

# WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

Weekly Vol. 18 No. 11d

We are Westmount

November 26, 2024

## St. Margaret's Day Centre turns 25



From left, top row: staff members Yasmina Sleb, Bianca Sealy, Lisa Lacasse, Elizabeth Mourelatos and Marc Fireman; and, bottom row: Connie O'Connell, Donna Schafer and Julia Gottlieb at an open house October 24 for St. Margaret's Day Centre, which is located just south of Westmount High. See p. 10 for story.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CIUSSS WEST CENTRAL MONTREAL.

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👉 This issue is the third-to-last one before our usual Christmas break 👈

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### Next step: final report

## Residents weigh in on 'preliminary' designs for the southeast

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The city's second public consultation meeting on the southeast development project attracted an estimated 100 residents to Victoria Hall November 14. Grouped around 10 participatory workshop tables, they were able to view and comment on new proposals stemming from the first consultation meeting June 12 and an on-

line survey. Each table had a facilitator from either Urban Planning or Lemay consultants who explained the proposals. It was described as the last public consultation before final conclusions expected next summer. The southeast area, which had a zoning freeze renewed in 2023, comprises a large zone between Dorchester ..... and St. Catherine - At- *continued on p. 9*

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## Use of banned gasoline leaf blowers continues to bring \$464 tickets

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

Gasoline-fired leaf blowers remain in use despite the city's ban on their use, Public Security director Greg McBain said last week. The department has been receiving many calls as fallen leaves continue to be cleaned up using these devices.

One such complaint was received November 13 at 1:58 pm concerning a gasoline-fired blower at a home on Rosemount that backs onto Mountain. A contractor was found at work in the backyard blowing the leaves and some already found on the street. He was ordered to take away them away.

Despite stating the device had been recently acquired, the worker was nevertheless issued a \$464 ticket for its use.

### Police Report

## Police act preventively for Dawson College one-day class boycott

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

A one-day boycott of classes by students at Dawson College last week kept officers from Station 12 as well as from other nearby Montreal police stations busy for much of the day on November 21.

Although thousands of students were initially expected to turn out for the pro-Palestinian protest, and the college administration ended up closing the campus for the day, only about 40 to 50 students turned up, according to Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit.

In spite of the low turnout, the Montreal police deployed officers and vehicles from several stations as a precaution, said Yigit.

He said the police were more concerned about a potential disturbance being stirred up by outside agitators rather than the Dawson student population.

## Man assisted after found lying on the ground on Victoria

When Public Security received a call November 15 for a man lying on the ground on Victoria north of Westmount Ave., officials reported he appeared to have fallen off a chair and complained of a sore right arm and hip.

A passer-by identifying himself as a doctor also stopped and the man was helped to stand, stating he had no pain in the head. He was seated in the patrol vehicle while awaiting police and Urgences Santé.

Identified as a 34-year-old homeless man, he refused to be taken to hospital on their arrival and went on his way.

### Purse snatched

The underground parking garage at Westmount Square was the scene of a purse snatching last week.

According to Cst. Yigit, a 25-year-old woman was about to enter her car in the garage around 2 pm on November 14, when a man approached and asked whether she had some spare change.

After replying that she hadn't any, the suspect allegedly grabbed the purse and ran off.

Although a description of the suspect was not immediately available, security cameras are providing investigators with images of the incident. In the meantime, the police are treating the incident as a non-violent act.

Yigit said it is unusual for something of this sort to take place at Westmount Square. He said a private security guard service at *continued on p. 9*

## 10 common frustrations, desires, & fears homeowners often experience when considering selling their home

	FRUSTRATIONS	DESIRES	FEARS
1	Not knowing the true market value of their home	Getting the best possible price	The home will sit on the market for too long
2	Having to prepare and stage the home for showings	Finding a buyer quickly and easily	The sale process will be too stressful or overwhelming
3	Managing the disruption to daily life (open houses, showings)	A smooth, hassle-free selling process	They won't find a buyer who truly appreciates the home
4	Uncertain timing and how long the selling process will take	Working with a professional they can trust & feel comfortable with	Their real estate broker won't represent their best interests
5	Juggling other life obligations (work, family) with selling	A knowledgeable broker who will handle everything for them	The home won't sell for the price they have in mind
6	Hidden or unexpected costs of repairs, updates, or moving expenses	Feeling supported and guided through the entire process	Buyers will criticize or undervalue the property
7	Negotiating offers and terms with buyers	Receiving honest and clear guidance	The closing process will encounter unexpected issues
8	Coordinating with contractors or service providers for repairs or improvements	A broker who understands their needs and priorities	They won't be able to sell at the right time to transition smoothly to their next home
9	Lack of transparency in the selling process and dealing with complex paperwork	Positive feedback and respectful interactions with potential buyers	Feeling pressured to make compromises they aren't comfortable with
10	Difficulty finding reliable information and trustworthy advice for decision-making	Making the process feel manageable and less stressful	The market will shift and impact the value or timing of the sale



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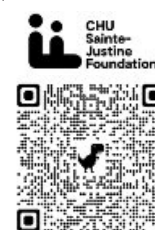
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## EDITORIAL

# City attempts to renege, force removal of agreed-to temporary newspaper boxes

Distributing our newspaper is key to having advertisers, who allow us to exist. Distribution is as important during a strike by one of our suppliers, which in this case is Canada Post, which usually does all of our door-to-door distribution, including to individual condo and apartment units. We don't know how long any strike will last and we need to reach as many readers as possible as easily as possible for them.

The city of Westmount recently attempted to halt our placement of newspaper boxes on its land, despite having previously agreed to allow us to do so.

Some details: The city of Westmount, over the last year and a half before the recent strike, had agreed to allow the *Independent's* metal newspaper boxes in Westmount-above-Sherbrooke in the event of a postal strike, and then attempted to rescind that permission on November 15, the very first day of the postal strike, at 3:25 pm on a Friday afternoon. After a few emails and texts back and forth over the weekend, the city relented on Monday, November 18 (thank you, Mayor Smith, for your role in this step forward) and allowed eight of the nine in-place boxes.

The city is supposed to be a bastion of civic-minded thinking and responsiveness. But, in stark contrast to everyone else, it has been nothing short of obstructionist in this tricky time. Does the municipal government want us to exist? Who are they working for? What are they protecting Westmounters from? News and opinions?

Of all our disputes with the city, this one had the potential to be the worst yet. It was disruptive to our operation when we had many other things to work on, could have been very harmful and, in the extreme, could have put us out of business.

As ever with the city, a given glitch leads to many more questions, including: Is this what you want the city's senior management dealing with? They seem to have spent quite a bit of time on it (head of Public Works, director general, other?). Wouldn't you rather that these publicly funded employees spent time improving services, streets, future plans *et cetera*?

I can't imagine how this dispute would have ended if I had not kept all my emails.

I am starting to get used to these disputes with the city, but is the average citizen? How much of this kind of thing goes on, unreported and unconflicted?

Some free advice on dealing with the city: keep your correspondence and notes!

Communication and consistency isn't just a problem with us. We learned recently that a city construction permit – whose “face” is usually the only thing consulted – cannot be taken at face value. The city recently issued one in error (October 22, p. 1), only to turn around and begin to sue the recipient to undo the work (November 12, p. 1). And whose money are they using to “correct” this problem, which they created? Yours! Is this the Westmount Way? Questions for you:

1. Do you think that the city acted properly in sending the email of November 15 asking us to remove all of our boxes?
2. Do you think that the *Independent* should have access to city land for 11 (or more) boxes in the event of future strikes?
3. Do you think that the *Independent* should be allowed to keep its test-case Roslyn/Upper Roslyn steps newspaper box after the strike? Should the three “in limbo” locations be allowed right now?
4. Do you think that the *Independent* should be lumped together with every other newspaper that can be bought or picked up free in Westmount? Or is the *Independent* distinct because of its unique Westmount-only coverage focus and unique Westmount-only distribution?
5. As the printing, publishing and distribution industries continue to change and evolve, in future there might be other requests similar to this one from us to the city. What attitude do you want the municipal government to have as it considers them? One that favours our existence, is neutral and technical, or hostile?

Putting out a newspaper in this day and age is not easy. The city sometimes seems opposed to a free press, and not for the first time (see September 21, 2021, p. 1, July 5, 2022, p. 1, October 1, 2024, p. 8). Having positive feedback from residents will very much help my future planning. If they can be for publication, it will help. If you want us here, please show the politicians and the bureaucrats. – DP

**For most of the correspondence in this this dispute, see Supplement on our webpage at [www.westmountindependent.com](http://www.westmountindependent.com)**

## APPENDIX

## The main dispute, in one email

November 16, 2024 – letter to Mayor Christina Smith (Email #1)

Dear Christina,

Thank you for the quick reply [to my short email of Friday, November 15 – email A], and on a Saturday morning.

Unfortunately, there will likely be more back-and-forth this weekend, but it is not my doing. Your director of Public Works, Robert Talarico, after a year-and-a-half of city acquiescence, including his own involvement (see below), attempted to rescind permission for our newspaper boxes on city land, on a Friday afternoon at 3:25 pm, on the first day of the feared and planned-for postal strike, with a deadline leaving us two weekend days to react.

This behaviour is not reasonable in the private sphere, and much less so for a democratic government dealing with the press as it attempts to survive a strike by an external contractor (i.e. not of our own doing).

The time-fuse lit by Robert also means that I must make final plans for the coming week in light of these events on Monday morning. I don't have more time to plan than that, to repeat, because of his schedule.

Furthermore, we relied on the city's good faith and acquiescence over this long period and so did not come up with an alternate plan. I cannot come up with a “Plan C” in days, or even weeks. Robert's last-minute about-face is not acceptable.

To answer your question and the ones implied by it:

1. I first brought this plan up with you in February 2023, explaining our need for a back-up plan during a postal strike. I sent you a picture of one of our boxes and the proposed first site (email #2 – February 2, 2023) to enable you to make internal inquiries,
2. You checked with Robert and then told me that the test location, to go into effect immediately, was acceptable. That location, like all the others, was deliberately chosen so as not to interfere with city operations, most notably sidewalk ploughs (if any minor adjustments are ever necessary, just tell me),
3. I sent you a picture of the test newspaper box in place at The Boulevard (north side) and the Upper Roslyn steps (February 10, 2023, email #3). It has been there ever since, without incident,
4. When this particular postal strike became more likely, I reached out to

Robert to clear nine new specific locations via email #4 (October 24, 2024). I then called him on October 28 to follow up and he said that they were fine, which is why my Distribution Note in our paper of October 29, p. 4 reads the way that it does.

After our call, he called me back right away to confirm that the placement of the new boxes was for the strike period only, and I confirmed that.

5. Two and a half weeks later, I asked about two more sites in order to fully deploy our 11 boxes (email #5, November 14, 2024). He wrote me back the next day demanding that I remove them all (email #6, November 15, 2024).

In my view, the city has agreed to these boxes and should honour its word.

Additionally, the city is not a sole proprietorship, or a club, or a public or private company, or even a charity. It is a democratic government.

What do you think the voters of Westmount want? Do they want their local paper to survive? We did not arrive in town yesterday and ask to put up a cigarette stand on Westmount Ave. We are a very well regarded local media outlet asking for accommodation (a few feet of land) during a strike, which we asked for in good time and transparently.

Furthermore, our readers and advertisers have now been apprised, repeatedly, over three issues and person-to-person communication, of these efforts on their behalf.

Any comparison with any other newspaper is a red herring. We are the only newspaper that focuses only on Westmount and that distributes only in Westmount, and have been since 2015. Please do not use the ploy used by the Legal department on the real estate transfers issue and act as though a request from us is an out-of-the-blue one, or one of millions by strange and unfamiliar entities. The city knows who we are, and knows how little we are asking, and has known for a year and a half.

For all of these reasons, I close with this: chief elected officer Christina, with city council support if required, please direct the municipal civil servants to honour the permission already granted by the city for the duration of this strike.

Best regards,

David Price, editor  
*Westmount Independent*  
weekly newspaper



# St. George's students learn about the 'power of words' and their impact on seniors



Montreal children's book author and communicator Marie-Claude Giguère gave a presentation on October 29 at St. George's School on The Boulevard about the importance of words when speaking to senior citizens.

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

In a touching tribute to mark International Seniors Day, St. George's School of Montreal held a special event on October 29 to raise awareness among students about the impact language can have when communicating with senior citizens.

Led by Montreal author and communicator Marie-Claude Giguère, a long-time advocate for the well-being of senior citizens, the event brought together students, grandparents and faculty in an experience that underscored the power of words and compassion in intergenerational relationships.

Giguère, who founded the Montreal-

based organization Helping Seniors, shared insights from *Grandma's Place*, an illustrated children's book she wrote. Through storytelling and discussion, she illustrated how words can either reinforce or diminish a senior's sense of autonomy and dignity.

She maintained that words like "put," "place," and "make," when discussing moves to senior citizens' residences, can convey an inappropriate sense of control or disregard, which can deeply affect a senior's well-being.

"Words used when we feel weak or vulnerable really affect the outcome, no matter our age," she said. "All we need to do is modify a few words to make seniors

# Hockey player for October: Marianna Drimtziias 'Outstanding' goaltender has 'huge responsibility'

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

In her second season with the city's M13A girls' hockey team for the Westmount Wings, goalie Marianna Drimtziias "has been nothing short of outstanding between the pipes," writes sports co-ordinator Alyssa Sherrard, president of the Westmount Minor Hockey Association.

"As the only goalie on the team, she takes on a huge responsibility of being there for her teammates, game after game, always stepping up when we need her. An amazing goaltender with immense talent, Marianna is always looking for a challenge and works hard during every practice improving her skills."

Chosen for October, Marianna becomes the first player of the month for the current hockey season in the city's recognition program. It was initiated in 2019 to highlight player contributions and acknowledge the skills that minor hockey, and sports as a whole, can offer young people in developing sportsmanship, teamwork and discipline. These, according to the program "transfer into other areas such as academic and community service."

According to Sherrard, Marianna's "resilience has been incredible, making huge saves that kept us in games and staying

feel more at ease and seen for who they are today – not for what they have lost."

Students learned that the language often used when discussing elder care or changes in autonomy has immense weight. She called for a shift towards more empowering dialogue, to build bridges of understanding between generations.

## Cookies!

Earlier in the month, St. George's organized a special cookie-baking evening for



PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT SPORTS AND REC.

sharp even when there's less action on her part."

She adds that "we truly appreciate the dedication and commitment Marianna brings to the team, and we're fortunate to have her back this season. Awesome job, Marianna... keep it up!"

the students and their grandparents, also facilitated by Giguère. The cookies were served to the students, symbolizing the warmth and connection that conversations about aging can create.

During the October 29 assembly, the St. George's students were asked to reflect on how they talk about and with seniors, both in their families and in the community. Giguère encouraged the students to think critically about how to undertake these conversations with respect and kindness.

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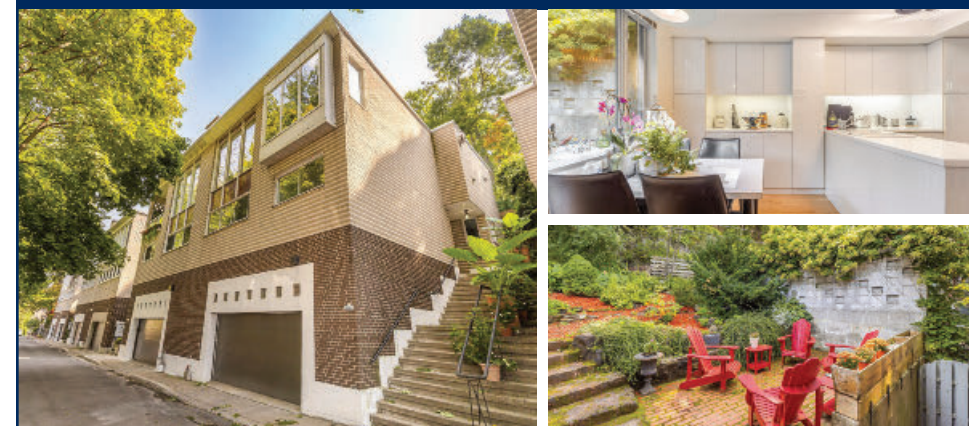
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## Distribution update

Canada Post went on strike November 15, so we cannot mail the *Independent* to you at present. Here's what have done and are doing.

- As ever, the *Independent* is available on the web at [www.westmountindependent.com](http://www.westmountindependent.com) and by email (to sign up, go to the website).
  - Montrose/Mt. Pleasant (northeast),
  - entrance to Murray Park (Montrose/Murray),
  - entrance to Murray Park (Westmount Ave. between Murray Hill & Belmont),
  - The Boulevard at the Roslyn/Upper Roslyn steps (north side),
  - entrance to Queen Elizabeth Gardens (Barat/Vignal).
- At regular drop sites around Westmount (e.g. ATMs, grocery stores, city buildings), there has been no major change, although we are leaving out more copies than normal.
- We have added black metal newspaper boxes at:
  - Côte St. Antoine/Victoria (northwest corner),
  - Sunnyside/Upper Lansdowne (southeast),
  - Entrance to Summit Woods (at Oakland/Summit Circle),
  - The Boulevard/Aberdeen (southeast),
- At multi-unit buildings (condos and apartments), we are leaving special drops of copies to their lobbies (not to individual mailboxes).
- Door to door, the *Independent* has enlisted an under-exercised aging semi-pro beer drinker to do what he can (see p. 7).

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# Confessions of an amateur distributor

BY DAVID PRICE, EDITOR

Given the postal strike, in addition to the efforts explained on p. 4, last week I distributed about 1,000 copies personally to houses well above Sherbrooke, which is about 20 percent of the number that usually goes to houses and duplexes. I focused on areas that were farthest from our usual drop sites in Victoria village, Greene village and in between, and where many residents might also access their houses without going south/down the hill near these spots (e.g. by driving for work or errands to Queen Mary Rd. or Côte des Neiges Rd.).

Another criterion included flatness. I am one man, and I tried to be realistic.

One area where I delivered to most houses was above The Boulevard. Another was between Claremont, Côte St. Antoine, Westmount Ave. and Murray Park. I am getting into better shape, but this strike will go many months before I attempt the steep part of our north-south streets...

Doing this work was an eye opener:

- Westmount is hilly, even when it isn't. On one side of many flat streets, most houses have staircases to keep the first floor above ground as the hill rises *behind* the house. Staircases are killers.

- My knees are doing okay. My legs? Less so.
- Maybe I should have had fewer beers over the last four decades?
- I have always had great respect for door-to-door distributors. In Canada Post's case, it has been doing a great job for us from Day 1 and we have never (voluntarily) left them. Walking a mile (and more) in the postal workers' shoes has increased my regard for them. I can't tell you how many times I was tempted to cut across a lawn to get efficiently to the neighbouring house. If you ever see a distributor doing this, be kind.
- I am not 18 any more. Best evidence? The two front doors of many semi-detached houses in Westmount share a front porch, usually with a "short" fence between the two owners' parts. As a kid, I remember seeing postmen swing over these barriers, with large mail bags on their shoulders. I tried that too, once.

I will work to do this task again for the issue that is in your hands. I will try to refine my technique (organize my walk by street or block? how to make sure to cover smaller side streets?) and increase the number of copies that I deliver.

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*Surpasses last year*

## Friends of Library's pre-holiday sale raises some \$18,000

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

The pre-holiday quality book sale by Westmount's Friends of the Library volunteers generated a reported total of \$17,922 November 16 and 17. This compares with the \$16,640 at this time last year.

In announcing the total last week, Lauren MacLean, interim library director, said the proceeds will go toward continuing to support Westmount Public Library's programming and projects. "We are all very grateful for the hard work of the volunteers who made the sale happen, and who work hard year-round and to the community members who generously donate their books to the sale."

Carolyn O'Neill, the group's president, said the sale "did well" even without the usual banner across Victoria Hall, which is expected to be replaced next year. There will also be new posters.

The group was formed in 2000 to help raise funds for special projects at the Westmount Public Library, which this year is celebrating its 125th anniversary. There were so many donated books that after the

first day the Friends' volunteers were able to add new books that could not be set out the day before. Among the favourites were many art and reference books.

So many "quality" books had been donated for this sale that a total of 600 boxes had been packed up, unpacked and set out to sell. Then, those left over to be donated to Renaissance had to be packed up again.

Student volunteers from many schools included those from École Internationale, Saint-Luc, Villa Maria, LCC, The Study, Westmount High and Ste. Marcelline.

The Friends of the Library focuses on quality donations to raise funds to improve the library's collections and service.

### 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: [editor@westmountindependent.com](mailto:editor@westmountindependent.com)



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**Southeast, cont'd from p. 1**

water to Clarke – that includes the city's Tupper parking lots and that stretches as far north as Sherbrooke (Dawson College) in the area from Atwater to Wood.

According to Tom Flies, senior director, Project Office and Territory Management, "preliminary concepts" for participants' feedback fell within three major components: built form, streets and urban grid, and parks and public spaces as depicted on large sheets now posted on the city's Engage website.

Among some of the proposals presented were creation of a "Dorchester esplanade," a "Gladstone square," closure of Dorchester at St. Catherine to create a "park" and highrise buildings on the north side of Dorchester that some attendees suggested should be scaled down.

**Indoor pool site?**

Various other considerations were those involving an indoor municipal pool.

Some of the proposals were offset by feelings of insecurity regarding the itinerant population.

"Residents, in general, had a lot to say and their comments, feedback and perspectives on the preliminary design concept that were presented cannot be overstated," District 8 councillor Kathleen Kez said last week.

She said she trusted they will have an impact in shaping the vision for the southeast sector, and "looks forward to seeing the results of the public consultation once all the data is compiled." While the meeting was geared to all city residents, her district in the southeast is one of those most



Attendees view some of the suggested designs for the southeast development.

directly impacted on a day-to-day basis by the results.

**Mayor:****No major investment in area for 40 years**

In introducing the evening, Mayor Christina Smith along with Councillor Kez pointed out that this is a key area close to the Metro and downtown that has not undergone major investment in some 40 years, and "deserves" a holistic planning approach.

Also addressing the meeting were

Councillor Conrad Peart, commissioner of urban planning and infrastructure, and Frédéric Neault, Urban Planning director.

Among residents attending were former urban planning commissioners Theodora Samiotis and Cynthia Lulham, who said she had "a favourable" view of the plan, which is expected to lead to a "special planning project" for the city's urban plan.

A number of developers also attending were seen at the meeting grouped around one of the tables and expected to have differing view from residents.

**Police report, cont'd from p. 3**

Westmount Square normally keeps a close eye on things. But he also suggested that the incident happened very quickly before anyone could intervene or act.

**Landscaping equipment stolen**

A grounds landscaper working at a home on Westmount Ave. learned a hard lesson in security last week after a thief stole several thousand dollars' worth of gear from his unsecured truck.

In an incident report filed at the Montreal police's Station 12 on Stanton St., the gardener said the perpetrator relieved him of two high-powered lithium battery packs used for powering cordless back-pack leaf blowers, with a combined value of \$1,500.

Despite repeated theft reports by landscaping and construction contractors doing business in Westmount, many continue to leave their equipment vulnerable in unlocked trucks or on unsecured work-sites overnight.

**Condo robbed**

In another case of theft that might have been prevented, the owners of a Clarke Ave. residential condo reported a burglary after a thief managed to break in through a broken window in a side entrance door.

After getting in sometime after 4 pm on November 19, the perpetrator ransacked the interior of the dwelling while searching for valuables.

He left behind a shocking mess and a disturbing scene for the owners when they finally realized what had happened around 8 am the following morning.

Household security experts identify doors with windows as being among the

vulnerabilities that burglars typically exploit, as they can often easily just reach in to unlock the door.


They recommend installing a door without a window, or at least choosing a door with a window covered by a metal grill or made of reinforced glass.

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# St. Margaret's Day Centre turns 25

The St. Margaret's Day Centre on Hillside Ave. behind Westmount High turns 25 this year.

The public facility is made possible by the Support Program for the Autonomy of Seniors (SAPA) and is for seniors who have a CLSC referral. It offers music and art therapy, baking, exercises, group outings and discussion sessions.

In a press release, the CIUSSS West Central Montreal quoted several clients of the centre.

### Testimonials

Two-year client Arlene Rudski described going to the centre as a day at the spa.

"I enjoy myself for the day and I don't have to think about anything. I come home with a stimulated mind and body. We do chair exercises. I learn things and the lunches are very good, too."

Mark Lovell, who has been a client since March, said he enjoys the element of surprise. "There are the usual activities like physiotherapy and exercise, but then, out of the blue, someone is asking how you feel about arranged marriages and it makes you discuss, debate and think. I like that."

His favourite activity is the book club.



From left, St. Margaret's Day Centre clients Arlene Rudski, Mark Lovell and Susan Wight.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CIUSSS WEST CENTRAL MONTREAL.

"I like coming here because I'm not alone," explained client Susan Wight. "I don't mind being alone at home, but I don't like being lonely. There's a big difference. I've made a lot of friends and although I don't really have any family of my own, these people are now my family, everybody here."

Learning goes both ways. Wight is teaching the art instructor how to crochet. See also photo on p. 1. - DP.

### Over a century of history

St. Margaret's generally, which is best known locally as a seniors' residence, has a long history. It was founded in 1883 on Ontario St. downtown and has been at many locations around Montreal. It became a women-only facility in 1973. It merged with the men-only Good Shepherd Home in 1986 and moved to its Westmount location in 1991.

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**Pull-out section**

# Holiday Gift Guide 2024

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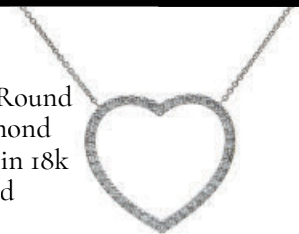


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## Healthy holiday recipe swaps



Although presents garner most of the fanfare during the holiday season, there is no denying that food and entertaining also figure prominently this time of year. *Delish* magazine reports that Christmas food consumption ranks third, behind Thanksgiving and Super Bowl Sunday, among Americans, and that a single Christmas meal can weigh in at 3,000 calories, not factoring in any other food consumed that day.

No one wants to feel held back while having fun with family and friends, but smart food choices can mean healthier living during this season of festivities. Dish up these alternatives when holiday entertaining.

- **Lean on leaner cuts of meat.** A strong body is built on protein, and holiday hosts often make a meat or poultry dish the star of the holiday dinner table. When selecting holiday fare, choose leaner options such as “round” or “loin” roasts; otherwise, select white-fleshed fish and skinless poultry in lieu of other options.
- **Use broths instead of creams.** Soups and gravies are popular this time of year, and both can be made healthier by opting for stock or broth bases over more fattening milks or creams when creating these recipes.
- **Create a one-crust pie.** Pie is one of the more popular holiday desserts, and plenty of the calories come from a rich, buttery crust. Lighten up by serving a one-crust pie, such as pumpkin or sweet potato. Fruit-based pies like apple or blueberry also can be made with one crust. Simply top the fruit with a light crumb coating.

- **Find ways to incorporate vegetables.** Vegetables are low in calories and rich in vitamins and nutrients. Many also are high in fibre, so they can help people avoid overeating. According to dietary experts from the American Heart Association, people should aim for four to five servings of vegetables each day. When making a plate, fill half of the plate with vegetables. Enhance dishes like lasagna or other pastas with fresh vegetables as well.
- **Skip the fried bird.** Although deep-frying a turkey can reduce cooking time, frying historically is not the best cooking method for those who are making health-conscious choices. Rather than frying, consider spatch-cocking (also known as butterflying) the turkey to enable it to cook faster. Use fresh herbs and seasonings instead of butter and oil to flavour your turkey as well.
- **Skip the cocktails.** The Center for Science in the Public Interest says that classic cocktails with little to no added sugar typically fall into the 150- to 200-calorie range, while others can be about 200 to 300 calories each. Many people will want to save those extra calories for dessert or another indulgent dish rather than drinking them away.

If you want to simulate a cocktail, make a spritzer with sparkling water and unsweetened cranberry juice.

Celebrants can make some smart choices in the foods and beverages they eat to enjoy a healthier holiday season this December. – MCG



## Notable Hanukah traditions

Each year on the twenty-fifth day of *Kislev*, which typically falls during the month of December, adherents of the Jewish faith celebrate the festival of Hanukah.

Hanukah commemorates the rededication of the Temple by the Maccabees in 165 BC after its desecration by the Syrians of that era. Although there was not enough oil left to light the Temple for even one night, lamps remained illuminated for eight straight days and nights. Thus Hanukah is known as the Festival of Lights, which incorporates many unique traditions.

### Lighting the menorah

Perhaps the most visible and important Hanukah tradition involves the menorah. While traditional Jewish menorahs have seven branches, the Hanukah menorah, known as the *hanukkiah*, actually has nine branches. There are eight candles and a ninth, which is called the *shamash*, is used to light the other eight. The menorah is lit each night after sundown.

### Giving of gelt

Hanukah *gelt* is money given as presents during the festival. It is typically

offered to children and sometimes to teachers. Other gifts have now largely replaced the coins once offered, and *gelt* is sometimes chocolate.

### Playing dreidel

Greek-Syrians outlawed Jewish studies at one point, so the Jews spun dreidels to pretend they were only playing games. Really they were engaged with their scripture. The tradition of spinning the dreidel endures as a Hanukah tradition.

### Foods fried in oil

The miracle of the burning oil extends to the foods enjoyed during Hanukah. Many of the holiday foods are prepared in oil, including *latkes* (fried potatoes) and *sufganiyot*, which are fried, jelly-filled doughnuts. According to *Town & Country* magazine, millions of jelly doughnuts are consumed in Israel throughout Hanukah.

### Serving brisket

An authentic Hanukah celebration often includes traditional dishes served in the spirit of celebration and gratitude. Brisket is frequently prepared for Hanukah dinners. Brisket was adopted because it was affordable and delicious.



Jewish brisket is braised, and served with carrots, potatoes and other vegetables. Brisket may be served alongside another Hanukah dish, *kugel*, which is a casserole made from eggs and noodles.

### Making cookies

Although Christmas cookies may be ubiquitous, cookies often are part of Hanukah traditions as well. Some

cookies are cut to look like dreidels or stars. Those who want to incorporate the miracle of oil into their baking can seek recipes that use oil in place of butter in the cookie batters, something that can make them dairy-free and also vegan. This year Hanukah begins on December 25 and will last through January 2, 2025. It's a festive time to embrace many time-honoured traditions. – MCG

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# Did you know?

The majority of people hear Christmas and naturally think of December 24 and 25.

For millions of Christians, these two dates mark Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, respectively, which is when Christians commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ. In fact, the word Christmas comes from the phrase “Mass of Christ.”

However, there are certain faithful who will not be celebrating Christmas on December 25. These are namely those who belong to Orthodox, Greek Orthodox and Coptic Orthodox churches, among others. These churches primarily trace their origins to Eastern Europe and portions of Asia and Africa, including Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Serbia, Greece, Armenia and Ethiopia.

The churches utilize the former Julian calendar for religious observations.

This places Christmas on January 7. It also is believed that 12 days after Jesus was born, three magi visited him to



shower him with blessings and gifts, an event known as the Epiphany.

Some recognize Christmas as occurring on this day, which is January 6. In fact, the “true” Christmas holiday takes place between Christ’s birth and the Epiphany, or the 12 days of Christmas.

Candlemas, which comes 40 days after Christmas, also is considered the official end of the Christmas season for some. – MCG



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# Notable Christmas celebrations around the world

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas all over the world. Christmas celebrations include various time-honoured traditions that celebrants hold near and dear to their hearts. Depending on where someone lives, their Christmas traditions may look quite different from those in other parts of the globe.

It can be enjoyable to learn how Christmas is celebrated elsewhere and perhaps even incorporate a few new traditions into your celebrations. Take a peek at these customs near and far.

- **Seafood and beachside celebrations:** Australia is located in the southern hemisphere, which means Aussies are enjoying the peak of their summer come December 25. A white Christmas is unlikely, unless the "white" refers to white, sandy beaches. Santa is probably swapping his thick coat for a pair of board shorts, and heavy, roast-laden meals are unlikely to make it on to the menu. Instead, Australians dine on seafood feasts and spend Christmas outdoors camping or at the beach.
- **Krampus parade:** Some Christmas elves are not so jolly. Just ask residents of the Austrian, German and Hungarian Alps. Each year in this region, a true "Bad Santa" is the talk



of town. Villagers believed that Krampus, a half-man, half-goat creature with a legion of ill-tempered elves, roamed the mountains wreaking havoc. Krampus was said to abduct miscreants and set unruly youth or even intoxicated adults straight. Today, Krampus is more the "bad cop" to Santa's "good cop" persona. Krampus is celebrated as an antihero at parades and other events.

- **Las Posadas:** According to scripture,

Joseph and Mary had to make an arduous journey from their hometown to Bethlehem for census purposes while Mary was pregnant. When the couple arrived, they found lodgings were nonexistent, and Mary ended up giving birth to Jesus in a manger surrounded by animals. In celebration of that journey, people in Mexico and Guatemala celebrate Las Posadas, a procession representing Mary and Joseph's journey and their struggle to

find lodging.

- **La Befana:** In Italian folklore, La Befana is a witch-like old woman who, like Santa, delivers gifts to children throughout Italy. Instead of this gift-giving taking place on Christmas, La Befana hands out gifts on the Epiphany Eve in a similar way to how the Three Magi brought presents to Baby Jesus. Le Befana also is believed to fly through the night sky to sweep away all the troubles of the old year and clear the way for a fresh start.
- **Move over reindeer:** Although reindeer often garner fanfare this time of year, the Yule goat is a Christmas symbol and tradition in Scandinavia and northern Europe. Each year in towns throughout Sweden and other areas, large statues of Yule goats are built on the first day of Advent and stand throughout the holiday season. This tradition dates back to ancient pagan festivals, and some believe the goat is connected to the Norse god Thor, who rode in the sky in a chariot pulled by two goats.

Holiday traditions differ considerably in various regions of the world. Celebrants may want to consider incorporating foreign traditions into their own Christmas celebrations this year. – MCG

  
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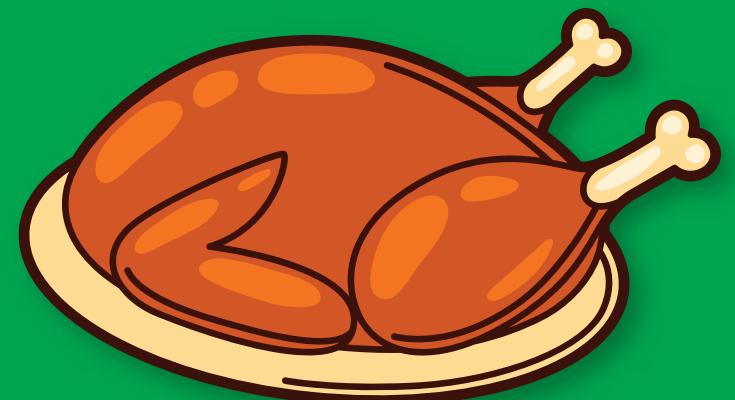
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# Embrace a crowd-pleaser to feed loved ones this holiday season

Holiday hosts recognize it's not always so easy to feed a crowd. That pressure may be even more notable come the holiday season, when food is such an integral component of gatherings with family and friends.

It may be impossible to please everyone all of the time, but few can resist a hearty comfort food like baked ziti. That makes the dish an ideal option for holiday hosts tasked with feeding a crowd. This holiday season, hosts welcoming loved ones into their homes can consider this easily prepared recipe for "Baked ziti with chicken and cheese" courtesy of Lines+Angles.

## Baked ziti with chicken and cheese

MAKES 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

- 16 ounces dry ziti pasta
- 1 large onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 pound ground chicken
- 8 cups spaghetti sauce
- 3 cups mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt, to taste

1. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add ziti pasta, and cook according to package instructions until *al dente*, about 8 minutes; drain well.
2. In a large skillet, brown chopped onion and ground chicken over medium heat. Add spaghetti sauce, and simmer for about 15 minutes.

3. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Coat a 9 x 13-inch baking dish with butter. Drizzle sauce in the bottom of the baking dish and arrange the ziti on top. Ladle remaining sauce over the ziti. Top with mozzarella cheese. Gently toss to completely coat the ziti with sauce and cheese. Sprinkle grated Parmesan cheese over the top.
4. Bake for 30 minutes, or until the cheese melts and the pasta is heated through.

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes  
**Cooking time:** 55 minutes – MCG



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# These colourful cookies are tailor-made for family baking sessions

Baking during the holiday season is a tradition in many households. Family baking sessions provide a perfect holiday season bonding activity, and the payoff is both cherished family time and delicious, indulgent foods.



- 1 tablespoon cold water
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt

*For the icing and decoration:*

- 4 cups confectioner's sugar
- 3 tablespoons meringue powder
- 7 tablespoons warm water, combined with 1 teaspoon vanilla extract, assorted food colour (e. g., red, pink and turquoise), assorted coloured sugar crystals (e. g., red, pink and white)

1. For the dough: Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease and line two large baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Combine flour, confectioner's sugar and almond meal in a large mixing bowl. Stir well to mix.
3. Add butter, egg yolk, water, and salt, and mix well with an electric mixer with spiral attachments until mixture starts to come together as a dough.
4. Turn out onto a floured surface and knead briefly until even. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill for 30 minutes.
5. After chilling, roll out dough on a lightly floured surface to approximately 0.25" thickness.
6. Use assorted star-shaped cookie cutters to cut out approximately

- 23 variably sized star shapes. Arrange between prepared sheets, spaced apart.
7. From remaining dough, cut out one teardrop and two semi-circles of dough, using appropriate cutters or working freehand with a paring knife. Arrange on one of the baking sheets.
8. Bake cookies for 12 to 15 minutes, until golden and dry to the touch. Remove to cooling racks to cool.
9. For the icing and decoration: Thoroughly stir together confectioner's sugar and meringue powder in a large mixing bowl.
10. Gradually beat in warm water and vanilla extract mixture using an electric mixer until icing is smooth and of a flooding consistency; you may not need all of the water.
11. Divide icing between three bowls. Colour two bowls pink and red, respectively, by beating in enough pink and red coloring to achieve uniform colors. Leave the third bowl uncoloured.
12. Spoon pink and red icing into separate piping bags fitted with small, round-tip nozzles.
13. To ice the cookies, pipe around their

perimeters with the icings to create borders. Fill in middle of cookies with more icing; you can use a damp, warm offset palette knife to spread out icing to an even finish.

14. Carefully transfer iced cookies to cooling racks, decorating with the sugar crystals in festive patterns.
15. Using same technique as in steps 13 and 14, ice teardrop cookie with red and white icing for Santa's hat and beard, respectively. Ice the two semi-circle cookies with white icing.
16. Before icings have set, carefully attach semi-circle cookies to teardrop cookie to fashion Santa's mustache. Colour any remaining white icing with turquoise colouring and then dab onto teardrop cookie for Santa's eyes. Pipe some pink icing below eyes for his nose.
17. Let cookies set and harden before serving.

**Tip:** Flooding consistency should be similar to the consistency of toothpaste. If your icing is too thick, thin it out with some warm water, mixing it into the icing in drops

**Preparation time:** 1 hour, 20 minutes

**Cooling time:** 30 minutes – MCG

## Christmas biscuits

MAKES APPROXIMATELY 24 COOKIES

*For the dough:*

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, sifted, plus extra for dusting
- 1 1/3 cups confectioner's sugar, plus extra for dusting
- 3/4 cup almond meal
- 1 cup unsalted butter, cold and cubed
- 1 large egg yolk

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# Hanukkiyah from Temple in Westmount appearing on Canada Post stamp

By JENNIFER BALL

A Hanukah *hanukkiyah* from Temple Emanu-El-Beth-Sholom's Aron Museum has served as the inspiration for a new Canada Post stamp.

The stamp was unveiled on November 15 during a *shabbat* service at the Temple, which is found at 4100 Sherbrooke, corner of Wood Ave.

A *hanukkiyah* is a candelabrum with eight candleholders in a row and a ninth candleholder set slightly higher than the others.

It is different from a regular menorah, which has seven branches. A *hanukkiyah* is nevertheless a kind of menorah.

## Rabbi Grushcow consults

Rabbi Lisa Grushcow, who has been a consultant for the Hanukah stamp for Canada Post for the past few years, told the *Independent* on November 15, "It's always a privilege to be involved in the development of Canada Post's Hanukah stamp..."

"This year is especially meaningful, as it features a Hanukah menorah from Temple's Aron Museum, which was given to us after being salvaged from the Holocaust..."



A mock-up of the new stamp and the Westmount *hanukkiyah* that inspired it, as seen November 15.

"In a time of darkness, its light shines brightly with a message of resilience and hope. As with all Canada Post stamps featuring different traditions, I hope that this stamp bears witness to the precious diversity of our Canadian mosaic, and to our values of co-existence and respect."

A commemorative envelope that Canada Post produced for the stamp indicated that the Hanukah menorah was rescued from a burning synagogue in



Germany in November 1938, when anti-Semitic violence in Nazi-occupied territories erupted in the iniquity of Kristallnacht.

The text on the collectible reads, "The silver-plated menorah on this year's [Hanukah] stamp is a symbol of faith and resilience..."

"This spectacular *hanukkiyah* is one of many cultural and religious items that were recovered in the aftermath of the Sec-

ond World War, and re-distributed to Israel and to Jewish communities around the world..."

"Donated to the Aron Museum at Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom in [Westmount], it features an ornate peacock on a curtained stage, its magnificent plumage illuminated with the lighting of each of its eight candles."

Carmen Cheung, from the communication department at Canada Post, works on the national stamp program and said on November 15, "Canada Post takes great pride in sharing and amplifying our stories through our national stamp program..."

"Our stamps commemorate the events, people and achievements that shape the fabric of our society and our culture..."

"The stamp I am here to talk about today marks Canada Post's seventh Hanukah stamp and the third year that we have had the pleasure of working with Rabbi Grushcow to tell the story of Hanukah ..."

"...Rabbi Grushcow suggested using this artefact ... about three years ago. We were very drawn to the beauty of it and the story behind it."

This year, Hanukah begins at nightfall on December 25 and ends at nightfall on January 2, 2025.

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# October sales: Volume strengthens, price up a bit

## Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

*Note: The following article relates to offers to purchase Westmount residential dwellings that were reported by local real estate agents as having been accepted in October 2024. 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 Westmount real estate market has been extremely active this fall, with local agents announcing an even dozen sales in October, all but one at less than \$3 million and with an average just over \$2 million, but suggesting a value for the “typical” Westmount house up slightly from September.

Six more sales were added to the September list, increasing that month’s residential sales to 16, and one more was added to August, bringing that month’s total to 12. That brings the three-month total to 40 as compared to only 18 in the same three months last year and 22 in 2022; in fact, the 111 sales posted through October this year almost matches the entire tally for both 2022 and 2023 (114 each).

On the other hand, the only price in October above \$3 million was the \$5 million paid out for a house in mid-Westmount evaluated by the city at over \$6 million, and the 17.4 percent mark-down, the lowest of the month, was a house “in need of renovation,” according to the agent. The lowest price for October was \$1,280,000, with almost as big a mark-down. The two were among five that sold below their tax value; the highest of seven mark-ups was 20.5 percent.

Looking back even further, with the 16 sales posted by agents as having been agreed to in September, the top price was \$5,400,000, though that one came in just under its valuation, one of three mark-downs that month, all single-digit figures, and the highest mark-up came in at 37.2 percent.

### Condos & commercial

Only two condominium sales were posted as having been agreed to in October, one for \$765,000 and the other exactly \$1,000,000, both very close to their tax values. The third-quarter sales, that is July, August and September, counted nine

transactions in a range from \$545,000 to \$2,700,000, with some fairly strong mark-ups and only one mark-down, so an average 16.8 percent price:valuation ratio.

Also sold in October were two co-op apartments at 2 and 3 Westmount Square, a commercial property on Victoria Ave., a multi-use property on Prince Albert Ave., and one of the stores at 4055 St. Catherine St. in the basement of 1 Wood Ave., but with a separate entrance to a large lobby and numerous storefronts.

### Adjacent Westmount

The adjacent-Westmount market was also busy in October, with four more sales in the Côte des Neiges district south of Queen Mary Rd., two in NDG east of Decarie Blvd., and two houses in the downtown Square Mile district, though none in the Trafalgar-Daulac area just east of Westmount except for a condominium-townhouse at the corner of The Boulevard and Côte des Neiges Rd.

The two sales in NDG showed serious mark-downs from valuation; we would suggest this is more a problem of overvaluation than of poorly-priced properties.

The number of Westmount houses on the market in mid-November has dropped significantly, as we approach the normally slow holiday season, down 16 in the past month, which basically says no new houses came on the market where sales brought others off.

The prices are fairly even between those in the \$1-\$2 million group (28), \$2-\$3 million group (29) and \$3-\$4 million group (21), with another 36 houses asking more than \$4 million.

Three houses are listed under \$1 million, with the lowest-priced house actually dropping its asking price last month, to \$799,000.

### Holiday window contest, Welsh choir singers

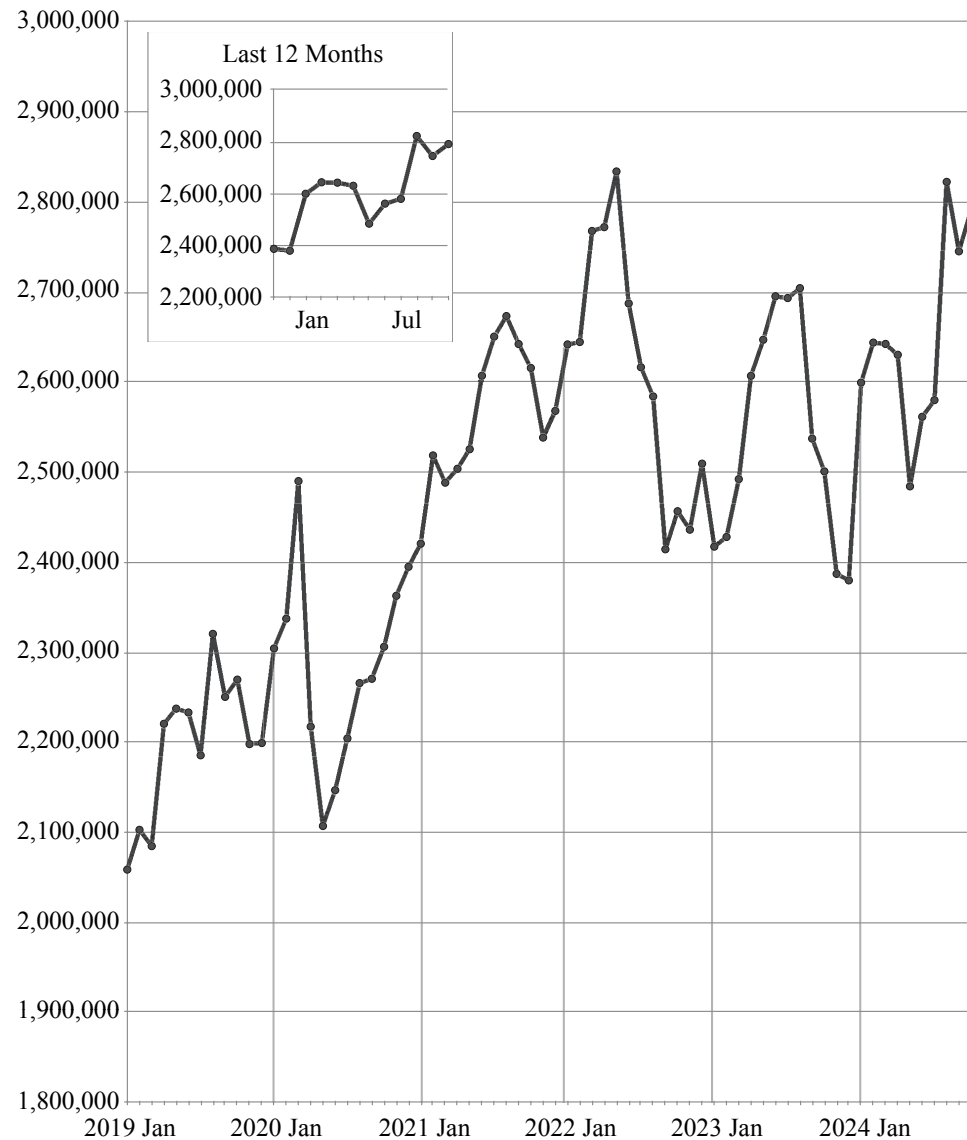
## Tree lighting Prince Albert Dec. 4, Square Greene Dec. 5

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

’Tis the season for outdoor tree lighting and decorating in Westmount. The annual city hall event December 2 at 5 pm, will follow tree lighting at Prince Albert square December 4 from 4 to 6 pm and one at Square Greene the next day at the same times. Ten members of the Montreal Male Welsh Choir will sing at each of the merchant events.

In a holiday spirit, a “Best Holiday Window Contest” will take place for the first time at each of the two neighbourhood festivities that are being organized by the Victoria Village Merchants Association and

*Average adjusted price for ‘typical’ Westmount house, by month, January 2019 to October 2024, based on accepted offer dates*



Quartier Greene.

The windows will be judged at each, according to Cynthia Lulham, general manager of the associations.

“Judges will look for creative fun windows that add to the holiday spirit. Hot chocolate and cookies will also be available,” she said. “Help us launch the holiday season!”

A contest winner will be chosen from each commercial area and will win a free half-page of advertising from contest sponsor the *Westmount Independent*. Lulham added a thank-you to editor David Price for sponsoring this first window contest with these “great prizes.”



The city hall tree lighting in 2022.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**LEONARD COHEN: WESTMOUNT-SCHOOLED, PERIOD**

I am Leonard's slightly younger first cousin. Prof. Lebold's statement (November 19, p.11) that Leonard went to Herzliah High School after Roslyn School is incorrect. Leonard attended Westmount Junior and Senior High Schools. In addition, he only met Irving Layton when he, Leonard, was at McGill.

Morton Rosengarten, Leonard's closest and lifelong friend, has corroborated this information.

GORDON COHEN, LANSDOWNE AVE.

**WAG PLAYGROUND WORK DISAPPOINTS**

The Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG) play area is finally finished. I don't know the budget, but huge swaths of bushes bordering the grounds were torn out, seemingly for no apparent reason. To date, their green and flowering presence has not been replaced. Perhaps the goal of the months-long "renovation" was the children's playground, which now has a new footing. However, the old sets of swings and slides have just been put back. Nothing new, and a disappointing finale.

A fence has been put up alongside huge stones. The fence is simply one long piece. It fences nothing in. Furthermore, as one local four-year old pointed out, now "I have to walk (or run) to the end to get home."

Neighbours – and children – are not quite sure what purpose this fence – and

its expense? – serves.

Above all, today, the children's play area is strewn with debris. Students from Westmount High have been noted leaving empty drink bottles, lunch papers, tissues – you name it. It is a mess. While understanding how difficult it is today to instill a sense of respect, perhaps it is a concept that teachers – and parents – could approach. It's never too late to learn the rules of civility.

VERONICA REDGRAVE, HALLOWELL ST.

**Editor's note:** Veronica Redgrave is a columnist for the *Independent*. – DP.

**CAN THE ISRAELI CONSULATE PLEASE MOVE?**

Dear Israeli consul general,

With all due respect, as a resident of Westmount and a concerned taxpayer, I wish to address the situation involving the Israel consulate's current location within our community.

Sometimes, a simple change – like moving an office – can lead to significant improvement for the greater good.

Inspired by Steve Jobs' idea that "simplicity is the ultimate sophistication," this straightforward move could be a sophisticated solution that benefits our community while still supporting the consulate's operations.

Moving the consulate to a non-residential area such as Notre Dame St. between Monk Blvd. and Pullman St. would place it in a nearby, suitable location that re-

mains accessible for consulate business.

In a world where geopolitical conflicts persist, protests inevitably arise as individuals exercise their right to voice their opinions. However, within our community of nearly 23,000, maintaining a peaceful atmosphere is essential, and I hope, respectfully, the consulate will consider this suggestion, recognizing its potential that may better accommodate the needs of both the consulate's operations and the Westmount community's welfare.

The time for such a solution is now, as we cannot wait a lifetime for broader federal actions to address protest management.

Thank you for considering this proposal to benefit our community.

DIANA HERNANDEZ, ST. CATHERINE ST.

**Editor's reply:** Hernandez implies that she disagrees with my October 22, p. 6 editorial ("We need a federal protest law"), which is fine. May I also say that I disagree with her? In my view, residents of our country, citizens or not, long term or short, from wherever, should be protected wherever they choose to be and should not be asked to move to industrial Siberia because federal politicians can't figure out how to limit never-ending, repeat demonstrations. – DP.

**SHAME ON POLICE RE: PROTEST AT SHAAH**

I am 70 years old, and I was at the Congregation Shaar Hashomayim on November 5 in Westmount, at 5:50 pm trying to enter the building. The protesters were blocking the entrance on Metcalfe and I had to ask one of the synagogue security guards to escort me because I was not comfortable going past them alone. As I walked past them, one of the masked protesters, holding a huge flag, yelled in my ear: "You are going to the genocide building and you are killing our people. Shame on you. Shame on you ..."

They were blocking people who were trying to park and yelling at them, and even though there is an injunction [regarding protests near synagogues], the police allowed the protesters to get close to the synagogue.

Therefore this was not a peaceful protest and just because no one got hurt doesn't make it peaceful. They were threatening, yelling hateful messages and trespassing.

Where are our rights to live peacefully and not be intimidated when entering a place of worship? Shame on our police for not protecting our rights.

ANCA M. GLASEL, ST. CATHERINE ST.

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**Harlequin/'Harley Quinn'**

9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Harlequin is a brave young mother cat who was taken in this summer with her kittens. Harlequin is true to her name, with a black mask over her huge green eyes and a touch of black on her sweet chin.

She is now ready for a forever family on her own and is being placed by the Gerdy's Rescue & Adoptions rescue.

She is very healthy, up to date with her inoculations, spayed and microchipped.

Please refer to the Gerdy's Rescue & Adoptions Facebook page for more information on Harlequin, providing your contact information through their application form link, and enquire at their email info@gerdysrescue.org.

Your neighbour,  
Lysanne



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Documentary aired at Shaar

# We Will Dance Again recounts Nova music festival heroism

BY JENNIFER BALL

*We Will Dance Again* reconstructs the Hamas-led attack on Israel on October 7, 2023 from the perspectives of attendees of the Nova music festival.

It highlights extraordinary bravery by ordinary people on a day when at least 1,200 people were killed and hostages were taken.

The documentary was screened on October 9 at the Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, which is located at the corner of Côte St. Antoine and Kensington Ave., and it was in collaboration with Start Up Nation

and L'Association des Médecins Juifs du Québec (AMJQ).

Amanda Rosenthal is a Shaar congregant and the president of Start-Up Nation. She said that the director Yariv Mozer is also a major in the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) reserves.

"He was given special permission by the IDF to access the Nova site just days after the massacre to make this documentary...

"*We Will Dance Again* is the lived experience of Nova survivors...

"These videos, voice messages sent to friends and family, and surveillance footage in addition to the disturbing body-cam-

era of Hamas terrorists [are the foundation of] this horrific story."

As the sun rose on October 7, the dancing stopped.

## Individual stories

The film meticulously reconstructs the events, capturing the raw emotions and heroism that emerged as partygoers – many of whom were intoxicated and under the influence of alcohol, drugs and sometimes both – realized they were in mortal danger.

As the film's narrative unfolds, we hear from witnesses like Noa Beer, who re-

counts a harrowing escape by car, and survivor Elinor Gambarian, a single mother who hid inside a refrigerator and was running out of oxygen but always mindful of her young son.

Two of the interviewees, Eitan Halley and Ziv Abud, recall a grenade attack on a roadside shelter where they had taken refuge. Both commend efforts by Aner Shapira, who was killed, to toss back live grenades before they exploded.



The installation of chairs commemorating Israelis that are being held hostage or who have already been killed by the 425 Metcalfe Ave. entrance to Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, as seen October 10.



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## MyShoeShop's Neven marks 20 years on Greene



### Retail Review

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Quality is top of mind for Glenn. “We inspect every single pair before shipping and have a very low return rate.”

He also offers other European brands: Gabor and Haflinger (from Germany) and Emu and Blundstone (from Australia) are seasonal sell-outs.

For winter, Glenn adds boot collections from Pajar and North Face.

Glenn explained that he sells to all ages: young ones to seniors. The staff is trained not only to fit children but also to offer advice for best shoe support for older feet. In fact, by sheer chance, the day I visited, the shop was full of all demographics.

An elderly lady was being helped to purchase the right winter boots; a cool guy grabbed a few (!) Birkenstocks; and a charmingly polite little girl loved her fur-topped shiny boots.

A perfect retail moment on one of Westmount's famed shopping areas. Family Volvos, low-lying Lamborghinis and sassy Smart cars have replaced chauffeur-driven-and-waiting limousines on this special street.

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## Marie Dumas marks 30 years on Greene



### Retail Review

VERONICA REDGRAVE

'Tis the season. Gift-giving is in the air. So local stores are buzzing with parcel-packing shoppers attempting to miss the postal strike. In vain, it turns out.

But local boutique Marie Dumas is celebrating more than the season. It marks 30 years on Greene. Founded by Marie Dumas and her daughter Francine, it is now managed by Francine and her sister Stéphanie.

And what a boutique it is. Renowned for floral arrangements created by Francine – gorgeous groupings that don't need watering – as well as wedding registry gifts, for 23 years Marie Dumas was originally in a smaller space closer to St. Catherine St.

Today, the sparkling shop is much larger, although that's difficult to see as every corner is packed with discoveries. Fashion accessories, babies' clothes, candles, area rugs, glass and table wares, and one of my favourite “old school” items: napkin rings.

Mixed with the classics – Chanel and Tom Ford items – is fun fuchsia: a holiday tree and *Nutcracker* figures. I noted the hot trend of the day: a pickleball racquet cover.

To celebrate their long successful sojourn, last week Francine and Stéphanie welcomed guests to bubbly and cupcakes. A pink theme (“we love that colour!”) ruled; pastel balloons welcomed guests, brightening the grey day. Even the Instagram-ready holiday table setting shone with rose gilded with gold touches. Cupcakes by local baker Michele Korne shared space with mimosas and mock cocktails.

Gift-giving has never been so delicious.



Stephanie and Francine Dumas.

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## Westmount A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

We introduced Tokyo to you a few weeks ago and now have an update on his settling in at his foster home with Gerdy's Rescue & Adoptions.

His foster family reports that this classic black-and-white chrysanthemum shih tzu is integrating well in the daily routine. Tokyo loves all dogs, big and small, on his walks and during playtime. He has come out of his shell, showing affection and tucking in for snuggles with the member of the family he has bonded with.

At four and a half years of age, Tokyo is very healthy, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and micro-chipped.

As he is a small nine-pound bundle of love, he is best in a one- or two-person family.

You can find out more about

## An update on Tokyo

darling Tokyo by referring to the Gerdy's Rescue & Adoptions website at [www.gerdysrescue.org](http://www.gerdysrescue.org) for more details, and then presenting your contact information through their application form link in order for a volunteer to reach out to you in turn. You can also take a peek at their Facebook page for more news. Please do not hesitate to reach out through their email at [info@gerdysrescue.org](mailto:info@gerdysrescue.org).

Tokyo is a delight, a sweetie who bonds to all with delight.

Your neighbour,  
Lysanne

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# Museum Ball sells out, delivers for attendees & MMFA



## Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

The highly anticipated and always sold-out Museum Ball took place at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA).

Co-chairs were **Deborah Orida**, CEO PSP Investments, and **Abe Adham**, chair, Quebec market, TD Bank Financial Group.

Celebrating its 64th edition, the gala theme was inspired by the museum's exhibition *Saints, Sinners, Lovers and Fools*.

Guests toured the show before sitting down to a gourmet meal by chef/author **Laurent Dagenais**, executed by the team of the Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth under the direction of **Armando Aruda**, executive chef **Jean-Mark Léon** and catering chefs **Pablo Gonzalez** and **Hervé Dumont**.

Event coordinators were **Christiane Fabi**, **Alice Menut** and **Pamela Plamondon Deliard**. Senior artistic consultant was **Alexis Johnston-Benamou**.

Guests were greeted by the museum's director **Stéphane Aquin** and **Mary-Daily Desmarais**, chief curator, joined by MMFA Foundation board chairs **Henry Mizrahi** and **André Dufour**, and **Jo-Anne Duchesne**, director MMFA Foundation.

From the corridors of power and creativity were ministers **Mélanie Joly**, (Foreign Affairs Canada); **Simon Jolin-Barette**, (Justice QC); and **Christine Fréchette**, (Economy QC); along with **Paul Desmarais III**, CEO of Sagard, MMFA campaign cabinet member; **Pierre-Karl Péladeau**, CEO Quebecor; **Louis Aucoin**, president/chief strategist AUCOIN Strategy and Communication; **Louis Audet**, board chair Old Brewery Mission; **Yves Lalumière**, CEO, Tourisme Montréal; **Nathalie Maillé**, executive director, Conseil des arts de Montréal; **Paul St-Pierre Plamondon**, leader of



Henry Mizrahi, Jo-Anne Duchesne, Abe Adham, Deborah Orida, Laurent Dagenais, Mary-Daily Desmarais, André Dufour and Stéphane Aquin.

the Parti Québécois and member of the provincial legislature for **Camille Laurin**; **André Dufour**, regional managing partner, Montreal, Borden Ladner Gervais; **Michel Leblanc**, CEO Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal; and artists **Kent Monkman**, **François Lacasse**, and **Pierre Dorion**.

Also noted enjoying the festivities were **Stéphanie Trudeau**, executive vp, Québec, Énergir; and CDPQ's **Kim Thomassin**, executive vp and head of Québec, and **Michèle Boisvert**, first vp of business outreach.

The electric eve was elegant and eclectic.

Evocative acrobatic entertainment wowed. Massive chandeliers shone with archetypal classicism. One dining room seemed wrapped in crinkled gold foil.

The fashions? Outfits ranged from couture to *haute-eccentric*; from runway-ready to casual. Bespoke tuxedos shared space with urban attire. Dresses ranged from mini-mini black, slit black and black strapless – the better to show toned arms and tattoos.

Jewel-toned and patterned frocks peeked through the sea of *noir*. Sneakers ruled, although classic shiny ..... black patent dress shoes *continued on p. 18*

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# Montreal Real Estate Foundation for Kids hosts grand ball



## Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

The grand ball of the Montreal Real Estate Foundation for Kids (FIMJ) held an elegant and successful eve at Windsor Station.

Funds raised at the event will work to further enhance the foundation's programs, which, since its inception, has distributed more than \$3.4 million to over 40 organizations, significantly contributing to transforming the lives of young people in the region.

Co-chairs were **Claude Bigras**, CEO of GDI Integrated Facility Services; **Patrice Bourbonnais**, president/COO of Groupe Petra; **Vincent Chiara**, president and founder of Groupe Mach; **Dario Montoni**, CEO of Groupe Montoni; and **Pierre Pomerleau**, executive chairman of Pomerleau.

Platinum Partners were Construgep, Cromwell Management Inc., Dentons, Desjardins, Kevric, KPMG, and Optima



Pierre-Jacques Lefavre, Mario Bédard, Patrice Bourbonnais, Pierre Pomerleau and Dario Montoni.

Design-Prisma Construction & Rosefellow. Gold Partners were Alfid Real Estate Services, Banque Nationale, Bastium, Cadillac Fairview, Isra-Guard (IGS) Security, KRB Lawyers, Lemay, Sunlife Quebec and VA Capital. Silver Partners were Alcovi Capital, BDO Canada, CBRE, EllisDon, Proment

Corporation, Garda, Genatec, Gerstat, Industrial Alliance, Miller Thomson, Bee-Clean, Canada Lands Company, SPEICO Building Services, Sutton Quebec and Vitreco.

The 20th anniversary event raised \$800,000, "a crucial milestone for FIMJ,"

said **Mario Bédard**, president FIMJ board of directors. "Thanks to the generosity and unwavering support of our donors, we can continue to build a promising future for kids in need by providing them with the tools to overcome obstacles and achieve their greatest dreams."



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William McLean, Deborah Orida, Yolande James and Andrew Jackson.



Jeremy Ghio, Félix Marzell, Mélanie Joly and Jo-Anne Duchesne.



Elisapie and Maurin Auxéméry.



Gino Chouinard and Christiane Fabi.



Alexandra Tremblay and Paul St-Pierre Plamondon.



Jean-Martin Aussant and Crystal Miller.



Pierre-Karl Péladeau, Pascale Bourbeau, Julie Katerine Turcotte and Marc Parent.

**Social notes, cont'd from p. 16**

and stilettos danced equally well. The Cinderella moment lasted well into the night when guests then enjoyed hot dogs from Lesters.

The prestigious *soirée* raised over \$1.9 million.

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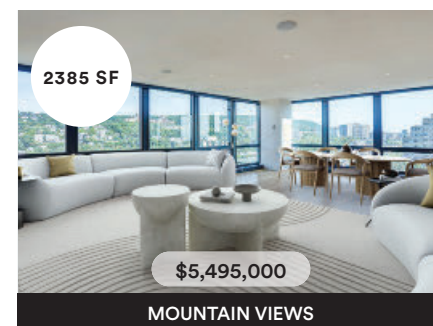
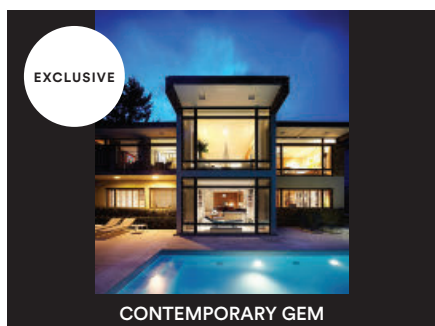




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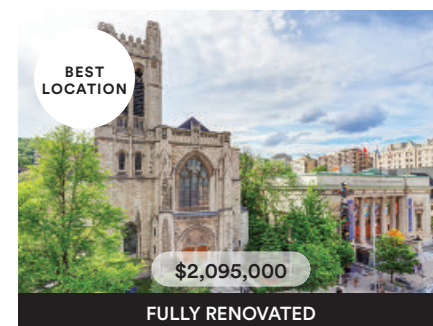
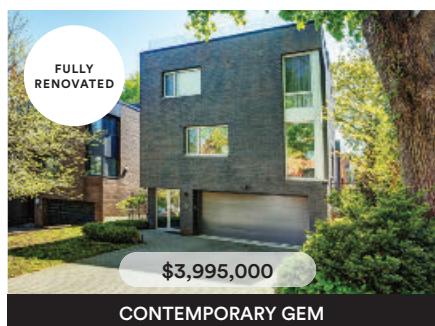


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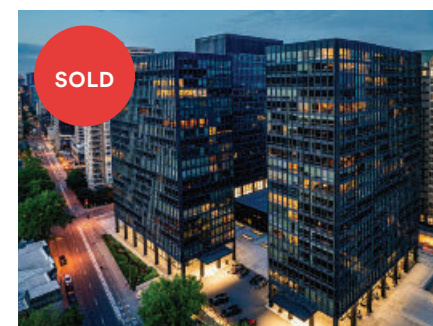


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