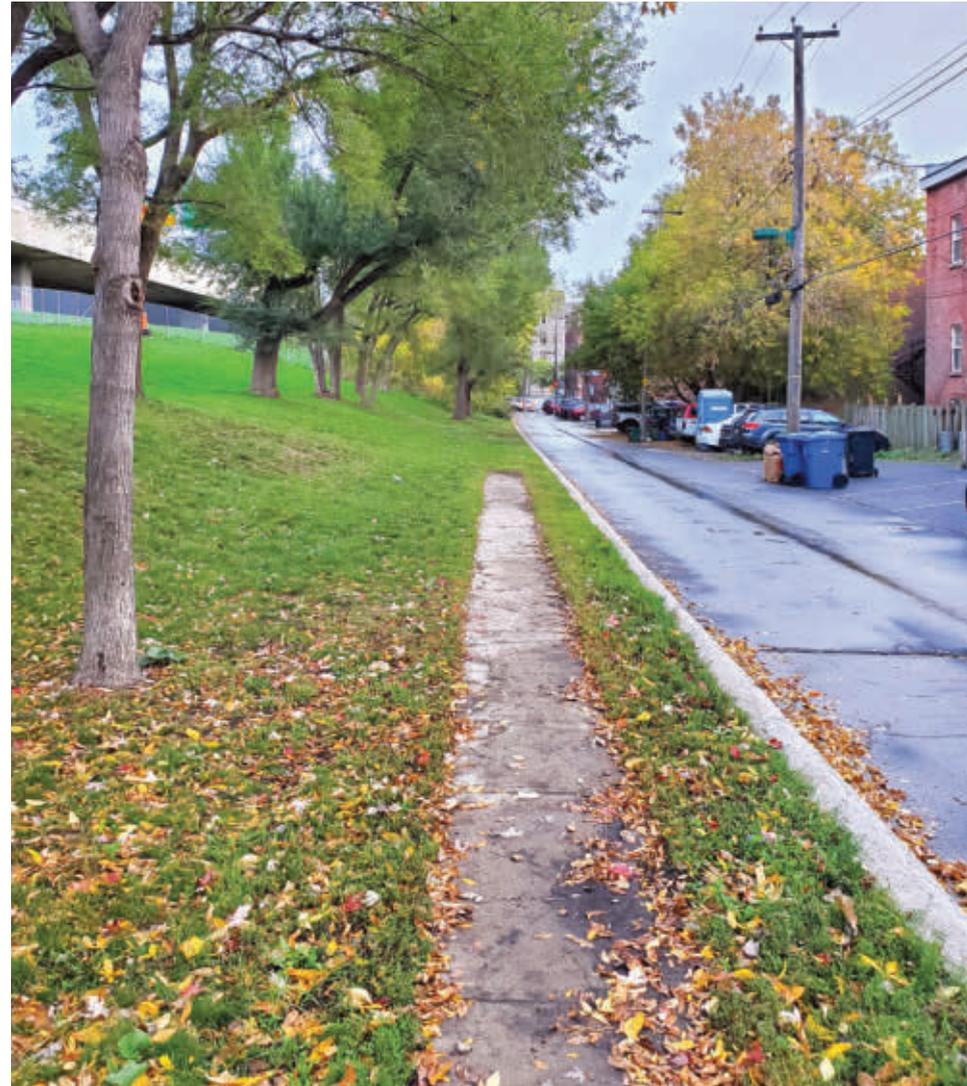


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Now that the Turcot project is completed... Council seeks way to re-open Selby Park on MTQ land



Above, the area that was Selby Park has a spooky feel at the moment, including this sidewalk to nowhere, as seen October 18. Selby Lane is at right. On an even more sombre note, a homeless encampment under Highway 136/720 is often visible from the area, seen at top right the same day. It is still in place, bottom right, with five tent groupings visible on March 11. PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Six years after Selby Park was temporarily closed in 2015 for the Turcot Project, city council has mandated city director general Hadi Hakim to negotiate with Transport Quebec to enable the city to re-establish the small park along the east side of Greene just north of Selby Lane.

While the city had maintained the park, it was discovered in 2015 that it actually had been created on land belonging to the provincial Transport ministry (MTQ), according to District 8 councillor Kathleen Kez, who moved the council resolution.

“Now that the Turcot [exchange construction] project has been completed, people need their park back,” she explained. Until an agreement is reached with the MTQ, the city cannot proceed with

landscaping or any other type of project in Selby Park.

The park had been created by the city in 1972 as a “memorial” to some 239 families displaced at that time by expropriations for building the original Ville Marie expressway, she told the *Independent*.

The council resolution also asks that negotiations regarding the park include the use of “the little parcel of land west of Greene and adjacent to Selby Park.” This is land where a row of triplexes had been demolished for the Turcot work (see story March 24, 2015, p. 1).

A community garden could be one use for the land, Kez suggested.

The photo on p. 1 was taken from the top of the hill in the “park,” looking southwest towards the east-west Selby Lane, which runs from the bottom left of the photo rightwards.



October 2021



This month

Appel aux Artistes de Westmount

Soumettez votre candidature pour la prochaine saison d'expositions de la Galerie du Victoria Hall. Ce concours s'adresse aux artistes émergents, semi-professionnels ou établis résidant à Westmount. Visitez westmount.org ou contactez la Galerie à galerieart@westmount.org ou au 514 989-5265

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La Galerie du Victoria Hall recrute également une personne en charge du commissariat. Postulez sur westmount.org jusqu'au 4 avril 2022.

The Gallery at Victoria Hall is also hiring a new curator. Apply on westmount.org until April 4th, 2022.

La Galerie du Victoria Hall
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



DEPLORABLE CONDITION OF FLAGS

About nine months ago my letter and accompanying photo showing the terrible condition and placement of the flags outside the main entrance of Westmount Park School were published in the *Independent*. It was suggested by Mr. Price [the editor] that this situation was due to a major construction project that was going on at the time.

Well, the work was completed months ago, yet the deplorable state of the flags remains. It is also important to note that the students of the school see this display when playing and then returning to class



after recess and lunchtime. Does the administration care?

The accompanying photos were taken March 2. In contrast, please note the two flags near the library, bottom photo.

SAM BEITEL, ABBOTT AVE.

YORK ST. SNOW CONVOY MAKES NO SENSE

As per Mme Lipovenko and the editor's reply (March 8, p. 6), may I add that having snow removal operations on York St. and thus blocking the area for a while, unannounced (of course), has a terrible effect on traffic flow coming in and out of Château Maisonneuve building at de Maisonneuve and Claremont? The vehicle access of the Château is designed with only two exit ways: both on York.

I've experienced it a few times: it's a nightmare to get out and make your way towards Glen Rd.

Château Maisonneuve is a huge building, with lots of people living and working there. And lots of deliveries. This snow convoy makes no sense in this little area when you consider all the one-ways that give very few options to drive away.

LULU CORNELIER,
DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

LET'S FOCUS (GROUP) ON POTHOLES

Holes, holes and holes.... But we are used to them in Québec with the very cold weather, and then rain, and freezing again; and Westmount is located on a mountain... This pattern has been going on for decades and it very normal with such changing



Victoria, inset, and Upper Lansdowne.

Clarification

A report February 15 (p. 1) should have read that the council meeting February 7 had approved minutes of the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) at which it recommended a permit for 4216 Dorchester be issued, with many conditions, rather than the permit's approval being adopted by the council.

weather conditions.

That being said, Montreal is known for the worst streets in the country with its monster potholes that appear when spring comes around. I wonder if, as one of the best cities to live in Canada, we should not put together a very simple focus group composed of a few residents and our Public Works team (which works very hard to fill those holes as they come up). The Public Works employees are very aware of the critical areas in our city and, with this focus group, we would make sure to identify and address the places on our streets that have been patched time and time again and that are the most perilous.

As residents, we too know them and working hand in hand with the city's team could enable us to attempt to find efficient solutions going forward.

Understanding that the writer has a full-time job, I did not want to circle Westmount's streets and take dozens of pictures. I have selected a couple that seem to be the more important places and where, if a tire hits one of them, damages will certainly occur.

There are enough situations in our world right now that we can't control. It would be great to have a proactive plan to at least be able to drive in Westmount without swerving around and damaging our vehicles. Thanks again to the Public

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GUEST COLUMN

Gratitude in a time of COVID – thank you, donors to Old Timers Hockey Tournament

Last year was miserable for most of us, to be gladly consigned history even as the pandemic endures. But as dark as the clouds may have been, one of them had a bright silver lining.

Since 1989, Westmount has granted SWAT (the Senior Westmount All-star Team) ice time weekly during the winter season and to run its Westmount Old Timers Hockey Tournament each first weekend of December.

The tournament, first held in 1991 as a modest charity effort, has grown substantially in scope and size to become a recognized annual event. Every year, the organizers have raised funds from team fees, program advertising, silent auctions, private and corporate donations, *et cetera*.

More than \$500,000 raised

Today, well over \$500,000 has been donated to the Montreal Children's Hospital and to the Hôpital St. Justine, all dedicated to funding advanced neuro-surgery equipment and targeted pediatric brain cancer research.

In 2020, for the first time in 31 years, the tournament had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. With the resurgence of variants, 2021 looked like a repeat.

The children's hospitals – gripped by the pandemic, desperately short of resources – were having to further postpone key neuro-surgery equipment purchases and critical ongoing research programs, and the victims of these circumstances were children unfortunately affected by this crippling and deadly disease.

Then a window opened when the Westmount recreation centre (WRC) advised us that the provincial government had temporarily relaxed its COVID-19 restrictions enough to hold a tournament with vaccinated players, masking and distancing restrictions and no spectators – making the tournament possible, but unfortunately cutting off traditional sources of funding.

However, under the circumstances, we felt that raising a nickel, \$500 or a thousand dollars would be better than doing nothing and doing something is believing.

With less than five weeks to the tournament date, we decided to take the plunge with organizers, sending out invitations to the outside teams that had participated in past tournaments.

That led to the first shock, as seven of the regular teams declined our invitation, some on account of the short notice and most because of the lingering COVID risk and of the restrictions still in place.

We were now left with SWAT, the origi-

nal Westmount team; Swattoo, its scion; the Wanderers, a Westmount team and long-term contender at the tournament; and a hastily patched together Montreal Children's Hospital team.

Then SWAT and Swattoo, in a radical departure from their traditional fundraising method, decided to switch to sponsorship, whereby each player would raise funds by getting sponsored by friends, relatives, merchants, donors of any kind.

New approach

With 10 days to go, the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation hastily set up a funding page for each team and for each player, providing full tournament information, individual targets, a record of all donations and tax receipts to donors.

Then the flood gates opened and a miracle happened that could only happen in a community of people who care about others, who espouse the children's cause wholeheartedly and cast their generosity into the tournament pot with selfless acts, support, funding and any which way that could help.

By the close of the tournament at 5 pm December 5, the tournament had amassed over \$45,000 of funds to go to the children's hospitals, twice the average amount raised in previous years – and this with no attendance in the arena, no silent auction, and half the number of teams usually playing. The sponsorship proceeds amount to over \$10,000 per team and to almost \$1,000 per player, all done in a two-week scramble in the throes of a pandemic.

Thank you!

To all and everyone who has participated, contributed in any manner, or even supported us in thought, the victory is powerful and the reward immense.

It has been impossible for us to thank personally and in a timely manner everyone who has contributed to the unexpected and remarkable success of this 30th tournament and hence we have resorted to the media that best reaches the Westmount community and beyond, and this way we can and must acknowledge every cog that turned the wheels of this great effort and all planetary gears that spun in sync to deliver the best ever Westmount Old Timers Hockey Tournament, namely:

- To the Westmount mayor, Christina Smith; the commissioner for recreation, Mary Gallery; and the city councillors who have generously supported the tournament and its cause for 30 years and have helped make it not just an annual

community event but an ambassador of goodwill to all other communities.

- To the Westmount recreation centre personnel in their entirety, with everyone on deck, making this unlikely event happen successfully and smoothly, despite major hiccups, uncertainties and last-minute changes that would give anyone grey hair and ulcers. Yet they gave of their time unstintingly, with pride and honour as they loyally have for the past 30 years.
- To the children's hospitals and their foundations, which have supported the tournaments' efforts wholeheartedly for more than 30 years, regardless of the yearly contributions and who have maximized the use of our donations by leveraging them with matching donors and/or using them to seed-fund larger projects, thereby maximizing the purchase power for neuro-surgery equipment and the funding of pediatric brain cancer research.
- To the entire medical staff and hospital personnel who daily transform the hope of our donations into the reality of medical achievement and progress in the ongoing battle against cancer.
- A very special recognition to the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation staff for their extraordinary effort and ability to set up a tournament "team and player page" to publicize the tournament and funnel substantial sponsorships, all done in 48 hours and with 10 days to puck drop. This page, as it turns out, was the tournament's largest fundraising mode.
- After a 15-year absence, a welcome back to the Montreal Children's Hospital team, which, with resources already stretched beyond limits, had one of its eminent surgeons rally a team at the last minute, which dedicated their very rare spare time to participate and raise substantial funds.
- To everyone who supported this event: the sponsors, be they individuals, mer-

chants, corporations or anonymous donors, who came out with unprecedented generosity, and all those who contributed in thought or in deed, believing in nothing else but the purpose and success of our campaign against pediatric cancer. They number over 1,000, they are the spirit of our Westmount community, now expanded far beyond its borders and gaining in momentum as are the successes of the research and neuro-surgery advancements they have fueled.

- To all the players and team captains who put their names out there for sponsorships to raise money from as many as possible, and a very special acknowledgement to those players who put their shoulders to the wheel with that extra "humph" and raised funds beyond all expectations. To those often in the shadows: timers, refs, organizers and all those who played a role in getting what could have been a train wreck of a tournament run as smoothly as the Paris-Lyon TGV.

Under the pandemic circumstances, the success of this event is remarkable and a true representation of the power of a community that cares, as evidenced by all those mentioned above who turned out and played their part selflessly to make a difference. For them, there is no medal or trophy, their victory lies in the knowledge that progress is made every hour, every day, and the time will come when pediatric brain cancer will be defeated and when that time comes, they will be remembered as having fought the battle.

Thank you one and all, thank you all and one.

SWAT/SWATTOO

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Judge: City, council, then-mayor Trent acted 'legitimately'

Court rejects \$2M claim over Mount Pleasant permit refusal

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Superior Court February 23 rejected a claim by a former owner of the vacant lot at 480 Mount Pleasant to recover some \$1.88 million from the city for costs over many years in trying to obtain a permit to build a new house, which the city council refused in 2017.

In a 33-page decision detailing events back to 2011, Judge Patrick Buchholz ruled the plaintiff, Claude Delage, had failed to prove the city, council or mayor at the time, Peter Trent, had acted in bad faith, given the plan for the new house "did not respect applicable municipal regulations."

Evidence and testimony presented over six days in March a year ago explained that the refused permit for a contemporary-styled house with flat roof did not integrate harmoniously in the historic area as outlined in By-law 1305 and *Guidelines for Building and Renovating in Westmount*.

The judge also found the council had properly exercised its "discretionary powers" in the permit process despite the

project being recommended by the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC).

Important judgment

"It's an incredibly important judgment in this day and age because it speaks to the role of elected officials to decide and vote," said Mayor Christina Smith. "When you run for council, you have to understand this role."

She said she had sat through all the court testimony and was very pleased because "an enormous amount of time" had gone into the council's decision. Smith was a city councillor at the time of the permit refusal.

"This judgment reinforces council's ability to protect the city's built heritage," Trent told the *Independent* last week. He was "proud," he said, that the council back in 2016-17 had taken the time to thoroughly review the file "and that we had behaved legitimately" in refusing the permit.

The judge found that the independent council members without party affiliation had been well informed on the issue, were

not "vassals" of the mayor and had not acted abusively to please his "personal satisfaction," as alleged. The judge devoted more than a page to Trent's testimony by video-conference including a seven-page document he had written in 2016 on "Preserving Westmount's Built Heritage."

Approved design

On August 3, 2020, before the court had heard the case, a plan showing a more traditionally styled house was approved by the council (see story August 18, 2020, p. 14). This was described as similar to one that had been submitted back in 2011 before it had been changed to a more contemporary, flat-roofed home.

The accepted design proposed a pitched roof, ornamentation on the façade and was considered more in keeping with the adjacent Category I house at 482 Mount Pleasant whose property had been subdivided to provide the vacant lot acquired by Delage as civic number 480 and requiring a future building to be architecturally integrated *continued on p. 17*

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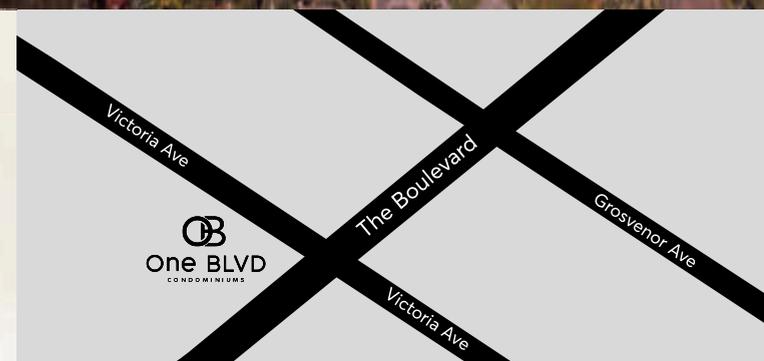
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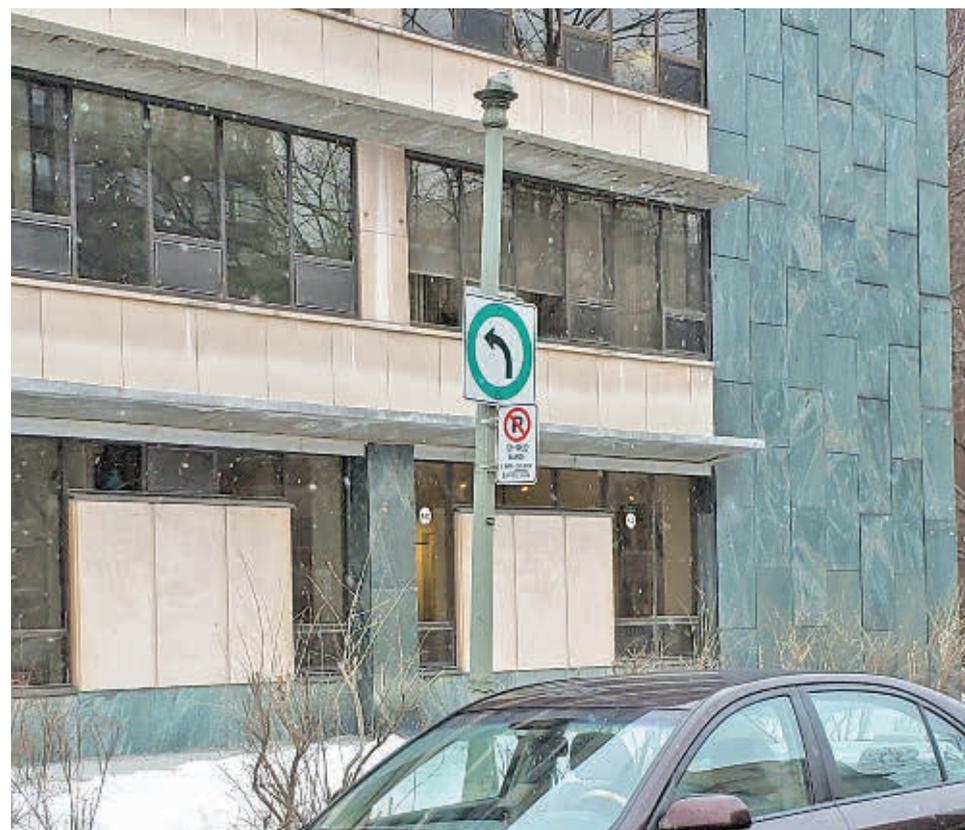
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Lamppost out – Still out



Left, at 11:38 am March 8, Public Security received a call concerning a delivery truck that struck a city Washington-style lamp standard on Victoria near the entrance to the Metro parking lot, department officials said. An officer met with the driver to take a report and Hydro Westmount technicians were called to the site to secure the lamppost that was being supported by a small tree. At right is a lamppost, seen March 11, on de Maisonneuve west of Victoria that is still damaged from when a tree fell October 27 of last year (see November 2, p. 15).

PHOTOS: BETH HUDSON (LEFT) & INDEPENDENT.



In Loving Memory of Sean

2008 - 2022

It is with profound sorrow that I share the news of Sean's passing on the evening of February 10, 2022.

Recognized by many by his smile, and loved for his joyful personality, 14-year-old Sean passed in the comfort of home, surrounded by love.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to say hello to Sean, give him a pet, or a hug, on his walks in Westmount Park or at the Summit. A very special thank you and deep appreciation to Dr. Allan Gilmour

and staff, oncologist Dr. Maude Touret and staff, Sean's walkers Patrick and Mike, and Sean's many human friends including Yvan, Patrick, Simon, Kati, Myra, Marie, and the office staff.

Sean came into my life in January 2019, when his mum Pat passed away. I would like to thank Sean's first family Alvar, Patty, Joanne, and François, for remaining in his life. Sean touched and made a connection with the many people he encountered. He will be missed.





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Karen Karpman* 514.497.8218

INTRODUCING

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 BED: 9 BATH: 5+2 MLS 19930308
Anne Marineau^A
Zoë Vennes 514.400.0280**

INTRODUCING

\$5,900,000



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Diane Stelmashuk* 514.944.6066

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Jennifer Vienneau* 514.265.3669
Stéphane Larrivée* 514.809.8466

INTRODUCING

\$2,995,000



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Vincent Chaput* 514.264.3555

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Detached duplex, Outremont
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Saguy Elbaz* 514.892.7653

\$998,000



Splendid family home
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Pina Pizzi* 514.781.4826

\$1,450,000



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Panoramic view, Prévost
BED: 3 BATH: 3 MLS 14719930

Melanie Clarke* 450.694.0678

INTRODUCING

\$898,000



Boisé Notre-Dame, Chomedey
BED: 3 BATH: 2 MLS 20171337

Rachelle Demers* 514.378.8630

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334 acre domaine, Sutton
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Marie-Josée Rouleau* 514.660.6682

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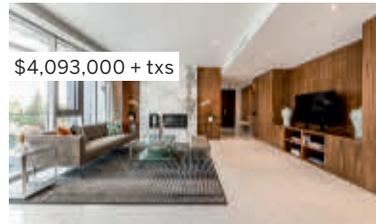
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4+1 bedroom cottage, Hudson
BED: 5 BATH: 2

Linda Noseworthy* 514.830.2288

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Cassian Bopp* 514.952.9115

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Navid Changizi* 514.632.6912

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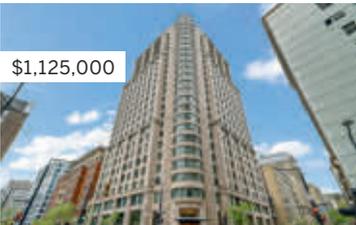
Cyrille Girard* 514.582.2810



\$1,325,000

Golden Square Mile, Ville-Marie
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Phyllis A. Tellier** 514.924.4062



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\$1,980,000



Stunning Penthouse, Ville-Marie
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Louise Latreille* 514.577.2009

ACCEPTED OFFER

\$1,275,000



Beautiful views, Ville-Marie
BED: 3 BATH: 2 MLS 22760970

Patricia Lallier** 514.239.1898

\$299,000



Cap Tremblant, Mont-Tremblant
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Marsha Hanna* 819.425.0619
Cody Ratcliffe^ 819.429.1834

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Patrick Vaillant** 514.774.6917

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Naami Group* 514.743.5000

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INTRODUCING

\$849,000



Old Montreal retreat, Ville-Marie
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Pierre Brunet** 514.248.8032
Nanyunzi Zheng* 514.886.8377

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LOT: 2,639 acres MLS 27238269

Herbert Ratsch†† 514.884.8269

\$1,295,000



**Waterview estate
Saint-Jean-de-l'Île-d'Orléan**
BED: 4 BATH: 3 MLS 18866253

Maurice Houle* 418.580.9120

\$1,290,000



Lac Bernard, La Pêche
LOT: 5,194 SQ.M. MLS 17951864

Marsha Hanna* 819.425.0619
Cody Ratcliffe^ 819.429.1834

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Beautiful lake views, Mont-Tremblant
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Filmmaker Abbott documents *The Sugarmakers*



The Holmes family's farm includes a sugarshack, foreground, and a rare round barn.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LOUISE ABBOTT AND NIELS JENSEN

BY JENNIFER BALL

We've heard a lot about how COVID has affected densely populated areas and activities, and how many North Americans have fled large cities, but what about its effect on already rural people?

Former Westmounter Louise Abbott has had a chance to ponder that question and is now ready to present an answer.

Abbott is a writer, photographer and independent filmmaker living and working out of the village of Stanstead on the far side of Lake Memphremagog in the Eastern Townships.

She has made Stanstead her home for the last 40 years and the solitude of the area is very important for her creative life. It has been her muse.

"I get notices about writers' retreats all the time and I think 'I really don't need to go anywhere else because I already have a retreat,'" Abbott said.

When the pandemic struck in 2020, Abbott did not want to simply hunker down and wait it out: "as a documentary filmmaker, I strive to bear witness to the world around me."

Living history

Serendipitously, she received a notice from the Stanstead Historical Society archives, requesting members to "document events surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic in the Stanstead area ... [and] educate future generations on how the population of our region weathered this exceptional ordeal."

The result is a series of films she made in 2020-2021 called *Out on the Land* where Abbott investigated the pandemic's impact on Townshippers who work the land to provide food for our tables.

She filmed a series of family farmers (beef, dairy, sheep, horse) and other food producers (maple syrup, organic vegetables, organic herbs), as they shared the highs and lows of two extraordinary pandemic years.

Her collaborator was her husband Niels Jensen, a licensed camera drone pilot, who

filmed the changing of the seasons and its effect on the rural landscape through a bird's eye view.

Sugaring off

One film, titled *The Sugarmakers*, is to unspool virtually at Westmount's Atwater Library Lunchtime series on March 31 from 12:30 to 1:30 pm.

The Sugarmakers is a behind-the-scenes look at the Holmes family operation, which has produced maple syrup for well over a century. The family that they bought the farm from already had a sugaring operation and they continued the venture but modernized, adding plastic piping to accompany the thousands of buckets and spigots that cleave the maple trees on the plot.

Hard work and team cooperation are in the frame during most sequences of the film.

"I am hoping [viewers] will get some insight into what goes into producing maple syrup and also an appreciation for a deeply rooted family tradition. Quebec produces 70 percent of the world's maple syrup. I don't think many people know the hard work that goes into it and the vagaries of the weather that could just ruin a crop or make it a bumper crop," Abbott said.

Thursday, March 31 from 12:30 to 1:30 pm
The Sugarmakers: Co-presented with Erin Holmes, a member of the farm family who is interviewed in the film. Register on the Atwater Library website.



Tony Schoolcraft in the Holmes family's sugarbush, March 3, 2021.

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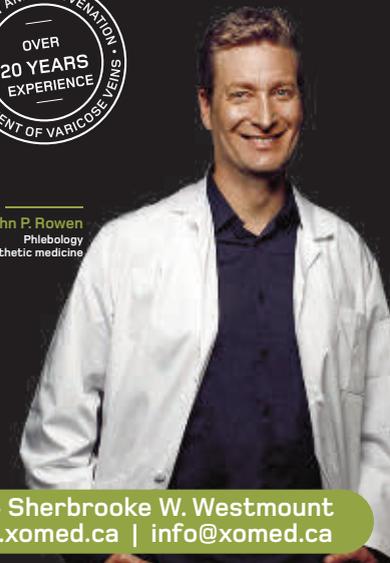
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Last week, Russia declared war on Ukraine. The Russian army has attacked military facilities, infrastructure and civilian targets. The WHO health cluster estimates that the number of affected people has climbed from 2.9 million a week ago, to over 18 million today.

The Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal, established by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) and the Canada-Ukraine Foundation (CUF), is working with Ukrainian government ministries, who are in the best position to advise on the needs on the ground so that we can ensure that the donations we receive meet the needs of the Ukrainian people.

Several tranches of aid have already been delivered and we will continue to monitor and match aid to the needs on the ground in the coming weeks and months.

Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

February sales: A sellers' market

Condos

If Westmount's house market is getting stronger, it appears the condominium market just died off, with only five sales so far this year compared to 21 in the fourth quarter of 2021.

With one condo sale in January and four more in February, only two cleared the million-dollar mark, including a two-storey apartment at 200 Lansdowne Ave. and a townhouse near the Westmount railway station on St. Catherine at the foot of Victoria.

Thanks largely to another sale at 200 Lansdowne, well below valuation while the other four sales ranged from 42.5 to 65.8 percent mark-ups, the average mark-up was only 29.5 percent, but still a slight improvement over the 26.0 percent average for all of last year.

The mid-March count of houses on the market is up slightly to 64 houses available, basically the same count at this time last year, but those numbers pale badly in relation to the 97 available at the same time in 2020 or the 90 at the same time in 2019. New listings usually come on in the next few months for spring sales, so we can expect inventory to increase.

In January this year, three houses took less than 10 days to sell and in February there were two more, so while fast sales are not commonplace, the market is hungry for new inventory and will likely eat up anything that is properly priced.

Average adjusted price for 'typical' Westmount house, by month, January 2017 to February 2022, based on accepted offer dates



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 2022. 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.

Real estate prices remained strong in February this year, pushing the value of the "typical" Westmount home over the \$2.7-million mark, as volume inched up from 11 sales in January to 13 in February. This happened despite the fact that the market is still very tight, so the result is an upturn in prices in what is definitely a sellers' market.

A detached stone house on The Boulevard sold for \$5,575,000, the highest price of the month – and, for that matter, the highest price so far this year – bringing the average of the 13 February sales to almost \$2.5 million, with seven sales over \$2 million and six between \$1,400,000 and \$1,780,000. Two of the month's sales were less than 10 percent mark-ups over valuation, while two others were over 60 percent mark-ups.

None sold below municipal value.

Court, cont'd from p. 8

into the historic property.

The plaintiff had argued that 29 flat roofs had been counted on 62 buildings in the historic character Area 9 known as "Rosemount."

Historic over-ruling of PAC

The permit refused by the council in 2017 had been the first time that the coun-

cil had overturned a favourable recommendation from the city's PAC (see the *Independent's* story February 21, 2017, p. 1, which was referred to in the court decision).

This had led to a *mise en demeure* and legal action by Delage against the city and the council, in which Trent, then District 2 councillor Victor Drury and then urban

planning commissioner Theodora Samiotis were all sued. The latter three were subsequently withdrawn from the suit.

In the court filing, Delage claimed his costs included those resulting from his various plans submitted to the city, which

led to attempts to sell the property.

He bought the property in June 2011 for \$1,150,000 and sold it in April 2017 for \$1,209,000 shortly after the council refused the permit.

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New Horizons program recorded seniors' stories

Garneau, Khera announce program funding renewal at Atwater Library

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

NDG-Westmount Liberal MP Marc Garneau announced during a visit by federal minister of Seniors Kamal Khera at the Atwater Library and Computer Centre on March 7 that the library's funding from Ottawa for a digital literacy program for seniors has been renewed for another year.

The minister was visiting the library to talk about services for seniors that have been made available with support from the federal government, and how the New Horizons for Seniors Program helped organizations like the Atwater Library deliver to seniors during the pandemic.

Over the past few years, the Atwater Library conducted a project funded by the

federal government's New Horizons for Seniors program, encouraging them to tell, record and share their stories. The project brought together seniors for creative storytelling, documentary making and sharing information.

The captured stories with video and sound are being categorized at the library to create a Seniors Living History Collection with many potential applications. It is believed the collection could serve as a tool for researching and documenting neighbourhoods, career paths or various types of life experiences.

'Amazing take-up'

"The Atwater Library will be able to continue this very successful program. In this

riding, the take-up for the New Horizons seniors' program has been amazing," said Garneau, adding that other organizations in his riding that provide similar services will also be supported.

Marlene Chan, a Westmounter who took part in the multimedia program at the library, told the *Independent* that during the pandemic, the participants met online to work on their projects.

"It's exciting to be able to do creative work, and to not be frightened of technology," she said. "I try to spread the message because it's made my retirement so interesting." Her completed projects along with those of other participants can be found on the Atwater Library web site.

According to Atwater Library executive-

director Lynn Verge, the government's Enabling Accessibility Program provided grants which paid for two thirds of the cost of a new elevator, which was completed in September 2020, although it hasn't been used much since then because of the pandemic.

She said that with the new elevator, as well as a renovation and multimedia sound system upgrade taking place in the library auditorium with private funding, "we will be beautifully equipped to serve seniors and the whole community for decades to come."

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Responsible, enthusiastic and loving, I am available to walk your dog in the Westmount area. One-on-one solo walks allow me to focus on your pet, with toys, treats and water on hand. Please see my website: edebuss.wixsite.com/my-site or contact me directly for more info: Elise 438-837-0083 or edebuss@gmail.com.

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Notice

The Quebec company of the Canadian Association for Aid in Agricultural Development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has declared its intention to be liquidated or to apply for its liquidation, to dissolve or to apply for dissolution. To this end, the present declaration is required by the provisions of the Act respecting the legal publicity of enterprises (CQLR, c.P.44.1). Note that the Canadian chartered company of ACADARC will remain in operation.
A. April, President



Seen here on March 7, from left, federal minister of Seniors Kamal Khera, Westmount resident Marlene Chan and NDG-Westmount Liberal MP Marc Garneau discussing some of the benefits received by participants in digital media courses funded by the New Horizons for Seniors Program.

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'Princess' Niki



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

home, affectionate, curious and playful.

She is a very healthy and active nine-year-old, up to date with her inoculations, spayed and microchipped.

She was very loved in her previous home and is a bit rounder from treats so she is on a special diet food to keep her at an optimal weight.

If you would like to present an adoption request at the Montreal SPCA, please refer to its website at www.sPCA.com, find Niki by her identification number 24873798 to bring up her information page, then click the black icon where you will access the adoption form to contact an adoption counsellor and find out more for an appointment at the shelter.

Your neighbour, Lysanne

Oh, her stunning eyes! They are the most bewitching light water-green shade and contrast with her long tabby fur. She is quite the princess and is now known as Princess Niki to her foster family for the Montreal SPCA.

She likes to set herself on a throne, watching all around her, quite regal and gracious. Princess Niki is moving beyond the first arrival stage at her temporary foster



Riley Puppy



Westmount
A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

His new family will have these wonderful first moments with him as he takes his place in the home routine, makes fast friends at the dog parks and the Summit, is known at the pet food shops where he will be up to date with the foods, fashion styles and toys for active guys his age.

Riley is very healthy, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped. Please go to the www.sPCA.com website and refer to him by his identification number 49714649 to be on his information page. From there, you will be able to book an appointment with an adoption counsellor by clicking on the "Book a visit" button and then move forward with your adoption process.

Your neighbour, Lysanne

Hello there, such a wonderful smile! Here is Riley, a 10-month-old chocolate-coloured poodle-type in need of an active family to take him home from the Montreal SPCA kennel.

You can see it in his sweet eyes and demeanor: he is a typical puppy, active, playful, happy, oh so keen. Exploring everything with everyone, new people, new dogs, one day maybe cats ...



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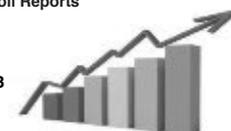


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Police Report

No new phone frauds or ID thefts, say Station 12 police

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

There is good news from the Montreal police department's Station 12 in Westmount.

As of last week, no new cases of identity theft or phone fraud were reported at the Stanton St. station.

This stands in sharp contrast to the situation a few weeks ago, when Station 12 officers arrested two individuals on suspicion of defrauding several senior citizens from Westmount out of thousands of dollars.

"All our hard work seems to be paying off," said the station's community relations officer, Adalbert Pimentel, noting that Station 12 had assigned a special team of officers to respond as needed to the rising number of fraud complaints filed by Westmounters.

He said recent coverage of the incidents by the *Westmount Independent* had probably

helped build awareness among potential victims, who are mostly senior citizens. "I think it's making an impact," Pimentel said.

Abandoned Lambo

An investigation has been opened at Station 12 following the discovery of a luxury vehicle left abandoned on a street in upper Westmount during the early morning hours of March 11, after having struck a stone retaining wall.

The front-damaged Lamborghini was found parked partly on the sidewalk around 6 am near The Boulevard by officers from Westmount Public Security. They reported it to police at Station 12 who were on the scene by 7:30 am.

"It was abandoned on the street," said Pimentel, noting that the car's air bag had gone off, while adding that Station 12 officers had a tow truck take it away after seizing the vehicle.

Although there is no immediate connection between this incident and another nearly six months ago, it's perhaps worth noting that police on the West Island in October last year recovered the badly damaged wreck of a \$400,000 Lamborghini.

It had been left abandoned in the middle of the night on a centre median on Sources Blvd. near Brunswick with the owners nowhere in sight.

Last week, the Montreal police on the West Island reported they had arrested three suspects after recovering nine stolen luxury vehicles, with an estimated total value of \$1 million. They were being stored in a warehouse in Pointe Claire.

Video of theft from car

A video recording that was made of a theft inside a vehicle in Westmount on March 5 is providing clues to the police investigators that could lead to the arrest of a suspect.

Around 10 am, Westmount Public Security advised Station 12 police that the alarm system of the vehicle had been triggered and a window had been shattered.

The police contacted the vehicle's owner, who told them after inspecting the car that a woman's purse was missing.

Subsequent to this, a nearby resident got in touch with the police to report that he had a video recording of the incident. It has been turned over to Station 12's investigations division.

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Retail Review

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Coiffure Spa Westmount adds staff from Platine



Nick Furfaro.

room for everyone.”

Indeed, his salon is spacious. There is room for stylists’ chairs to be widely socially spaced with protective plastic sheeting.

The spacious lower floor is calm with artificial plants. One mirrored room has chairs that are “rented by stylists who are not part of my team and do not have their own salon, but wish to offer their clients the salon experience.”

Also in this area Cécile Leclerc, trained by a podiatrist, explains the advantages of the Calgel gel nail system. This method does not prevent natural nail growth and has a damage-free soak off.

The aesthetician Dorota Jonczy described the range of Yon-Ka treatments for men and women.

The spa offers both standard classic facials for men and women as well as personalized approaches addressing particular concerns. Ever the elegant Italian – it must be in their DNA!

Nick addresses a few beautifully-coiffed ladies as they leave. “Our clients really appreciate the free three-hour parking we offer. That we are open later is also handy for those rushing to morning meetings or gala evenings, which are starting up again luckily.” *continued on p. 22*

Coiffure Spa Westmount is a renowned local success story. Owner Nick Furfaro opened in Westmount Square almost 30 years ago. Not only is he proprietor of this salon, but he also owns three others: one in the former Lise Watier space on Laurier; one in Laval and one in TMR.

Trained in Italy – which explains his sense of style – he once owned 30 salons in Montreal. Despite COVID restrictions, the four he now has run smoothly. And they are all large spaces to accommodate faithful clients.

Coiffure Spa Westmount has a staff of about 50, including mani-pedi personnel, aestheticians, colour experts and stylists. This number just grew. Platine, the destination Sherbrooke St. salon, closed a few weeks ago. And seven of its team – four stylists, one colourist and two aestheticians – have joined Nick’s group.

Back to ‘ideal number’ of team members

“We lost a few staff during COVID, but with [professionals from] Platine, we are back to our ideal number. We have enough




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'Diggers and Weeders' turning 90

Anniversary contest is open to community gardeners

BY HEATHER BLACK

In celebration of its 90th anniversary, The Diggers and Weeders Garden Club of Montreal is offering three, \$500 awards to develop or enhance community-focused gardens. These awards reflect the group's mission "to stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening among amateurs; to aid in the protection of native trees, plants, and birds; and to encourage civic planting."

Gardeners with ties to schools, seniors'

Retail Watch, cont'd from p. 21

he smiles with that indescribable Italian sprezzatura.

I ask about looks for this spring. "We are getting requests for more 'shaggy' cuts. But our clients still want volume. We love it when they are happy," he enthuses. There must be a lot of people happy with their hair to support such a well-known salon for so long.

SPA DE WESTMOUNT
Westmount Square
Monday to Saturday, 8 am to 8 pm
Coiffurespawestmount.com

residences or other civic associations are asked to apply; private gardens are excluded.

Founded on October 24, 1932, the Diggers and Weeders first met at the home of Mrs. R. M. Ballantyne on 30 Forden Ave. Among the list of topics to discuss at subsequent meetings: "rock gardens and pools," "native plants and wild flower preservation" and "lilies and orchids."

Westmounter Lori Baird – the current president and a third-generation member – commented: "Along with an interest in gardening, what distinguishes our club is community service."

Over the years, the Diggers and Weeders have developed or maintained civic gardens for Queen Mary Veterans' Hospital, St. Margaret's Home, the Tyndale St. George Community Centre and, currently, Prospect Belvedere House on St. Catherine St. near Westmount Park. This sense of community service – and learning



Lori Baird in front of the Unitarian Church of Montreal, just west of the Westmount-NDG border.

– is also seen on the "2022 Community Garden Award" application: "First-gardening project," "For teaching," "Trees with garden" or "Vegetables," to name a few.

The awards are open to communities throughout Quebec. Baird said: "Although many members are local, we also pull from the West Island and the Townships." During the pandemic, the Diggers and Weeders turned to Zoom. However, on March 10, the group met in person to hear speaker Mary Yearl on "Illustrated Herbals, Osler Library" at the Unitarian Church of Montreal on de Maisonneuve near Claremont.

As for the special 90th-anniversary awards, Baird commented: "It's more fun to give a present than to receive one." Interested gardeners can download the award application from the Diggers and Weeders website (see "President's Message") or by email request to: DWgardenaward2022@gmail.com. The deadline is April 14.

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