

Full swim lessons back – but still looking for more life guards

Sports & Rec sign-up opens April 19 for summer programs

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

Registration for this summer's Sports and Recreation programs, starting Tuesday, April 19, highlights a full "pre-pandemic-esque" schedule, including summer camps.

The sign-up for swimming and tennis lessons begins Tuesday, April 26.

It's the first summer since 2019 for the return to "normal" pool and summer youth camp capacities – barring unexpected government restrictions, depart-

ment director Dave Lapointe said last week. It's also the first year since then that full swimming lessons will be offered.

"While we still have no official answer for our summer camps, we're planning to return to our full capacity in 2019 of 144 per session," he said. These had been cut in half for the previous two years. "This year, I'm expecting a big camp registration from Day One." These are open to youth aged 6 to 14.

A full range of youth swimming lessons at 10 different levels for ages 2 and up as well as adult aquafit will be offered in four nine-day sessions. The pool will also go back to its maximum capacity of 350 people for general swim times.

Tennis lessons for youth and adults listed in the department's summer booklet and avail- *continued on p. 2*

Public Security turns 40 (& 42), gets new wheels!



Shown with the first of the new Public Security patrol vehicles delivered April 11 are public safety officers William Lamontagne, left, and Troy Graggs. See story on p. 2.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT PUBLIC SECURITY.

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City to hold Platinum Jubilee Tea April 24

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

Queen Elizabeth's 70 years on the throne are being marked by a Platinum Jubilee Tea at Victoria Hall Sunday, April 24 at 2 pm. The event, fashioned after a traditional British afternoon tea, is being held by the city using a \$5,000 grant from Heritage Canada.

Those attending the anniversary event will receive special commemorative pins and be served with tea poured from "unique teapots" as well as scones, sandwiches, puddings and cakes.

As a result of the grant's requirement, the celebration will be open to the public by reservation at Eventbrite, said organizer Donna Lach, assistant director of the library and community events. It had originally been planned to take place by invitation only.

"We're very excited about this," Lach said.

The event is limited in number to 100 to respect safe distancing in the concert hall, where those attending will be seated at eight tables.

Highlights of the tea *continued on p. 5*

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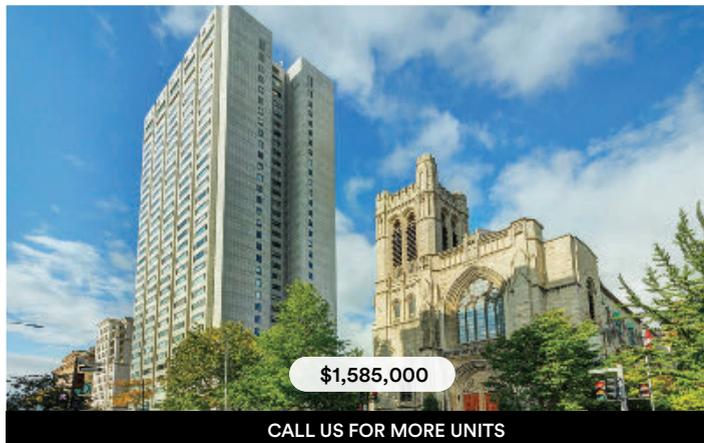
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Different branding marks 40th anniversary

Hybrid patrol fleet to bear Public Security's new look

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

When the city's Public Security patrols hit the streets starting April 18, their new hybrid vehicles will bear what is a new design to mark the unit's 40th anniversary in 2020. The fleet was last renewed in 2016.

"Since we weren't able to celebrate our 40th in 2020, the new branding will be part of that," said Public Security director Greg McBain.

The new vehicles are black with a white hood and roof bearing a red diagonal stripe down the front doors to match the red stripes on the officers' uniform caps and pant legs that are used to symbolize law enforcement in many municipalities. A large city crest and red horizontal lettering identifies them as Westmount Public Safety. This is reflective at night.

The six new vehicles are Ford hybrid models with all-wheel drive made for emergency use and able to bear the loads of heavy equipment they carry up the steep hills of Westmount. This includes defibrillators, cones, barricades, blankets, orange cones and other safety equipment.

The new vehicles are also being equipped as offices for the patrollers, according to assistant director Kimberley Colquhoun.

Previous Toyota hybrids, tried in 2007 (see story June 20, 2007, p. 3), had been found unable to handle the hills owing to the capacity of their batteries at that time. As for moving to fully electric vehicles with lithium rechargeable batteries, "We're not there yet," McBain said.

Low-profile black

When the unit hit the streets in 1980, it was in low-profile black sedans chosen purposely by the original director, Sidney Ashford, to be discreet, though these evolved to have a white door bearing the city crest.

As the new force began gaining prominence, the cars became heavier vehicles and took on progressively higher identifications such as the mainly white ones currently being replaced that had a blue-and-yellow horizontal stripe along the sides. These were preceded in 2007 and 1996 by all yellow ones.

See photo on p. 1.

Sports & recreation summer programs, cont'd from p. 1

able on the city website are also expected to fill up quickly, given the successful registration for the spring sessions.

A general lack of swimming lessons "everywhere" over the last two summers is starting to be reflected in "a real decline" in available qualified life guards, Lapointe said. At Westmount, fewer applications than usual were received.

A total 16 full-time life guards of the required 18 had been hired by last week along with seven part-timers, according to facilities manager Bruce Stacey, who added that he is "still interviewing."

One added issue with the life guards, he said, is that most are university or CEGEP students. The earlier back-to-school CEGEP times in August are taking place before the end of even the summer pool schedules.

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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‘Share the road’ drivers urged by PSU, contractors moved off bike paths

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

With the return of mild weather and an influx of cyclists returning to Westmount streets, Public Security officials last week urged drivers to be especially “courteous” in sharing the road, following posted speed limits and keeping bike paths unobstructed.

Patrollers have been keeping a special eye out for bike paths, discovering two contractors setting up illegally on them without obtaining permits that would set out various safety conditions.

On April 9, one patroller noticed a worker parked on the bike route on Côte

St. Antoine at 8:20 am and discovered his permit to occupy the public domain at that location had expired. He was required to move and re-apply for another permit at Public Works.

Two days later, a construction company was found to be installed on the west end of the Westmount portion of the bike path on de Maisonneuve at 8 am. The contractor was ordered to obtain a permit and officers stayed on the scene until the equipment had left.

PSOs inspect leaf blowers

Now that leaf-blowers are allowed for spring clean-up until May 1, public safety patrollers have been carrying out random inspections of equipment, Public Security officials said last week.

Not only must contractors have the required permits, but their devices must bear stickers verifying that they meet very technical requirements regarding noise limitations, said the department’s assistant director Kimberley Colquhoun.

On April 6, one gardener checked out in the area of Lexington was stopped for non-compliance whereas another on Victoria Ave. April 11 was found to conform to requirements despite a complaint.

Leashes now required at all times in Summit Woods

Dog owners are reminded that as of April 16 and until June 15, dogs must be kept on leash in Summit Woods at all times. This is to protect nesting birds during the bird migration period as well as emerging wild flowers such as trilliums. All are protected in the summit’s bird and flora sanctuary.

All dogs must have valid Westmount licences. Dog-related violations are subject to fines ranging from \$75 to \$300. Summit Woods is closed from 12 am to 5 am.

Find out what inflation, pandemic is doing to:

Local florists, p. 10

Westmount’s pet stores, p. 14

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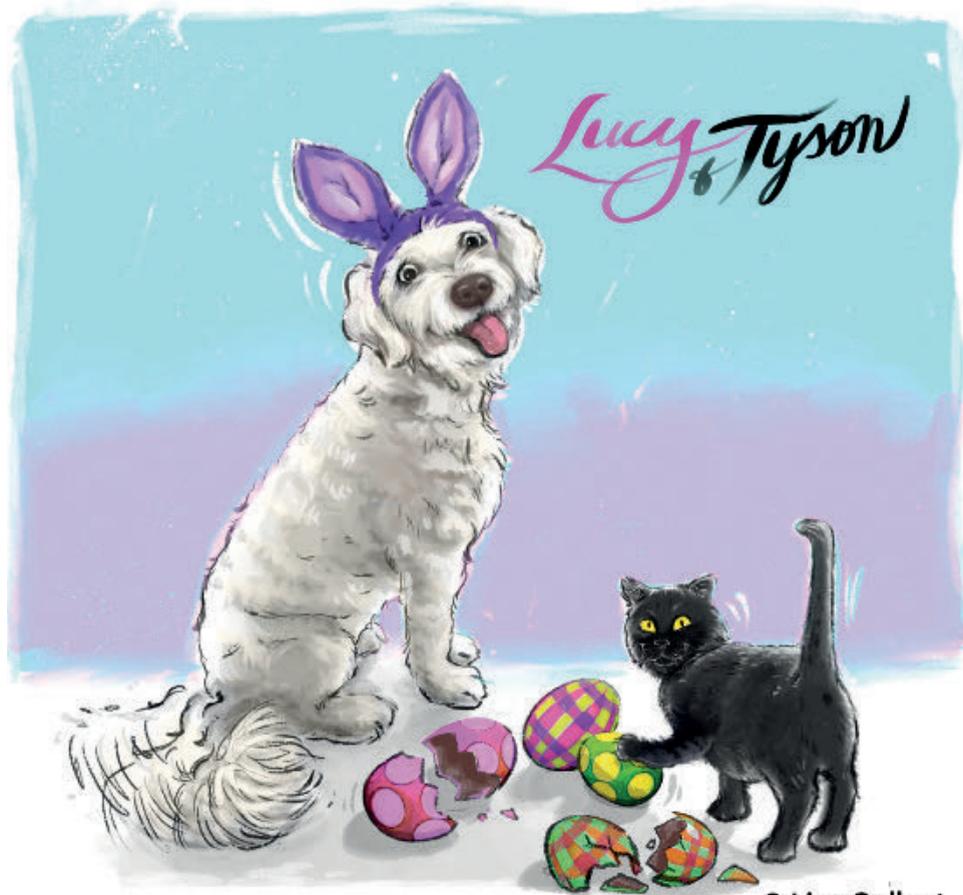
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Then-Westmount mayor J. C. Cushing presents a silver jug for maple syrup to Queen Elizabeth on her visit to city hall in 1959. He promised an annual supply to fill it, which the city continues to send.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY OF WESTMOUNT ARCHIVES.

Jubilee, cont'd from p. 1

include vintage images of royal visits featuring the one in 1959 when Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip visited Westmount during the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

At that time, the city presented them with a silver jug for an annual supply of maple syrup, which continues to be sent every year in custom bottles to ensure replenishment of the jug. The bottles, appropriately labelled as from Westmount, will be sent again next month from the mayor's office bearing a specially designed jubilee tag.

Guests are expected to include MP Marc Garneau, Westmount's federal representative, and Jennifer Maccarone, Westmount's provincial legislator, along with entertainers George Bowser and Rick Blue of Bowser and Blue.

The senior choir from The Study will open the event, followed by a concert by Musica Camerata Montreal, a chamber musical ensemble that will play during the tea highlighting the works of English composers Samuel Coleridge Taylor and Gustav Holst.

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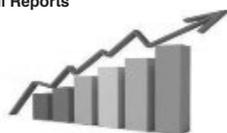
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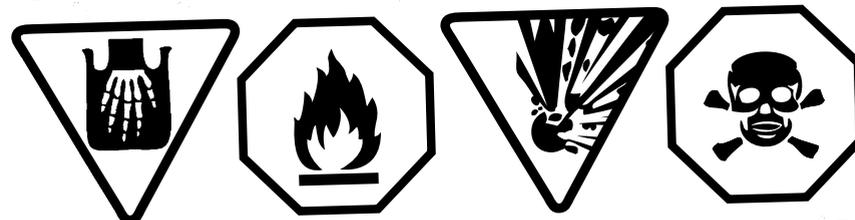
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Consult the complete list of accepted items at www.westmount.org/hhw



Services des travaux publics
Public Works Department



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EDITORIAL

Thanks for the ads, François – province's COVID campaign was win-win-win

Open letter to Premier François Legault

Dear Mr. Legault,

I won't be voting for you in October. To put it mildly, I find CAQ-ism as unpalatable as separatism, and for the same reasons.

But let's focus on the positive! Your government has done something right, and politicians should be encouraged when they do so.

The province's COVID advertising campaign in local newspapers was excellent. Thank you.

At a time (March 2020) when most private-sector advertising money disappeared overnight, the province came in with a large, consistent order to local newspapers. The space purchased per week declined over time and ended last week, but it was a huge boon to newspapers when they needed it. In our case, we would have gone on temporary hiatus in spring 2020 if not for the province's order.

With ad purchases, everyone wins

Very importantly, you supported these local media businesses by *buying their product*. I can't tell you how much better this method is than subsidies, which are poison – unless absolutely required. (I understand that bar, restaurant and gym owners were in a different boat from us during the pan-

demic, for instance.)

Firstly, because we deal with ad orders every day, there was no need for any time-consuming and soul-destroying subsidy paperwork by the business people involved. Often this paperwork is done by aspiring recipients only to find out that they do not qualify after question number 255, or once submitted.

As a friend in the film business once put it, the final question in subsidy applications is often something like "Was your grandmother's favourite colour teal? (include proof)." If her favourite colour was green, or the photo of her in the teal cardigan has been lost, no subsidy.

Secondly, in the case of your ad campaign, the government and residents of the province of Quebec received something tangible in return for their money, and without any expensive subsidy analysis by provincial civil servants. The province was spending massive amounts on testing, vaccinations, research, treatment and countless other things. Telling Quebecers how you were spending their money – and how they could access the resulting programs – was key. Telling them what was legal (and what was not) was the right thing to do. The people deserved to know, and to know how to take advantage of available programs that they were paying for.

In the newspaper business, there is also a second-order effect of large ad purchases: more content for the reader. Unlike tv or radio newscasts that have to fit into a time slot (and may actually grow in length within this allotment if there are fewer ads), newspapers add pages and articles as ad sales grow. So Quebecers got more news coverage (much of it about COVID) during this pandemic because of your ad purchases.

No subsidies, please!

It can't be said enough: all of the work around subsidies is a waste of time and taxpayers' money. And what do taxpayers get in return for it? More paperwork, and businesses adjusting their operations to meet arbitrary bureaucratic criteria. Even worse, over time, whole enterprises will come into existence solely to receive this or that subsidy. Who needs clients, or products that people actually want, when you can get free money from the government? As Hunter S. Thompson taught us, "When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro."

And the cancer spreads into subsidy-receiving entities. There is an organization that I am aware of that has received a *grant* to hire a *grant-writing officer*. Will there one day be a grant to finance a study on the efficacy of grants for grant-writing officers? The snake is eating itself. There is no need for a parody about this aspect of modern life. *Res ipsa loquitur*.

Of course, politicians should also interact with journalists. Press conferences regarding COVID, for instance, have been a

great way to reach the public, but they are not the only method. The provincial government has had many very specific things to say over the last two years. Saying them in its own exact words via advertisements in media outlets that readers, listeners and viewers actually consult made perfect sense. Print has the advantage of being able to convey a lot of detail in a form that can be re-consulted immediately. (No need for recording or rewind.)

Remember us in future

Even though this special COVID advertising campaign had ended, please keep local newspapers in mind for the province's other advertising messages, which I hear and see regularly in other media – which themselves are often owned by huge conglomerates.

The local newspaper is often more connected with its community than these options. Good local newspapers are intently read and are a great venue for the province's message about its programs, its laws and every aspect of government operations, even in non-COVID times.

One tip to find quality newspapers that people actually read and avoid *de facto* subsidies: look where the private money is being spent. Governments should not be the only clients, or compose the majority of the revenue.

Thank you again for the order.

Sincerely,

DAVID PRICE, EDITOR
Westmount Independent
weekly newspaper

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

\$73K OF TAXPAYERS' MONEY FOR WHAT? AND WHY?

Regarding "Atwater-to-Wood gathering place coming to one lane of de Maison-neuve" (April 5, p. 1), we ask: Are investments of this sort done based on notions, hunches, fantasies – or on facts, evidence, expertise and priorities?

One of us has lived in this area of Westmount for over 50 years and the other for over 25.

For decades, the merchants complained and blamed the lack of parking for their plight. Has anyone figured out who and how "they" will get to the furniture on de Maisonneuve and then to Greene? Will they wander, where will they park, why will they want to come to Greene, for what attractions and merchandise? What do the

merchants and the council know about the area, and how devoid of people and cars it is throughout the warm months, and why?

Greene Ave. merchants have been disappearing like dinosaurs who haven't been able to adapt to the reality of retail. Is it the role of our government and our tax dollars to aid them, and what evidence is there to show such projects as this are helpful?

Why not simply give out \$73,397 of free ice cream on the street over the summer? Guaranteed that will generate traffic and smiles!

Which residents and where have complained about the volume of traffic coming through Westmount from Montreal on de Maisonneuve? Has Westmount done a survey to determine the amount of traffic, and when and where the drivers go? And will they go to St. Catherine St. – in case anyone

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

has noticed the growing imbroglio there. And this is in response to how many fact-based complaints?

Or with \$73,397, what about providing benches for those who walk de Maison-neuve daily between Westmount Park and Greene and have no place to rest, put down their parcels, or even sit and talk. We know that is where Westmounters walk; from daily observation, we know *nobody* walks east from Wood unless going to a destination.

We suggest that the only people who will take great pleasure from the new “street furniture” are those with no place to go: to hang out and enjoy themselves in the hospitable surroundings, i.e. those who have been dispossessed from Cabot Square and surroundings. The lovely combination of odours of urine, alcohol and pot will certainly draw an approving crowd.

Shall we assume that Public Security will have a busy and complicated season dealing with the “centre of vagrancy,” oh – excuse us – “ephemeral place,” planned for de Maisonneuve?

DAVID ENGELS, OLIVIER AVE.
AND JOAN GRAHAM, OLIVIER AVE.

LEAF-BLOWERS LEGAL WHERE?

I live in Ville Marie borough, two streets from Westmount and your newspaper is delivered to my mailbox every week. “Leaf-blower season is here” was the title of a boxed article on p. 3 of the April 5 edition.

However, right next door to Westmount, Ville Marie borough banned gasoline-powered leaf-blowers completely in 2019.

That different municipalities have different regulations can be a source of confusion for residents and lawn maintenance companies. Since your newspaper is delivered to some areas outside of Westmount, you could help dispel that confusion by informing your readers.

ELIZABETH ROBINSON, VILLE MARIE
(DOWNTOWN) BOROUGH

Editor's reply: In our newspaper, any mention of by-laws, municipal rules and programs, and “the city,” should be construed to refer to the city of Westmount unless otherwise stated. We do distribute our paper outside of Westmount to some extent, but covering those municipalities in any depth makes no economic sense at present. I hope that residents there might be interested in the non-municipal aspects of our paper, or spend time in Westmount and so be interested in our city-of-Westmount coverage, or be curious about Westmount events and programs to compare with their home municipality (or, in many cases, be able to participate), but – of course – no newspaper (or article within it) will appeal to everyone. – DP.

WHEN WILL ROADWORK BE DONE?

Open letter to Mayor Christina Smith

Each year the city of Westmount undertakes major road rehabilitation of a small number of streets. These works are considerable, involving renovation of roadbeds and sidewalks, and the replacement of sewer and water pipes. A question: at the present rate of renovation, how many more years will it take to repair all the roads for which the city is responsible?

Under the present policy, a small number of renovated streets are in good shape, while most of Westmount's roads and sidewalks are visibly disintegrating.

BRIAN SLACK, UPPER ROSLYN AVE.

Mayor's reply: I agree with Mr. Slack that many of our roads and sidewalks are in poor condition and I also believe that many of our buildings and parks also need significant infrastructure upgrades. Mr. Slack asks when the city work will be done on all roads.

Unfortunately, there is always work to be done.

The city of Westmount is responsible for over 52 km of water and sewer mains, 52 km of road ways (excluding lanes) and over 100 km of sidewalks. Combined with this are conduits from the city of Montreal's primary water network that are located under some streets in Westmount and that the city's water mains are located within five different networks.

When planning for a major reconstruction or re-surfacing project, the following factors are considered:

- Age and condition of the water main, including the number of recorded leaks or breaks and availability of subsidies;
- Age and condition of the sewer main;
- The likelihood of public water services being in galvanized steel or lead;
- The condition of the underground Hydro Westmount infrastructure (distribution and street lighting);
- The age and condition of the sidewalks and roads;
- The condition of the underground infrastructure of external utilities (Bell Canada, Vidéotron, Énergir etc.);
- The opportunity to change the street to improve the existing conditions (safety, liveability) and add sustainable initiatives (surface water retention, green canopy, etc.);
- The proximity to other projects within the city.

A prioritization plan for the city's water, sewer and road networks has been developed by following specific criteria and standards that are set by the provincial government and is then approved by the Minis-

tère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation. The city in turn receives subsidies under the Programme de la taxe sur l'essence et de la contribution du Québec 2019-2023 for qualifying projects.

For reasons relating to pressure, adequate fire protection and quality control, multiple water main replacement and rehabilitation projects cannot be undertaken within the same network at the same time.

As our five networks are also shared with the city of Montreal, large water projects in Montreal (i.e. in the neighbouring boroughs of Ville Marie (downtown), Côte des Neiges-NDG and Sud-Ouest) can also have an impact on our networks. These factors combined with the prioritization plan determine the scheduling of a project and the long-term planning schedule.

Since 2013, a total of 6.5 km of water services have been replaced, over 9 km of water mains have been reconstructed or rehabilitated and over 16 km of streets were re-surfaced or re-constructed.

At the current rate, the city's underground infrastructure and street network will be addressed over a 25- to 30-year plan, after which a continuous maintenance program will remain in place.

CHRISTINA M. SMITH, MAYOR

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Long line-up respects safe distancing

Book sale yields \$12,418 for library after 2-year hiatus

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

A total of \$12,418 was raised for Westmount Public Library over the weekend April 9-10 by the Friends of the Library's semi-annual book sale, library director Julie-Anne Cardella said last week.

This was the first time a sale had been held in two years since the cancellations in 2020 and 2021 of four others due to the pandemic. "People were in such a good mood and seemed accepting of the long



Safe distancing numbers were capped at 100 at a time during the spring book sale April 9-10 at Victoria Hall. This photo was taken on the first day "after things had quieted down," said Donna Lach who had been monitoring admissions.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT COMMUNITY EVENTS.

line-up on the first day" of the sale on Saturday, she said. "Everyone was very patient with our health measures and happy that the sale was on despite the sixth wave."

The line-up stretched from Victoria Hall past Manoir Westmount, said Donna Lach, assistant director of the library and community events, who was at the door monitoring numbers allowed inside. At one point, volunteers had to be removed from the room to make space for the shoppers.

"We're super pleased," said Carolyn O'Neill, president of the Friends of the Library. "We didn't know what to expect. Could we get volunteers? Would people come out? But clearly, the sale is still relevant in the community."

There were about 100 student volunteers and 26 volunteers from the Friends

group including 99-year-old Miriam Tees, who has worked at the sales since they began 20 years ago, O'Neill said.

A decision has yet to be made between the Friends organizers and the library staff concerning what library projects will benefit from the sum raised.

"Now we're ready to receive new books for the fall sale," Cardella said. The library,

which had already collected hundreds of boxes full for the cancelled sale in 2020, had put a hold on receiving more.

Unsold books after the recent sale are being sent to the Zornica Canadian-Bulgarian Cultural Centre in Côte des Neiges. "They will sell the books at their upcoming festival, with proceeds from the sale to go to refugees," she said.

Cleaning/ticketing season begins



This warning ticket was seen on a car on York St. April 6. How many municipalities warn before ticketing?

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.

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Everything's coming up roses for Westmount florists – although shipment diversions, inflation present challenges

By JENNIFER BALL

Since spring of 2020, flower sales have been up, up and up for florists in Westmount. So many people it seems, love to open their door to a delivery of colourful blooms or to create joy for others – often ones they missed seeing in person – by placing a flower delivery order, according to both Christine Pickrell and Denis D'Etcheverry.

“One of our customers called and said ‘I am running out of food. I can do without food but I cannot do without flowers,’” Pickrell said, who runs Westmount Florist with her brothers Peter, David and Stephen.

“The longer people could not see each other, they were buying flowers because it made them feel good. Don't forget that Westmount has a lot of disposable income. People were not travel-



Denis D'Etcheverry, co-owner with Gilles Lord of Flore L'Atelier, on April 6. It is located on Sherbrooke at Grosvenor.

ling and they were not shopping so they had money to spend and they were spending it on flowers.”

When the government allowed re-opening in 2020, it was just in time for Passover. Florists were considered an essential service since their product is perishable. “Our website was on fire, then Mother's Day came and it was one of the biggest Mother's Days ever for our business. It was like a zoo here.”

D'Etcheverry co-owns Flore L'Atelier with Gilles Lord and they have run the business for 27 years in Westmount. “We had

no weddings; we had no funerals and these are all flower events. But in the meantime, if you can't [get together] in a restaurant what do you do? You send flowers!”

While all of this smells sweetly, there were some nettlesome thorns.

D'Etcheverry has had a sign in his window for an experienced florist for months without being able to add anyone to his payroll. “I just work more. I am 68 years old and I am in top shape, but at one point, will I be able to keep up with all the hours?”

“It used to be that you would give an interview [in the hiring process]. Now they give you an interview! When you do have prospects, the first thing that people tell you is what they will do and what they do not want to do.”

There have also been bobbles in receiving stock, which is, of course, perishable. “A huge shipment was supposed to come in from Holland and arrive [April 6],” Pickrell said. “They shipped it to New York by mistake and when my brother tried to get it shipped up to Montreal, they said they could not get a plane [to deliver it]. They shipped it back to Holland, so, we just don't get that product.”

She also indicated that orders placed locally can be uncertain at times, “One of the wholesalers said he just cut 40 boxes this weekend for my shipment because they do



From left, Luiza Messinger and Clea Gelinas, florists at Westmount Florist on April 6. It is located on Victoria Ave. near Somerville.

not have enough.”

While the beauty of the succulents, arrangements and bouquets stays constant upon arrival, the prices per stem have risen. This, while florists assess what the market can bear, according to D'Etcheverry. “If I have a customer who sends flowers all the time and they are typically paying six dollars a rose, I cannot charge that client \$14. I cannot! So, we absorb. In the meantime, people understand I have a certain profit.”



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Vivot's 'La mère et l'enfant' comes to Prince Albert square

BY RALPH THOMPSON

Mayor Christina Smith and councillors Mary Gallery, Anita Bostock, Kathleen Kez, Matt Aronson and Elisabeth Roux, along with city director general Hadi Hakim, gathered in Prince Albert square April 11 to unveil a bronze statue, "La mère et l'enfant."

The artwork, a life-sized sculpture of a mother and child sitting on a bench, "was created for our mother by artist Lea Vivot in 1983," said Samuel El Kaim, son of Claudine Levy. "The city can keep it for as long as they wish."

Samuel and his sister Frédérique attended the unveiling and explained that the statue might look familiar, since it has been located for many years outside of 1434 Sherbrooke St. West (south side, near Bishop). The artist was on tour at this time, but has said she and donor Levy would like to formally present this to the city in the future.

► From left, councillors Mary Gallery and Anita Bostock, Mayor Christina Smith, and councillors Kathleen Kez, Matt Aronson and Elisabeth Roux behind the statue along with donor Claudine Levy's daughter and son, Frédérique and Samuel El Kaim (seated).



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MARTIN ROULEAU

Westmount pet supply stores struggle to profit from surge in 'COVID pets'



Animalerie Little Bear pet supplies, on March 30. It is located on St. Catherine near Greene.



Mario Vizzaccaro, owner of Peluche, on March 29. It is located at the corner of Wood and St. Catherine.

BY JENNIFER BALL

Half of all Canadian homes now include a pet as a member of the family and among those pet owners, 18 percent obtained theirs since the start of the pandemic, according to Narrative Research, which is a Canadian market research company. So, retail businesses specializing in our four-legged friend's needs must be absolutely booming in Westmount, right?

Mario Vizzaccaro of Peluche and Chuck Altman of Animalerie Little Bear, both on St. Catherine, explain the factors that have preyed on their business, all in ways that no one could have possibly predicted.

When the *Independent* spoke to Altman he was sifting through emails and calculating what product mark-ups he could add to help him meet fixed costs. "Every single

supplier that I work with has sent me a price increase in the last three days. Some of them are reasonable and some of them are astronomical. Some want 30 percent to 40 percent more than they wanted last week, which is 20 percent to 30 percent higher than they wanted two years ago."

Little Bear sells a wide variety of pet necessities, toys and food, many of which have had quite a journey to get onto his shelves, he said. "There are products that have been stuck at the ports – whether here in Montreal – or over in Vancouver. Not only have we had big issues like the [Ukraine] war and COVID, there were wild fires, protests, strikes at the port. It just seems that every point of entry is being challenged!"

"It is 20 years since I bought the store and I have never seen all these factors all

at once. We have seen staff shortages. We have seen supply shortages – due to a fire – but this is just non stop!"

Pandemic changed plans

Vizzaccaro is a new kid on the block in Westmount pet retail. His boutique Peluche opened in August 2021, although there is a sibling store on Wellington St. in Old Montreal. As a direct effect of the surge in the price of oil, Vizzaccaro says he abandoned plans, in flight, that he had for an online business.

"When I have to pay \$10, \$20, to ship, it is okay but I had someone buy cat litter and my shipping costs were \$75 to transport four bags to Westmount. That was the cheapest quote I got, so I grabbed my son and I told him to deliver them to that address." *continued on p. 22*



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Kids beat politicians to re-opened Somerville tot-lot



From left, Mayor Christina Smith and daughter Isabel Cundhill, councillors Mary Gallery and Anitra Bostock, and, raring to zoom down the slides, Felix and Leo, the grandsons of former city councillor Cynthia Lulham, who initiated the rejuvenation.

BY RALPH THOMPSON

The renovated tot-lot on Somerville Ave. near Claremont was formally opened April 12 by Mayor Christina Smith, councillors Mary Gallery and Anitra Bostock, and Smith's daughter Isabel Cundill.

But before the ribbon was cut, half a dozen kids had already snuck in and were testing out the swings, slides, springy

horse and all the other fun equipment.

The area seems much larger than before because much of the foliage around the edges has been cleared away. The deep wood-chip base is very soft and the product is tested to work to cushion the fall of a child falling from a height, according to Robert Talarico, director of Public Works. But falling from a height is not recommended.

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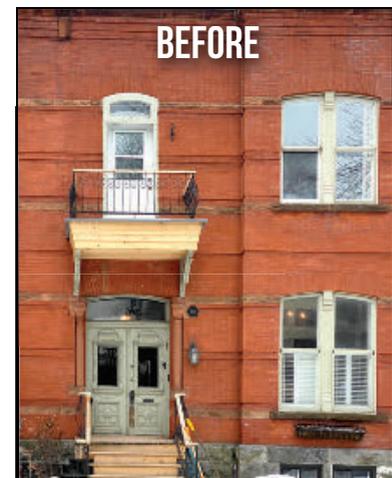
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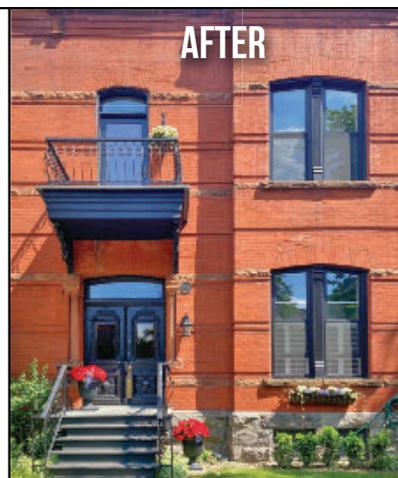
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L'inscription débute le mardi 19 avril pour les résidents de Westmount. L'inscription pour le camp d'été débute le 19 avril, et celle pour les activités aquatiques et le tennis le 26 avril. westmount.org

Collecte de résidus dangereux

Samedi 23 avril, 9 h à 17 h, stationnement de la Bibliothèque. westmount.org

Bois Summit : chiens en laisse

Pendant la période de migration des oiseaux, soit **du 16 avril au 15 juin**, les chiens au bois Summit doivent être tenus en laisse EN TOUT TEMPS.

Collecte des résidus de jardin

Dès le 19 avril. Placez vos résidus en bordure de rue dans des sacs en papier ou en vrac dans un contenant ouvert. westmount.org

Sécurité routière à Westmount

Au printemps et en été, les piétons et les cyclistes affluent dans nos rues. Nous rappelons à tous les

usagers de la route de faire preuve de prudence et de courtoisie. westmount.org

Parc Westmount : corvée de nettoyage

Vendredi 22 avril à 13 h. Dans le cadre du Jour de la Terre, la Ville vous invite à participer. Inscrivez-vous à l'avance. westmount.org

Patrouille verte à Westmount : on recrute!

Si vous avez entre 15 et 30 ans et voulez contribuer à la cause environnementale, postulez avant le 2 mai. westmount.org

Dépôt pour résidus de jardin

Le dépôt du ch. Belvédère est ouvert entre 7 h 30 et 16 h pour les entrepreneurs détenant un permis de la Ville. westmount.org

NEWS

NEXT COUNCIL
MEETING

Monday, May 2

**Registration for summer activities begins April 19**

Registration opens Tuesday, April 19 for Westmount residents; please note that summer camp registration begins April 19 and swimming and tennis registration begins April 26. westmount.org

Hazardous Waste Collection April 23

Saturday, April 23, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Library parking lot. westmount.org

Dogs on leash at Summit Woods.

During the bird migration period **from April 16 to June 15**, dogs in Summit Woods must be kept on leash AT ALL TIMES.

Garden waste collection

From April 19. Place your waste at the curbside in yard waste paper bags or in bulk in an open container. westmount.org

Road safety in Westmount

Spring and summer bring many more pedestrians and cyclists to our streets. We

remind all users of the road to act safely and show courtesy. westmount.org

The Big Cleanup at Westmount Park

Friday, April 22 at 1 p.m. As part of Earth Day, the City invites you to participate. Sign up in advance. westmount.org

Recruiting for Westmount's Green Patrol

If you are between 15 and 30 years old and want to help raise environmental awareness, apply before May 2. westmount.org

Garden waste depot

The Belvedere Rd. depot is now open daily from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. for landscaping contractors with a City permit. westmount.org

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Concerts d'été au parc Westmount : appel aux musiciens et musiciennes

Les ensembles de musique jazz, classique, folk et pop sont invités à soumettre leur candidature **au plus tard le 29 avril**. westmount.org

Galerie du Victoria Hall : exposition

Du 19 avril au 20 mai : *L'architecture de Victor Bourgeois*, par Peter Lancken, commissaire invité et architecte de renommée. westmount.org

La Journée du cinéma canadien

Mercredi 20 avril, 14 h, Victoria Hall. Projection du film *Beans* (2020), réalisé par Tracey Deer. Inscription requise. westlib.org

Conférence : Art Space Ecology

Samedi 23 avril, 14 h, Victoria Hall. Avec John K. Grande, auteur du livre *Art Space Ecology: Two Views/Twenty Interviews*. westlib.org

Parlons opéra!

Dimanche 1^{er} mai, 14 h, Victoria Hall. *Mozart - La Flûte enchantée*. Discussion animée par Pierre Vachon, avec l'invité spécial Richard Turp. En collaboration avec l'Opéra de Montréal. Inscrivez-vous à westmount.org.

Présentation spéciale : Toot Suite

Samedi 7 mai, 19 h, Victoria Hall. Un hommage musical à l'âge d'or du jazz de Montréal avec courts métrages et performances en direct sur scène. Inscrivez-vous à westmount.org.

Concert : Amour et plaisirs

Mercredi 11 mai, 19 h, Victoria Hall. Une sélection de musiques célébrant la vie, l'amour et les plaisirs simples par la Compagnie baroque Mont-Royal. westlib.org

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Summer concerts in Westmount Park: call for musicians

The City invites small jazz, classical, folk and pop groups to submit their candidacy **by April 29**. westmount.org

Gallery at Victoria Hall: exhibition

April 19 to May 20: *The Architecture of Victor Bourgeois* by Peter Lancken, guest curator and renowned architect. westmount.org

National Canadian Film Day

Wednesday, April 20, 2 p.m., Victoria Hall. A screening of *Beans* (2020), directed by Tracey Deer. Registration required. westlib.org

Lecture: Art Space Ecology

Saturday, April 23, 2 p.m., Victoria Hall. With John K. Grande, author of *Art Space Ecology: Two Views/Twenty Interviews*. westlib.org

Let's Talk Opera!

Sunday, May 1, 2 p.m., Victoria Hall. *Mozart - The Magic Flute*. A discussion with Pierre Vachon and special guest Richard Turp. In collaboration with l'Opéra de Montréal. Register at westmount.org.

Special presentation: Toot Suite

Saturday, May 7, 7 p.m., Victoria Hall. A musical tribute to Montreal's golden age of jazz using vintage films shorts and live performances on stage. Register at westmount.org.

Concert: Amour et plaisirs

Wednesday, May 11, 7 p.m., Victoria Hall. A selection of music celebrating love, life and simple pleasures by the Compagnie baroque Mont-Royal.





Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

March sales: Volume off, prices holding

up at 27.9 percent, down from 37.2 percent in February, but the general trend in prices is still advancing. The lowest price of the month, \$1,150,000, is also the lowest price in Westmount this year, in fact the lowest price for a one- or two-family dwelling since last April.

Busiest February since 2017

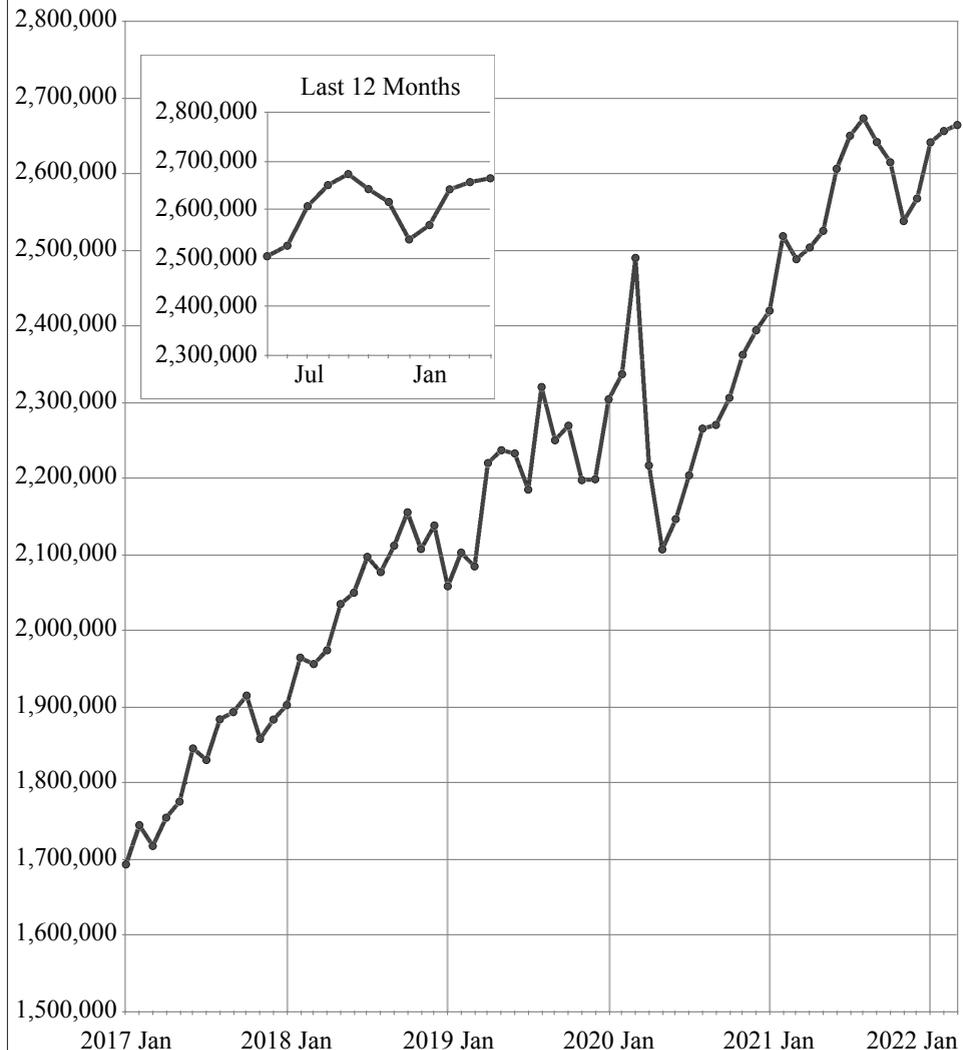
A few late-reported sales increased February's tally to 17 sales, which would be the highest February volume since 2017, and since March is usually the busiest month of the year, this year's drop is significant.

The ten March sales averaged 72 days to sell, but in fact the median days-to-sell was only 16 days, since five homes got buyers in less than 10 days each. At least three of the sales went above their asking price, mainly because of multiple offers, an indication the buyer frenzy has not subsided even as the average price increases.

And speaking of volume, spring brought a whole lot more inventory to the Westmount house market, up from 64 active listings in mid-March to 77 in mid-April, including 11 more in the \$2,000,000 to \$4,000,000 price range; only eight of the 77 listings are asking less than \$2 million, up from six the previous month. Rentals are way down, with 12 active listings in April compared to 24 a year ago, and only six have been rented so far this year, compared to 13 at the same time last year.

Three March condominium sales brought the total for the first quarter to eight, ranging from \$657,000 at 11 Hillside Ave. to \$2,100,000 for a double apartment at 1 Wood Ave. The average mark-up for the quarter was 28.1 percent, about the same as for one- and two-family dwellings.

Average adjusted price for 'typical' Westmount house, by month, January 2017 to March 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 March 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.

The number of Westmount residential sales dipped slightly in March, but prices continued in their steady climb back to the peak reached last August. One more sale over \$5 million in March – combined with a \$5,575,000 sale in January posted by agents only recently – means that at least one over-\$5 million sale has been reported in every month but one (November) since last June.

Ten sales in March averaged \$2,517,750, including all but three with prices over \$2 million, keeping the adjusted average price of the "typical" Westmount house above the \$2,500,000 mark for more than a year.

The \$5,600,000 sale of one mid-level house with a valuation of \$5,520,600, a 1.4-percent mark-up, kept the average mark-

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She is a healthy eater and enjoys treat-motivated tricks and training, and is quite an interactive companion.

Lola enjoys being an only pet, but has lived harmoniously with another dog. Cats are an object of curiosity so maybe not something she knows much about.

Please refer to the Gerdy's Rescues & Adoptions website at www.gerdysrescue.org for more information on Lola and write to them at their email info@gerdysrescue.org for more information and an application form to start the adoption process.

Your neighbour, Lysanne

Her eyes stay with you - such a warm gaze into hearts. Just delightful, Lola is loving to all and loved by the foster family that has taken her in for the volunteer animal rescue group Gerdy's Rescues & Adoptions.

As a Bernese mix, she has cuddliness and playfulness to give everyone throughout her daily routine, in fun moments of play in the fenced backyard and on good walks.

Lola is an active 10-year-old, up to date



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Cutest Little Red

special low-protein diet and some daily medicine.

This does not stop him from enjoying his everyday routine. It is just important to keep to the treatment framework and follow up. This makes Little Red fall under the category of a humanitarian adoption, so his adoption is presented with a reduced fee.

Please refer to the SPCA website at www.sPCA.com and scroll through to Little Red's information page under his identification number 48831068 to find out more about him, then click on the "Fill out the form" button to be directed to an adoption-counsellor information form to begin the adoption information process and bring him into the loving arms of your family.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne

This adorable kitten is just a year old, and aptly named Little Red for his sweet dark-marmalade colouring. A precious little fellow growing up curious and energetic, he is as happy and cuddly as can be.

Little Red is in foster care for the Montreal SPCA cattery and he fits in very well with a family dynamic of children and a dog quite well. He is an exceptional kitten, very bright, social and affectionate.

He is up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped.

Little Red has a congenital condition that affects the functioning of his liver, a portosystemic shut, which requires a



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Building manager Peter Gyorgy 'is great. We love Peter!'

Fire in garage of Stonehurst Apartments takes out electricity



During, left, and after the fire at the Stonehurst Apartments, located on the southwest corner of Sherbrooke and Greene.

BY JENNIFER BALL

There was a fire in the garage of the Stonehurst Apartments, located at 4200 Sherbrooke St. at its corner with Greene Ave., at approximately 8:10 am the morning on April 14.

Thanks to Peter Gyorgy, a fast-thinking building manager, it was contained rather quickly.

“Our apartment manager had just arrived at work, and he could see the smoke and the fire coming out of the electric panel, so he took a fire extinguisher, put it out and called the fire department,” said a

tenant who preferred not to be named.

The alarm system went off in the hallways at the same time smoke appeared in the tenant’s apartment. “Because of the smell of it – it was a very plastic smell – there was more concern about toxicity rather than the actual fire.

“All of a sudden, all of these firetrucks started to arrive and when I looked out the window, I thought ‘Oh, they are coming into our building.’”

The tenants of Stonehurst Apartments could go back into their apartments the same day, but they have no electricity.

The tenant’s apartment was not dam-

aged, and “the only place that really smells in our apartment is the kitchen. When we left the building, firemen came up to every single apartment and opened up all the windows. I think the reason that they did that was because they were concerned about the toxicity of the smoke.”

The tenant was not optimistic about returning any time soon. “The building is so old. They cannot fix the [electrical] panel until they find the replacement parts, and they cannot turn the electricity back on until they replace the panel.

“So, it could be quite a while. I am very pessimistic.” *continued on p. 22*

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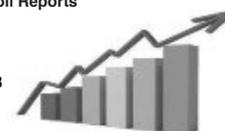
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Police Report

Police execute warrant to arrest suspect on criminal charges

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

An official at the Montreal police department's Station 12 on Stanton St. has confirmed that a suspect wanted on outstanding criminal charges was arrested at a home near the corner of Prince Albert Ave. and St. Catherine St. on April 2 after police executed two warrants.

The *Independent* was told by a nearby resident that several police cars were observed shortly after 6 pm in the driveway of the suspect's dwelling.

Station 12 community relations officer Adalbert Pimentel described the suspect as someone with a lengthy criminal record.

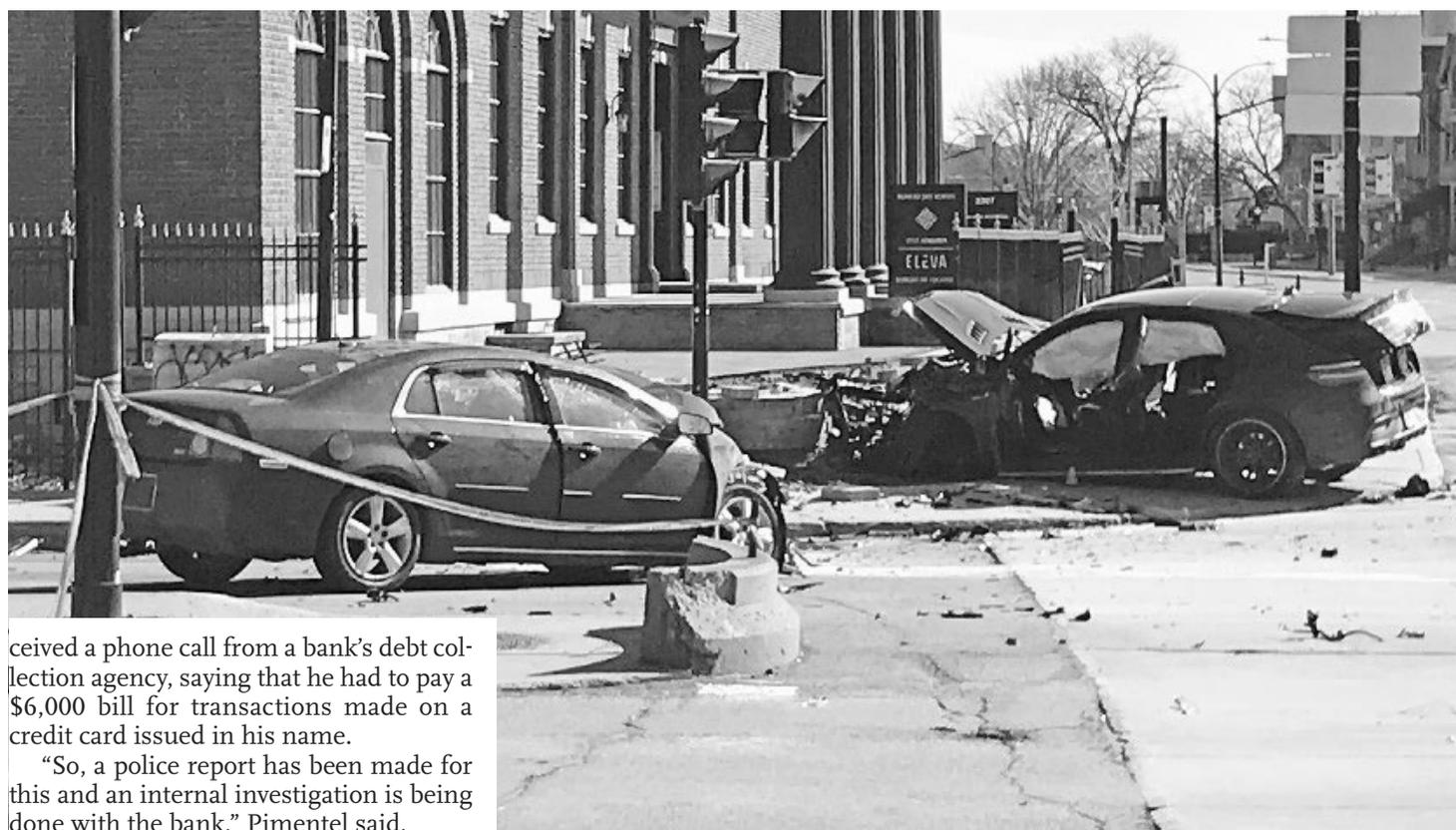
He did not elaborate on the nature of the charges he was facing, but said a number of police officers were required to execute the warrants because there was a possibility the suspect would become aggressive.

Although the suspect cooperated with the officers, Pimentel said they had been told before arriving that he had been yelling, and so they went in prepared for a disturbance.

Fraud/ID theft advice

Police at Station 12 report that fraud and identity theft continue to be ongoing crime issues in Westmount.

In one of the latest examples, a Westmount resident filed a criminal complaint earlier this month, stating that he had re-



ceived a phone call from a bank's debt collection agency, saying that he had to pay a \$6,000 bill for transactions made on a credit card issued in his name.

"So, a police report has been made for this and an internal investigation is being done with the bank," Pimentel said.

He suggested that the best way consumers can protect themselves from the rising number of frauds and identity thefts being perpetrated is to do so proactively.

That means at the very least getting in touch with either of the two most widely-known credit reporting agencies, Trans-Union and Equifax, and establishing a relationship by registering. This can easily be done online.

"Should anyone other than yourself ask for a loan, a credit card, or try to make any other kind of transaction such as a contract in your name, you'll be immediately informed and you can put a stop to it right there before it starts," he said.

Car crash at Atwater and Dorchester

These two cars were in an accident the morning of April 15 at Atwater and Dorchester. Three of the intersections' four corners are in Westmount, including the northeast one pictured here.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JIM RICHARDS.

LOCAL CLASSIFIEDS

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Garden cleaning, Weeding, Adding Mulch, Yard Cleanup, Raking Leaves. Text / Message Vince at 514-294-5562.

Cleaning / Housekeeping

Westmount/NDG area: Reliable & thorough, I am available for cleaning and/or housekeeping at your home or office. References available, please call Karen 438.229.1173.

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Assistant sought

Looking for on-site assistant with Mac expertise to help organize and catalogue photographs, documents etc. Aurel 514-582-4157.



VILLE DE | CITY OF
WESTMOUNT



IMPORTANT NOTICE

Minor exemption Application

1. The City of Westmount has received an application for a minor exemption for the building located at **4309 Montrose Avenue**;
2. The application will be reviewed at a regular sitting of the Municipal Council that will be held on **May 2, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.** in the Council Chamber of City Hall, located at 4333 Sherbrooke Street West in Westmount and will be broadcasted live on the City's website. The link for the sitting will be available at the following address: www.westmount.org/seance-du-conseil-en-direct.

The legal notice relating to the foregoing is available at: <https://westmount.org/en/resident-zone/legal-services-city-clerks-office/public-notice/>

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City Views

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Postcard from Rome #4: to stroll and *flâner*



Bramante's Tempietto di San Pietro in Montorio.

walls and taggers have left their signature styles.

The Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderne is a go-to destination. The façade features elements borrowed from architecture of antiquity but inside the high-ceiling, light-filled galleries are full of exciting contemporary work. A hint of the mood awaiting you is the pride of life-size bronze lions lolling about on the wide gallery steps, which echo those of the Borghese Gardens opposite.

Roman rhino

The Fondazione Alda Fendi-Esperimenti is behind the amusingly named Rhinoceros Galleria. Not only can you see cutting-edge art, but you can sip something memorable as you gaze on the domes of Rome from the rooftop terrace. Leaving behind lemon trees and bursting wisteria, in next week's final article I'll give you the *Indie's* special sources for your next trip to Roma.

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Rome offers awe-inspiring art and monumental ruins. But before Stendhal's *Symptom* set in, I sought things to do on roads less travelled.

I played tennis on red-clay courts. At the Auditorium Parco della Musica I heard a wonderful orchestra play Berlioz and Shostakovich.

Markets are a must. You can find "gently used" couture bags (real), jewellery and designer clothing at Borghetto Flaminio. (Bargaining is part of the experience, but best done in Italian!) You, too, can *flâner*.

Avoid the hordes

Walk away from the hordes. Discover Bramante's classical masterpiece, the Tempietto di San Pietro in Montorio. The perfectly proportioned rotunda was inspired by antiquity: circular Roman temples once dotted the Tiber banks.

Traipsing through trendy Trastevere is fun. Narrow cobbled streets are somewhat restricted to cars and boast boxes of greenery. Here, street artist Banksy has inspired many stenciled marks on peeling



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Tatsenko: St. Michael's church sending plane-loads of aid

Paprocki urges others to support Ukrainian relief campaign

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

A Westmount resident who feels strongly about the war now raging in Ukraine is urging other Westmounters to support a campaign for the relief of displaced Ukrainians that is being coordinated by St. Michael's Ukrainian Church in East End Montreal.

For more than seven weeks, Westmounter Halina Paprocki has been helping other volunteers at the church on D'Iberville St. ship plane- and boat-loads of food and medical supplies into Ukraine.

The campaign, which is being coordinated by church member Hanna Tatsenko, has managed to send at least five plane-loads of more than two dozen pallets each week to Ukraine through Poland.

"She is in constant contact with people in the Ukraine, finding out what their needs are," Paprocki said of Tatsenko, who has professional experience in shipping logistics.

"We are orchestrating a lot of merchandise that is coming in, we have regular people who are dropping things off, but we are also calling companies. Hospitals in Ukraine are calling on a regular basis to tell us what are the things they need, such as sutures for wound stitching. We update



Seen here at St. Michael's Ukrainian Church on April 8, from left, are Hanna Tatsenko and Westmounter Halina Paprocki, who have been helping to send donations of medical supplies and non-perishable food for shipment to war-torn Ukraine.

Westmount pet stores, cont'd from p. 14

"We use different suppliers and what they often do is put a minimum purchase order. I have to buy \$1,000 of supplies or I need to pay delivery costs. As a small store, sometimes I do not want or need to buy \$1,000 of stock. There are a lot of different [issues] now that interfere with how you want to run your business."

Bare shelves, where dog treats used to be, can be added to that list. "We are an ingredient-driven store," Altman said, "so most of our treats and food are as local and as natural as possible, but even my sup-

pliers are having a hard time getting ingredients or raw materials."

"We can't get chicken hearts right now because the meat processing plants are so under-staffed. That is a strange one. You just did not think that would happen! Chicken – no problem – but chicken hearts for treats: that has been absolutely impossible to get."

The *Independent* reached out to Global pet foods, located on St. Catherine near Abbott, on March 29, but they did not respond in time for publication.

Fire, cont'd from p. 19

Gyorgy was not able to diminish the tenant's pessimism when he spoke with the *Independent*, nor could he estimate when the electricity would be turned back on inside the building, which was built in 1929. He did confirm that the hunt for replacement parts had commenced.

The tenant was grateful to him nevertheless for his fast, decisive action. "Peter is great. We love Peter!"

"I ran to the fire instead of away from it – which was my first instinct – and for that my wife gave me real shit," Gyorgy grinned.

our lists. We contact pharmacies."

According to Tatsenko, the donated goods are being shipped to the front lines of the war in eastern Ukraine, where they are being received by civilians, local defence groups and Ukrainian soldiers.

Priority: Medical supplies

She said the main priority in Montreal is to send medical supplies, while food that can be consumed without cooking and personal hygiene products are also important. "The biggest part of our shipments is medical supplies," she said.

Paprocki, who has a Polish background, said, "The thought of what was happening in Ukraine, being so close to my own country, made me feel that I needed to do something."

She said the pastor, Father Yaroslav, and his wife, who oversee St. Michael's Ukrainian Church, "are just incredible people. I speak to them in Polish and they answer me in Ukrainian and we understand what needs to be done."

Although there isn't a Ukrainian church in Westmount, Paprocki said, "any help will do, and the people of Westmount have always been very giving and supportive."

A comprehensive list of the goods and materials that are currently most needed can be found on the church's website (stmichaelmontreal.ca/helpukraine/).

Donations can be brought to the church at 2388 D'Iberville St. Phone: 514.521.2234. E-transfer money donations can also be sent to support.ua@atlanticukrainian.ca.

We welcome your letters

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

email us at:

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Checking for damage from ice + snow,
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Your sump pump should be running a lot,
Check if any slate tiles are cracked or missing,
Make sure your window caulking's not shot.

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Time to think about your A/C,
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Clean the compressor of leaves + debris,
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PAY IT FORWARD

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