

Site re-opens after \$2.5M reno

Fence removed, kids rush into 'new' Westmount Park playground

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

Even as protective fences were being removed from the new Westmount Park playground October 21, kids were jumping on the new small built-in trampolines, sliding down the long zip line and playing on, or in and out of, other new equipment.

City staff from almost every department joined Mayor Christina Smith in assembling for the ribbon cutting that included some of the children present. And soon after, even Councillor Kathleen Kez was seen taking a turn on the zip line to show others how to do it.

The zip line had previously been

described as one of the "riskier" new activities, and was planned to help develop agility. On the first day, as dusk darkened into night, many people were still seen climbing up its departure platform to await their turn.

Parents commented on the new substance used for ground covering under some of the equipment, and it was obvious from the smiling faces and running to and fro that the disappointment of being without the playground all summer was almost being forgotten.

The \$2.5-million plan and excavation includes new larger layout, equipment and replace- *continued on p. 6*



Cutting the ribbon to open the new playground: Mayor Christina Smith assists one of the many children present on the morning of October 21 to open the "new" playground in Westmount Park. To the right of the mayor is Councillor Mary Gallery, parks commissioner.

Don't Miss It

The elections for the EMSB (English Montreal School Board) are Sunday, November 3

Important note on Indie delivery, starting next week (November 5) See p. 4

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Sherbrooke St. through Vic village to be re-paved

Council focuses on roads+ in \$39M capital works program, \$21M loan

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

City council October 21 presented a \$39-million capital works program for 2025 in which the lion's share – some 60 percent – calls for work related to roads, and their sewer and water mains. For this, the total amount of next year's work is expected to require a loan by-law of some \$21 million in financing as accumulated surpluses

dwindle.

This compares with a forecasted need to borrow \$7.6 million to balance the 2024 program, though the final amount or need to borrow has not yet been finalized.

A loan by-law for 2025 results from the city's "inability" to generate new incomes without "massively" increasing property taxes or new real estate development, explained *continued on p. 10*

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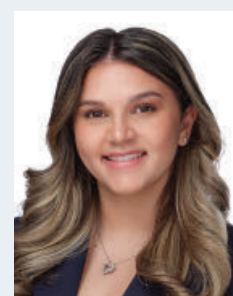
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The Shapiro Group believes in fostering the talent of tomorrow. We wish our summer interns the best of luck as they return to school and pursue promising futures. We are also pleased to welcome our newest intern, Ben. Additionally, we are excited to have Amanda join our team full-time alongside Gabi, who is also taking on a full-time position with us.

Welcome to the Shapiro Group:



Gabriella Marsilii
SACRED HEART ALUM

Gabi graduated from the John Molson School of Business in 2024 with a degree in International Business and a minor in Finance. She has been part of our team for two years in a part-time capacity, and we are thrilled to welcome her as a full-time member!



Amanda Shannon
ST GEORGE'S ALUM

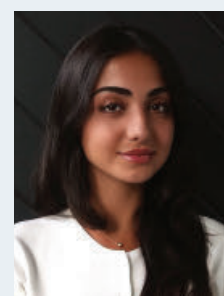
Amanda recently graduated from Queen's University with a degree in Psychology. She joins the Shapiro Group full-time as an Administrative Assistant. Welcome Amanda!



Benjamin Katz
SELWYN HOUSE ALUM

Ben is a student at McGill University - Desautels Faculty of Management. He will be joining us for the next three months, and we are excited to have him on board.

Thank you for being part of the team this summer!



Keira Zadeh
LCC ALUM

Keira is pursuing Business Management and Legal Studies at the University of Western Ontario, with plans to graduate in 2026. Best of luck in the school year ahead!



Alex Rutenberg
LCC ALUM

Alex is completing a dual degree in Commerce and Economics at Queen's University. Alex has one semester left and is looking forward to pursuing a career in finance full-time in the new year.

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Public Security works to cool fender-bender dispute

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A car backing into a handicap parking space at 4141 Sherbrooke October 21 hit a legally parked taxi, erupting into a call for an “altercation with possible aggression,” Public Security officials said.

Responding to the call at 8:55 am, officers found only minor scratches on both vehicles, making it difficult to determine which ones might have recently occurred. They described it as a fender-bender. The irate taxi driver, however, was described as “very upset” with a woman who admitted she had hit the taxi, as also witnessed by two passers-by.

Officers told the cabbie the way he was talking to the woman was “unacceptable.” Police arrived and both drivers were reportedly “sent on their way” without charges.

Public Security intervenes in theft-allegations altercation until police arrive

A patroller intervened in a physical altercation on the sidewalk outside the Metro store on Victoria October 18, Public

Security officials said. Two employees were reported to be trying to stop someone reported to have stolen something.

The dispute on the sidewalk was witnessed at 10 pm by the passing patroller who stopped to help. Meanwhile, police arrived and placed the suspect under arrest to be charged with robbery (theft with violence). No other details were reported.

Ticket issued for gasoline-fired leaf blowers

A ticket for \$464 was issued October 18 to a company when two of its workers were reported to be using gasoline-fired leaf blowers no longer allowed in Westmount at any time, Public Security officials said. Patrollers received the complaint at 11:07 am concerning work in progress on Sunnyside near Victoria.

Patrollers to be out in force for Hallowe’en

Public Security officials said last week that additional patrollers would be out on the streets in all sectors Thursday, October 31, to work to ensure safety for Hallowe’en trick-or-treating.

Cost of initial sound barrier analysis rises with complexity

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

City council October 21 authorized an added expenditure of \$66,039 including taxes to the city’s share of a joint three-way report by SNC Lavalin (now called Atkin-Réalis) on analysis of data collected concerning legal proceedings of a sound barrier along the westbound lane of Route 136 (formerly called the 720).

The city’s legal case is against the Quebec Ministry of Transport (MTQ) and KPH

Turcot to have them build the sound barrier at their own expense, for which the parties had agreed to mandate an expert to conduct and produce a joint evaluation on costs.

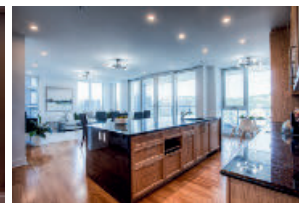
The contract for an analysis had been awarded by the city on October 5, 2022 for which the latest share to Westmount now rises to \$186,762 following the addition. The total costs result from the exercise now being “more complex than originally thought,” explained District 8 councillor Kathleen Kez in moving the resolution.

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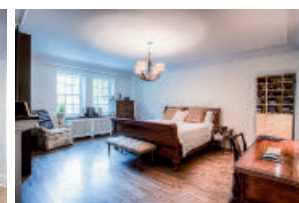


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Karen Karpman
cell: (514) 497-8218
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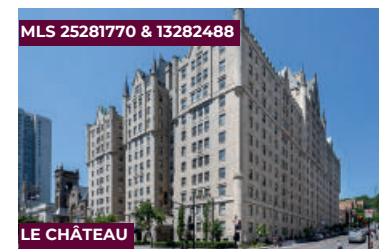


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Important note**Postal labour dispute looms – News on *Independent's* delivery**

Management and labour at Canada Post, which delivers most of the *Independent's* copies, are in a labour negotiation and there may be a disruption of service as early as next week. We wish both sides well at this time and hope for a quick and mutually beneficial settlement.

Because our drop-off and delivery cycle with Canada Post takes four days, we usually have to assume that there will be a disruption even if none has been announced. We can't have newspapers caught in Canada Post's distribution centre during a last-minute strike or lock-out.

As a result, next week, **residents of condo and apartment buildings** should likely look for issues of the *Independent* in

their lobbies, not their mailboxes. We did this last time there was a postal interruption. If you can put in a good word with doormen and management, please do – and I thank you in advance.

Everyone can continue to look for newspapers at our usual drop sites (e.g. banks, grocery stores, city buildings), because they are filled up by a private contractor. I expect that we will deliver more newspapers to these locations given the circumstances.

For residents north of Sherbrooke (and thus far from most of our drop sites), I plan to have newspaper boxes installed at spread-out locations in your area by next week. They are:

1. Côte St. Antoine and Victoria, north-

west corner,

2. Sunnyside and Upper Lansdowne, southeast corner,
3. Entrance to Summit Woods, near Oakland and Summit Circle,
4. The Boulevard and Aberdeen, southeast corner,
5. Montrose and Mt. Pleasant, northeast corner,
6. Entrance to Murray Park, near Montrose and Murray,
7. Entrance to Murray Park, near Westmount Ave. and Murray Hill,
8. Montrose, south side, near Aberdeen,
9. Entrance to Queen Elizabeth Gardens, near Barat and Vignal.

These newspaper boxes will be on municipal land. I thank the city of Westmount's Public Works director, Robert Talarico, for his help on this matter recently and I thank Mayor Christina Smith for her preliminary work on this back-up program over one year ago.

Please know that there is already a newspaper box in place on the north side of The Boulevard at Roslyn Ave. near the steps to Upper Roslyn, which we will also fill up more than usual.

Starting next week, I ask everyone to go to our website, which we can update daily, for the latest delivery information.

David Price is the editor of the Independent.

Police Report**Station 12 reports an upsurge in recent crimes – Tools, copper, jewellery stolen**

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

After a period of relative calm, officers at the Montreal police department's Station 12 were busy indeed last week, dealing with an unusually large number of household and business burglaries, as well as a major incident when a disturbed man drove erratically before abandoning his stolen vehicle in Westmount Park.

In the latter incident, around 4:45 pm on October 18, according to Station 12 spokesman Cst. Emmanuel Provencher, the suspect, believed to be mentally un-

stable but also under the influence of alcohol, was seen by several witnesses recklessly driving a pick-up truck on the street near Westmount Park.

After colliding with parked vehicles, he drove into Westmount Park, after which he abandoned the truck and fled.

The police later determined that the truck, a red 2002 Chevrolet Silverado, had been stolen in the Ville Marie sector downtown. Although police found liquor in the truck, they were unable to verify the degree to which the suspect may have been intoxicated.

The driver left the scene and was not

immediately identified. In the meantime, the police confirmed that no one was injured during the mad escapade.

However, two days later, an individual fitting the suspect's description was spotted on Grosvenor Ave. and also on Lansdowne near de Maisonneuve, spray-painting markings on the license plates of cars, as well as tossing garbage about.

Police arrested him after a resident called in a complaint to 911. Provencher said the police immediately connected the suspect to the driving incident two days before.

Although he faces at least one charge of mischief, Provencher said the suspect was released, pending legal proceedings, on a promise to appear in court.

Tools stolen

Around 10:45 am on the morning of October 17, a tradesman carrying out work at a home at 82 Summit Crescent in upper Westmount who had parked his truck in front filed a complaint with police that tools worth a few thousand dollars that had been left in the vehicle were stolen.

Pedestrian struck by Bixi

A little after midnight on October 18, a woman attempting to cross the street near 3505 Atwater Ave. on the slope north of Sherbrooke St. was struck by a cyclist who was driving a Bixi bike.

"The lady was pretty badly injured, but her life is out of danger," said Cst. Provencher. He said she was transported to hospital, suffering from injuries to the head and other parts of her body.

No charges were filed against the bike's driver after the police concluded the collision was entirely accidental. "The guy tried to avoid her, but she jumped on the wrong

side and it ended in a collision," Provencher added.

Rolex stolen

On October 21 around 3:15 pm, the occupant of an apartment at 5010 Sherbrooke at the western limits of Westmount ran to catch up to a burglar who was about to rob him of a costly Rolex watch.

"The victim saw the guy, so he ran after him," Provencher said. However, while trying to chase down the suspect, the victim tripped and fell and sustained some significant but non-life-threatening injuries, he added.

Church robbed

Provencher said that on October 23 around 2 am, there was a break-in and robbery at St. Léon de Westmount Church on de Maisonneuve at the corner of Clarke Ave.

He described the material stolen as an object made of copper with an estimated value of \$1,000. He suggested it may have been related to renovations.

Worth noting is that copper, like a few other metals, has risen in value in recent years among scrap dealers.

Jewellery stolen, twice

On October 24 during the night, suspects cut the alarm system at a home at the very top of the hill on Clarke Ave. before going in and stealing an unspecified amount of jewellery.

That same night at an apartment building on Lansdowne Ave. near the corner of de Maisonneuve, burglars pulled off a similar heist.

They got away with jewellery worth an estimated \$500 to \$1,000 after breaking in through a patio-level sliding door at the rear of the apartment.

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT**We are Westmount****Editor**

David Price: 514.935.4537
editor@westmountindependent.com

Chief reporter

Laureen Sweeney

Graphics

Ted Sancton

Advertising sales

Arleen Candiotti: 514.223.3567
advertising@westmountindependent.com

Classified ads

www.westendclassifieds.com

Accounting

Beth Hudson: 514.223.6138
office@westmountindependent.com

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Dawson College attracts, identifies 1,000 species in 1,000 days

BY JENNIFER BALL

A goal of Dawson College is to have a living campus that re-connects people, community and nature.

With that in mind, it has also now achieved a COP15 commitment it made in 2022: to attract and identify 1,000 species in 1,000 days.

The species had to be found at a location within the Dawson campus and they included plants, insects, invertebrates, bacteria, algae, fungi and animals.

This counting was achieved by the last week of September.

The United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15) ended in Montreal on December 19, 2022 with an agreement to guide global action on nature through to 2030. In November 2022, the CEGEP, which is found on de Maisonneuve, at Atwater Ave., committed to being part of the Nature Positive Universities alliance.

Being “nature positive” means Dawson has pledged to help halt and reverse nature loss so that species and ecosystems can start to recover.

Dawson will work to restore species and microhabitats that have been harmed over time by the impacts of the college and its activities.

Brian Mader, the project lead and a biology teacher at Dawson, told the *Independent* on October 22, “It is no small feat to be able to count 1,000 species...”

“We had to create habitats for these thousand different species.”

How was it done?

The student-driven team achieved its goal by planting different kinds of wildflowers to attract local pollinators and created little micro habitats that could foster certain species.

How the project worked was partici-

pants downloaded the free iNaturalist app and created an account to join Dawson’s community there.

Once that step was accomplished, they started looking, clarifying and posting their results.

Mader instructed participants to include a picture, date, location and an identification. If they were unsure of the species, the office of sustainability at Dawson College was prepared to help.

Mader set three goals:

- Pedagogical: Teach people about the world around them. Learn about species and the ecosystem services they provide,
- Sustainable: Use this project to provide microhabitats for species in our urban landscape,
- Social: Bring people together, collaborate. Get people outside and appreciating nature.

“As an educational institution, this project helps define our core value of well-being for all,” said Chris Adam of the sustainability office.

“Students are engaged and learning, teachers are gaining an incredible outside classroom, other species are benefiting, and group activities foster a sense of community.”

‘More work to do’

Now that the project has been implemented successfully, the CEGEP is in the process of drawing up new, stretch goals.

“Oh, there’s definitely more work to do.” Mader said.

Mader referred to the land that Dawson occupies as having originally been a forest before settlement.

“If we can modify the landscape and return at least a small part of that original landscape – then we can provide homes for the species that traditionally used to live [in that forest.]”

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Westmount Park, cont'd from p. 1

ment of paths by wider and more easily accessible ones of light grey unistone and terra-cotta paving lined by new benches. Also created are raised garden mounds ready for planting.

When the contract was awarded at the



Councillor Kathleen Kez demonstrates the new zip line.

February 26 council meeting, Mayor Smith had explained that the park was the city's most used park and playground – by residents, schools, daycares, day camps and by “people coming from afar.”

The work was to be undertaken to update and enlarge the playground whose equipment she described as “a safety hazard” (see story March 12, p. 1). As well, she added, “as anyone can attest who has walked around there, the paths are in desperate need of work.”

The new play structures for various ages would include “some things we’ve never seen in our parks before,” Mayor Smith said. She referred to them as including trampolines and climbing structures “integrated into the ground.”

“This is an exciting new contract for our outdated play models,” said Councillor Mary Gallery on moving the contract resolution as commissioner of parks. “I’m delighted this is moving forward.”

Gallery was one of the first to arrive at last week’s opening.

‘Signature park’

Another was city director general Julie Mandeville, who had earlier told the *Independent* that the changes would bring in unique and original elements to create a “signature park.”

While taking account for “inclusivity and accessibility and the environment,” she said they would also incorporate measures to counteract heat islands such as a misting system and tree troughs, integrate a family zone (with a picnic table) and a rest zone (with a hammock under the trees).

Closing of the playground and entire area for the summer without much notice or consultation had been raised several times at the May 6 council meeting plans and illustrations were posted on the fencing.

The “park train” from Family Day was also put into service for a few weeks during the early holiday period.



Jumping on the new embedded mini trampolines.

150th coverage coming soon

We now have the names of photographed guests at the city’s 150th anniversary cocktail held October 9. We hope to run photos and names soon. – VR/DP.



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Homme Men Femme Women Enfants Children

'Not the greatest life... but it is pretty good'

Centenarian Faye Arnold: 'Who you are is as important as what you eat'

BY JENNIFER BALL

Centenarian, and former librarian and film classifier, Faye Arnold is of the belief that her long life can not only be attributed to what she eats but to who she is.

She sat down with the *Independent* on October 9 for tea and biscuits at Manoir Westmount, which is located at 4646 Sherbrooke just west of Victoria Hall.

Arnold, who is 102, said that she is from a large family that left Romania after World War I for a better life in Canada.

Not everything went smoothly. Arnold said her family suffered greatly when the economy crashed during the Great Depression (1929-1939). Her father "was not a person who had been favoured by the First World War and the troubles..."

"We were broke most of the time but we did not feel deprived..."

"When he went out to get a job, he found he had company with lots of others who were also unemployed."

Arnold concedes that it was a "very difficult time" and they "were very thankful when he had work."

Born in 1922 in Montreal, Arnold had a lengthy career as a librarian working for

McGill University and Sir George Williams University (which merged with Loyola College in 1974 to become Concordia University).

"There was nothing else that I would rather be doing" than working as a librarian, Arnold said. She is still an avid reader, regularly perusing the *Gazette*, the *Economist* and the *New Yorker*.

When Arnold retired from being a librarian, she worked, for almost two decades, for the Quebec censor board: a new career that she started in her late fifties. The mandate was to rate films before they could be released in cinemas.

"I thought it was worthwhile," she said about her directive.

Between 1911 and 1913, five provinces passed censorship laws and then established boards to apply them. In Quebec, the emphasis was placed on protecting children from corruption.

Arnold did not remember specific films that she had rated but she acknowledged that many women of her generation did not work outside the home. She said that she felt honoured to have been able to do so.

She also worked inside the home. She raised three children, two boys and a girl, with her husband and although she has

lived a long time without him – he died many decades ago – and although her children do not live locally, Arnold said she is very grateful to be preparing to celebrate her 103rd birthday in February.

Her thoughts on so far having outwitted Father Time? "I was born under a lucky star... I would probably not have guessed that I would be blessed to live this long... Such as it is, it is not the greatest life... but it is pretty good."

'Artisans Westmount' set for Nov. 9-10

The annual Artisans Westmount gift-giving sale takes place this year on Saturday and Sunday November 9 and 10, at Victoria Hall from 10:30 am to 5 pm.

It's here that Public Security also kicks off its annual holiday food drive as the price of admission both days: a non-perishable food item or \$2 toward supporting families in need in the Westmount community. Among the handmade goods to be featured are jewellery, ceramics, stationery, accessories, toys and "much more," according to a press release from the city's Community Events office.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TOUGH TIME VOTING AT EMSB (1)

The following is not just a Westmount issue as it affects the English Montreal School Board and maybe also other areas in Quebec that still have English school boards. I am concerned that Elections Quebec has designed the system to dissuade voters who come to vote from voting.

When my wife and I tried to vote in the advance polls today (October 27), we experienced minor chaos. We arrived at around 2:30 pm at our polling station, which was at the Westmount Park elemen-

tary school. They checked our polling station number and asked us to wait in a line-up that led into another room further on. It took us over three quarters of an hour to enter the room, where we had to wait again in another line-up.

After spending 15 minutes in this line-up with hardly any forward motion, we decided to leave as we estimated that at the observed rate of progress it would take us

over one hour to get to vote and as we had another appointment that we needed to make that afternoon, we left.

They did tell us that the polling stations would be open until 8 pm. Well, we managed to finish with our other appointment early and then decided to give the polling station another try. This was around 6:20 pm. When we entered the school, we noticed that the line outside of the voting

room was gone and on entering the room for voting, it was relatively small, so we waited and half an hour later we could vote!

While waiting in line, we noticed again that some of the polling stations rarely had anybody voting. In talking with the election staff, we found out that the system of determining which polling station a person was to use for voting was done on a purely geographical basis, so if one area had a lot of skyscrapers with apartments, that polling station would have an enormous number of people while those areas with low populations would have few voters.

Also, a polling station that was open but had almost no voters, by law, could not accept people from another polling station.

Later that evening when I spoke with my sister-in-law regarding our experience, she said that she had wanted to vote, but apparently she was not on the list of voters. When she asked a neighbour for information as to how she could be placed on the voters' list, the neighbour told her how to do it but, the neighbour also said, that it had taken her 11 hours to get on the list, so my sister-in-law is not bothering.

Well, as they used to say "Québec sait faire"?

ALFRED EDEL, VICTORIA AVE.

TOUGH TIME VOTING AT EMSB (2)

We English voters will need to be very patient! I have just returned from the advance poll at Westmount Park School. It is now 4:30 pm. I waited in line for 20 minutes, to be told it would be another hour before I could vote! My poll is 147. I will return on Sunday, November 3 to vote.

Please, if you have encountered a similar problem, do return to vote on November 3. Let us show the government how patient, persistent and determined citizens we English can be! Please vote this Sunday. We will show them how conscientious the English can be!

BEVERLEY HUTCHISON, KITCHENER AVE.

Tim's coming to Greene!



The rumour has been around for a while but the signage is now up, as seen October 28 on Greene below de Maisonneuve. The store was not open and workers were still opening cardboard boxes inside. There was no signage on the door to indicate an opening date.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.



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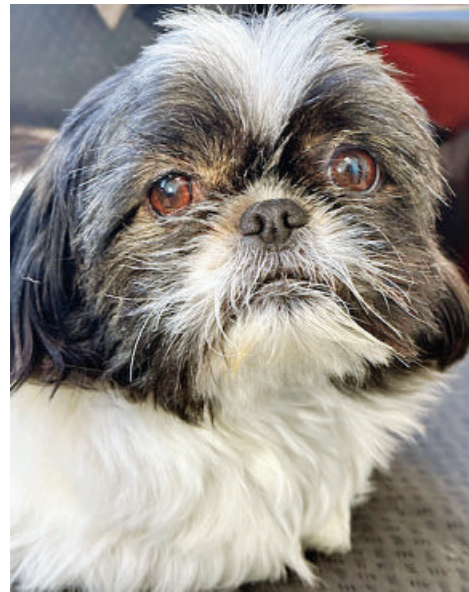
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LYSANNE FOWLER

Precious Tokyo



order for the adoption coordinators to reach out to you in return.

Please do not hesitate to write to them at their email address at info@gerdysrescue.org as well. Tokyo is such a delightful charmer, a little friend in need of the warmth and caring that you can share with him in the everyday.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne

A handsome little fellow, wonderful Tokyo is a classic shih tzu. He is presently in foster care for Gerdy's Rescue & Adoptions, enjoying the routine yet still feeling sensitive to the change in his life and people.

A playful companion, he enjoys other doggie friends on walks. Tokyo is nervous around people as everyone is new to him, so it is best to let him become comfortable on his own terms. He would be at his best in a home with a single person or a couple who are experienced with shih tzus and understand their personalities.

Tokyo is a very healthy four-and-a-half-year-old, up to date with his inoculation, neutered and microchipped. He is small at approximately nine pounds, and because of his size, it would be good for him to be in a home without young children.

If you would like more information on Tokyo, please go to the Gerdy's Rescue & Adoptions website at www.gerdysrescue.org for more information and photographs from his foster family, offering your contact information on their questionnaire in



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City needs more asphalt to handle added paving requests

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Even though it's nearing the end of the paving season, city council at a special meeting October 21 approved modification of a contract for the purchase of asphalt "due to the extent of repairs and repair requests received by Public Works" to complete them

for the remaining three months.

'Time Sensitive'

Described by Mayor Christina Smith as "a time sensitive" matter and by Councillor Anitra Bostock, commissioner of Public Works, as in time for "upcoming lousy weather," the additional cost added \$34,493

to the total of the original contract of \$57,486.

This brought the total maximum payment amount to Construction DJL to \$91,979 and followed the separate special meeting for presentation of the city's capital works program that highlighted the need for increasing road attention.

Capital works, cont'd from p. 1



City councillor Conrad Peart, commissioner of urban planning and architecture (engineering and infrastructure), at the capital works meeting October 21.

Councillor Conrad Peart in his capital works speech.

"As we announced last year," he explained, "we will be resorting to borrowing more than in previous years" which had used accumulated surpluses, of which only \$4 million appears to be available for the coming year.

Given rising costs of material and equipment, the impact of climate change and ageing condition of the roads, sewers and water mains, Peart said the city previously had "greatly underestimated" amounts needed long term for 2017-2037.

Roads and buildings

Nevertheless, a decrease in parks for 2025 over 2024 relates mainly to the Westmount Park playground and the Doug Ellis Memorial Garden. The decrease in municipal buildings results from the library's makerspace, the heating system at Victoria Hall and replacement of the Westmount recreation centre's water tower.

As a result, 60 percent of the capital works programs in the next three years "will be dedicated to roads and their infrastructure." As well, increased amounts are needed for the municipal garages at Public Works in order to "continue to efficiently provide snow removal, garbage collection and street cleaning for years to come."

Mayor Christina Smith also stated that "our roads are still in deplorable condition." In this respect along with major reconstruction of Claremont and the two Fordens, she told the *Independent* that Sherbrooke

would be re-paved through Victoria village as part of the 2025 program, though this was not mentioned at the meeting.

Breakdown of spending

The \$39-million program is broken down to include some \$18.6 million for roads and another related \$5 million for water and sewer lines as well as \$7.4 million for buildings, \$1.9 million for parks, \$1.2 million for vehicles, \$748,500 for IT, \$486,800 for project bureau, and \$3.8 million for Hydro Westmount amounts related to electrical distribution.

The new "project bureau" line not included in previous capital programs is for the work of overseeing and coordinating capital works projects under Urban Planning division director Tom Flies.

Peart pointed out that the capital works

program was not "strictly speaking" a budget but an "ongoing process" requiring rigorous monitoring to allow for updating year by year based on factors such as progress, delays, postponement or cancellation.

"I see it as a wish list," director general Julie Mandeville told the *Independent*. Mandeville previously served the city as treasurer and finance director.

As a result, financing of the 2025 capital works program of \$39 million calls (in round figures) for some \$12 million from taxation (pay-as-you-go), \$4 million from accumulated surplus, and \$2 million from grants, leaving some \$21 million needed from a loan by-law.

Projections for the three-year capital works program adopted at the meeting go from \$39,030,400 in 2025 to \$43,823,400 in 2026 and \$46,764,700 in 2027.

For more detail, go to the city's website at: The city (top left tab)/Finances and budgets/2025 budget/Capital Works programme 2025-2026-20267 [sic].

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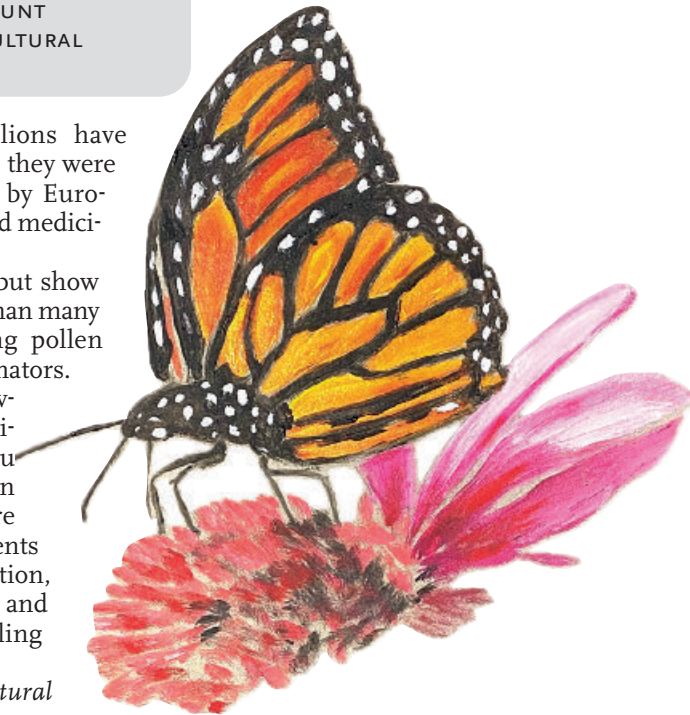
Society has interesting speakers every month at the Westmount Library. You can find us on Facebook. Join us!

Even though dandelions have been vilified historically, they were originally brought over by Europeans for their useful and medicinal properties.

They are not native, but show up earlier in the season than many other flowers, providing pollen and nectar for early pollinators.

Dandelions are believed to be the most nutritionally dense green you can eat, outstripping even kale or spinach. They are also used for many ailments like reducing inflammation, lowering blood pressure and cholesterol, and controlling blood sugar.

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The 2024 Montreal Chapter Shoebox Project Holiday Campaign

The Shoebox Project for Women is a non-affiliated, non-profit Canadian charity with chapters across Canada and England. Its mission is to uplift and empower women who are experiencing or at-risk-of homelessness through in-kind support, educational workshops and community participation. Its mandate is also to build awareness, promote equity and fight discrimination and gender-based violence.

Since its inception in 2011, the organization has gifted more than 350,000 shoeboxes to women at more than 600 shelters and community agencies

These shoeboxes really uplift women who are affected by financial and housing instability and homelessness,” said Lora Tombari, Montreal Chapter Coordinator. Along with a team of volunteers, everyday essential items, personal care products as well as small luxuries, such as makeup, skincare products, and gift cards are assembled into gift-wrapped shoeboxes. Each shoebox includes a handwritten message, which makes the recipient feel worthy and special.

In Montreal and in Laval, the Montreal Chapter helps 51 shelters and organizations. Their largest Holiday fundraising campaign is currently underway and their objective is to deliver 3,300 gift-filled shoeboxes in time for the holiday season.

The Montreal Chapter’s official campaign period is from November 1, 2024 to December 6, 2024. There will be several shoebox “drop-off” locations in Montreal, including one in Westmount situated at O’Way Coiffure, Sherbrooke St. Ouest, Westmount, QC H3Z 1H3.

The charity welcomes the opportunity to partner with schools and corporate sponsors in addition to raising funds and bringing in product donation support. This year, through the efforts of Caryn Weltman, a Westmount resident and Shoebox Project volunteer, The Busy Bees Knitting Group at the Contactivity Centre donated warm items to include in shoeboxes.

“Everything that we put into our shoeboxes are things we often take for granted, Tombari said. “We are providing something important and letting women in challenging circumstances know that someone cares about their wellbeing. A gift-filled shoebox is “hope” and “love” in a box.

To find out how you can help support women in need, please contact the Montreal Chapter directly at:

montreal@shoeboxproject.com
or montreal_outreach@shoeboxproject.com



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

As kittens, Tiger and Feather are bonded little siblings. These cuties are presently in foster care for the Montreal SPCA cattery, growing more beautiful and affectionate every day. Loving, curious, playful and cuddly, each charms in her own unique way.

Tiger is outgoing and Feather follows happily, getting the feel for things from her sister first. These pretty tabbies are very healthy, up to date with their kitten inoculation program, spayed and microchipped.

If you would like to find out more about them, please go to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, then scroll to their information pages from their identification numbers, Tiger at 2000135396 and Feather at A2000135405.

Their foster family has presented precious notes there on their personalities and activities, offering additional photographs as well.

As a next step, refer to the “Fill out the form” black rectangle at the right-hand side of the information page and click to the

Tails of two sisters



form in order to present your contact information for the adoption coordinators to get back to you. You will then be able to discuss your interest in the kittens and adoption framework, ensuring that you can give them a wonderful home life and they can give you the joy of kitten affections.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne



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Travel

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Remembering Puccini, Arnolfini



Palazzo Arnolfini.

Giacomo Puccini passed away one hundred years ago. As he was born in Lucca, this year the town is celebrating the composer and his world-renowned operas.

The first, *La Bohème*, reflects his poverty-stricken time as a young artist living in Milan.

Tosca, *Madame Butterfly* and *Manon Lescaux* followed, each with their own type of heroine.

His *La Fanciulla del West*, premiering at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 1910, featured a special harmonic language. He introduced sounds from outside sources such as folk melodies, giving this work an incredibly modern sound.

Arturo Toscanini conducted the world premiere of Puccini's unfinished opera *Turandot*. Famously, he stopped in the middle of the third act – the point Puccini had reached when he died. Turning to the audience at Milan's La Scala, he simply said, "Here Puccini ended his opera."

On a side note, the composer also loved hunting. Moving from his natal house in Lucca, he *continued on p. 14*



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Travel, cont'd from p. 13

constructed a new home, Torre de Lago, today the Villa Museo Puccini. Located in a small village outside Lucca, it once had the lake's waves lapping at the front door. Today, a massive pedestrian area means that the house is now far away from the water. Puccini composed almost all his operas here.

Speaking of powerful Lucchese, the Arnolfini family became iconic in art history books thanks to a beautiful painting. Flemish artist Jan van Eyck painted *The Arnolfini Portrait* of Giovanni Arnolfini and his wife in 1434.

Giovanni di Nicolao Arnolfini was a wealthy merchant from Lucca, although he spent most of his life in Flanders. The family was a power player, involved in politics as well as the cloth trade. Their spacious palazzo in Lucca has now been transformed into apartments.

And today...

Luckily, I happened to stay at the Palazzo Arnolfini for my time in Lucca. Nearby is the San Francesco convent, with its wonderful interior *cortile* (courtyard), complete with lemon trees and masses of herbs.

But before you think that everything in Lucca is old – which of course most of it is



Courtyard of San Francesco.

– this historical complex now houses a private university: the IMT School for advanced studies, undertaking research and inter-

acting with the scientific community or organizing the organization of technology transfer events.



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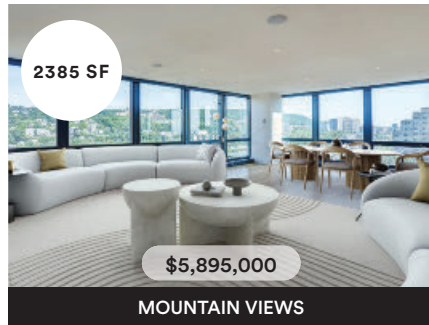
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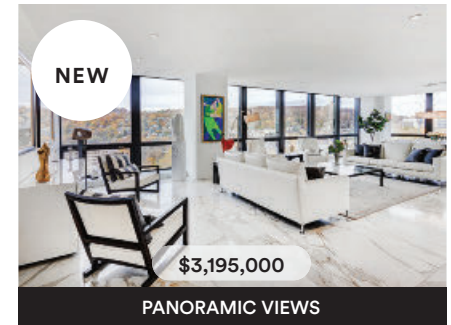
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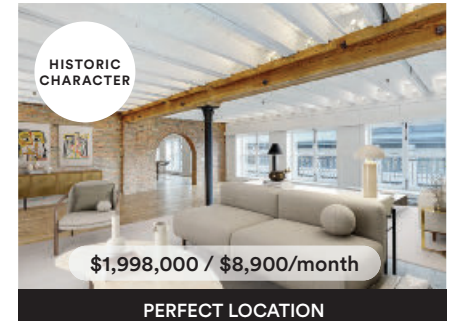
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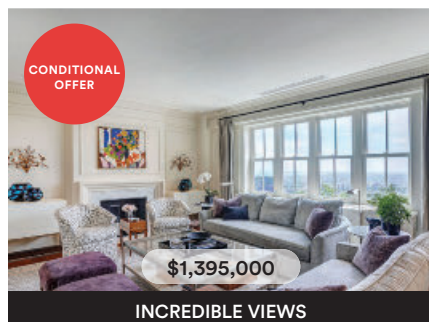
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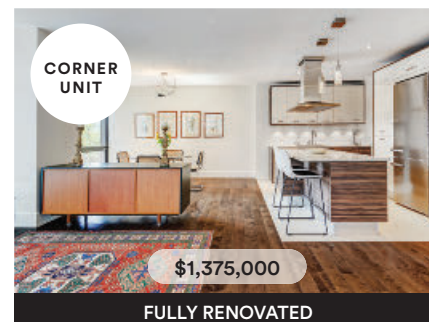
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