

Note to readers, advertisers

Rotating strikes could delay house, duplex delivery of *Independent*

On October 11, Canada Post's union changed strike strategies again, this time choosing to have rotating strikes.

Under this new circumstance, the *Independent* has chosen to use Canada Post for houses and duplexes, but – if there is a rotating strike here – **house and duplex papers (and only they)** will be delayed by the length of the strike, at least.

I thank, again, every volunteer distributor who worked when we did not use Canada Post. Despite their wonderful work, we never had enough of them to cover every house in Westmount. As a result, it would be churlish, in my view, to have them hitting the streets in addition to Canada Post to do a job that will – eventually – be done completely by the postal workers, and very likely on time.

This change does NOT affect apartment and condo delivery, which has not been done by Canada Post since the spring.

This change also does NOT affect drop sites and the *Independent* remains available all over town in its usual timely fashion, including at special “strike condition” distribution boxes, a list of which can be found on p. 18.

The paper is also available online at www.westmountindependent.com and by email. The sign-up link to subscribe is on our website. – DP.

**Don't Miss It:
The municipal election
is Sunday, November 2**

Westmount turns out to ‘meet’ mayoral hopefuls



From left, Eric Buzaglo and Peter Hall at the mic at the Westmount Municipal Association's meet-the-candidates event October 23 at Victoria Hall. Buzaglo asked about neglected heritage properties and Hall about what candidates would do to improve Westmount most over the next four years. See p. 19 for story.

PHOTOS: MARTIN C. BARRY.

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Arson investigation concludes homeless encampment fire was accidental

By JENNIFER BALL

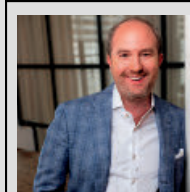
A fire broke out on September 20 behind 4024-4032 St. Catherine, just west of Atwater in the east-west alley that starts at Atwater and runs between St. Catherine and Tupper St.

The large building, initially a Packard car dealership, is located between an empty lot and the Bureau en Gros. The Montreal police's arson squad undertook an investi-

gation, and its findings were that it was most probably accidental and it was not a criminal element that caused the fire. The origin of the fire was in a homeless encampment.

Jean-Pierre Brabant, a spokesperson for the Montreal police (SPVM) – who provided a statement for an earlier report (see September 30, 2025 p. 1 and 8) – provided the investigation summary to the *Independent* continued on p. 4

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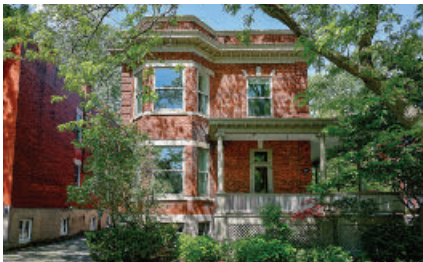


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Public Security issues tips for safe trick-or-treating

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Public Security will be adding patrols on the street and in parks Halloween night October 31 and expects to be handing out reflective tapes and some treats, according to director Greg McBain.

As more and more skeletons, ghosts and gravestones started emerging outside Westmount homes last week, Public Security last week issued a number of pointers to help keep trick-or-treaters safe as they go from door to door.

For those planning to welcome trick-or-treaters, be sure to keep any porch and stairs well lit.

For trick-or-treaters, wear a light-colored costume to ensure it can be easily

seen and short enough to prevent tripping. Reflective tapes can help visibility.

“Younger children should be accompanied by an adult, travel in a group when possible, carry a flashlight and agree with parents or responsible adults which route to take and time to return.”

More advice: Stay on the sidewalk and plan a route that allows for travel on the sidewalk. Cross only at an intersection and obey traffic lights if available. Look both ways before crossing. Stay outside. Do not go up to the door of a house that has no lights on. Never go near a car or get into one without your parents’ permission. When arriving home, check your treats with parents to be sure they are safe to eat.

Updated information Jonas’ official agent is Tina Shapiro

The *Independent* was told by the city October 20 that District 6 candidate Jeremy Jonas was his own official agent. After our story about agents was published October 21 (p. 8) and then being told otherwise by a source, the *Independent* re-enquired and was told by the city October 23 “Indeed, M. Jonas has an agent...We were in the process of updating the website.” That update shows Jonas’ agent as Tina Shapiro. – DP.

Letters to the Editor, p. 6

Police Report, p. 17

9 Lives, p. 20

A-dog-tions, p. 22



Social Notes:
Allegra & YES, p. 21 & 22
infoWestmount, p. 16

Winners of Westmount Public Library’s pumpkin decorating contest

Ages 6-7 category:

1. Oliver Robinson
 2. Waverly Casseli-Rodier
 3. Tida Zaribaf Esfahani
- HM: Riyansi Borah

8-9 Category:

1. Tea Okawa
 2. Peter Black
 3. Sky Gielly
- HM: Astrid Waschke

10-12 Category:

1. Aya Okawa
 2. Frances Hou
 3. Sophia-Victoria Richelieu
- HM Cera Kim

Family category:

1. Purmal Family
 2. Han Family
 3. Lee Family
- HM: Halperin Family

See p. 10 for story

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Happy Hallowe'en



You can leave the leaves



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Take a break this fall and resist the urge to clean up too much. Leave those leaves where they are. It's not being lazy. It's perfectly respectable and nature friendly. Leaving leaves helps your garden, pollinators and local wildlife

Many rake the leaves up, put them into bags and have them hauled away, which is a waste of natural insulation and fertilizer. Leaves form a nice insulating layer, protecting your lawn and garden by insulating them from the cold and retaining moisture.

Insects overwinter in leaves

Many insects overwinter in the insulating layer of fallen leaves. Butterflies and queen bees hide under their protection from the cold. Birds and other urban wildlife pick through the leaves to find the food they need. If you have a great pollinator garden and are raking up, you may be

removing the pollinators your garden has been providing for all summer.

If you can't stand to leave them all over, or if your leaf coverage is too thick, you can run a lawnmower over the leaves to make them into smaller pieces, and rake them over to the base of your trees, shrubs and gardens. They become excellent compost as they decompose on the ground.

Now what will you do with all that extra time?

Westmount Horticultural Society has speakers on the second Tuesday of every month. Join us!

Arson, cont'd from p.1

on October 22.

"What the [SPVM arson] investigators told me is at this moment, there is no criminal element that was found. It seems like no one did it on purpose and that maybe [it was started] manually by someone that was in the encampment..."

"There's [nothing] that leads us to believe that there was a crime that was committed. At this moment [it is an] accidental fire that caused the damage to the [encampment]."

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OPINION

Something I want to say: The art of bringing election promises into reality

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

As Westmount voters head to the municipal polls November 2, many are understood to be undecided whom to choose of the three candidates for mayor and a record-setting 21 candidates vying for the seven remaining councillor positions. (District 3 councillor Jeff Shamie was elected by acclamation (see story October 14, p. 1).)

After listening to, and reporting about the proposals, promises and past achievements of those declaring their candidacies starting July 8, it appears that many, if not most, seem to be advocating for the same basic priorities of improved road conditions, safety and increased public consultation.

Money aside, to please almost everyone, it seems the city would likely need to become a major construction site or experience continual pavement patching. This results, in part, not only from previous underfunding of infrastructure (roads, sidewalks and sewers) but also the city's hilly terrain that was once explained by an

engineer as the result of rain, underground rivers and run-off collecting from the mountain.

Campaign promises

As a result, in the case of the electability of candidates, it seems that much may depend on how well they have been able to articulate their promises as well as how approachable they have been during the campaign. Once elected, their success will depend on many factors, including how well they become versed in the city's immediate needs versus various long-range issues, many of which they may not be immediately aware.

Despite the many platform goals or "promises," it may be fair to note that most of the candidates have not served on previous Westmount councils, meaning that once elected, they may have their eyes opened (and minds changed) to the administration's projected plans, costs and the impact that various work might have on taxes. ("Administration" is Westmount-ese for the city's senior unelected employees.)

On the other hand, some of their con-

cerns and questions may result in a fresh vision for the city, as had been controversially championed some 35 years ago by the now late former and then rookie mayor May Cutler in 1987. She served one term, until 1991. She often worked late into the night to carry out her own research regarding her various projects, one of which was the extensive library addition, for which she enlisted the help of her eventual successor, Peter Trent (see March 8-9, 2011, p. 1 and March 22-23, 2011, p. 8 for our coverage of her political life).

New practices?

In a similar vein, and not to be forgotten, are the persistent ground-breaking environmental efforts by the late councillor Sally Aitken (1937-2011, serving from 1983 to 1991 as councillor, see August 9-10, 2011, p. 6), which were initially persistently dismissed by her council colleagues – as reflected at one memorable council meeting when she was told by a colleague that there was "no way" he would ever carry his newspapers out to the curb to be picked up for recycling.

Regarding some of the current calls for increased public consultations, it is worthwhile to remember one of the city's abandoned experiments, namely holding a public consultation meeting at the early stages of budget preparation. It suffered from low attendance and was discontinued in the early years of this newspaper. Was it because the city at the time was more flush with money, giving all projects a greater chance of being funded? Or general indifference to municipal affairs?

Only time will tell how successful some of the current council candidates will be in successfully bringing their campaign proposals or promises into reality.

Municipal election news

- Trent confronts Gallery about 'his' quotation, p. 12
- Voter card delivery issues given Canada Post strike, p. 14
- Can 'extra' voters be removed from the electoral list? p. 18

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LET’S CHOOSE QUALITY OF LIFE
OVER IMAGE

Permit me to borrow a campaign slogan from one of the electoral hopefuls: Fix what’s broken.

But this ambitious leap cannot be taken unless, and until, what is first fixed is how council and its leader think. Because that’s what been broken for too long.

The longer I live here (25 years now as a homeowner), it becomes increasingly apparent that quality of life for its residents takes a backseat to Westmount’s carefully crafted image for public consumption. A multi-million-dollar greenhouse is a showcase opportunity in Montreal media but does zip to improve Westmount’s rotting roads or curb a range of by-law violations.

What is at the root of “broken thinking”? A silo mentality that can leave, and has left, Westmount residents *on their own* to deal with major fallout from whatever happens just over Westmount’s borders (or

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Voters write in**

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- Mayoral candidate Lynne Casgrain’s supporters, including former mayor Karin Marks (who had already endorsed her), write in to support her, see p. 25.

within its territory but where jurisdiction is lacking) that negatively impacts their quality of life. I won’t elaborate but residents who have been in this boat will recognize what I am talking about.

Overtuning this mindset requires political will and removing the kid gloves; no more foot-dragging or off-loading problems to other levels of government or worse, to your own citizenry.

DOROTHY LIPOVENKO, YORK ST.

**WESTMOUNT COUNCIL NEEDS
A RENEWAL – NOT RECYCLED
COUNCILLORS**

As Westmount approaches its next municipal election, it is clear the city needs a full renewal of its council. The service of current councillors is highly appreciated, but gratitude cannot replace the need for meaningful change. After years of delays and questionable decisions, re-electing the same councillors will only repeat the same problems. With one councillor now seeking to become mayor, Westmount needs renewal, not a continuation of existing issues under a new title.

Public office carries serious responsibility. Westmount’s council is not alone, the city is full of residents ready to contribute their time and expertise to ensure civic work is fair, efficient and accountable, provided leadership listens and acts. Councillors must respond to residents’ inquiries, offer clear solutions, and keep the public informed on ongoing issues, upholding transparency and mutual respect between the council and citizens. If the

demands of the role exceed a councillor’s capacity, they have both the freedom and the duty to respectfully step aside.

It is unacceptable for communication to be met with silence, for questions to be ignored, or for civic concerns to be treated as personal criticism. True leadership requires professionalism and a genuine sense of duty, not detachment.

Westmount is a city of intelligent, engaged, and civic-minded residents, deeply invested in its future. The next election is not just about changing faces; it is about restoring respect in public service. Elect leaders who see council as a responsibility to fulfill, a council that works with its residents, not above them. Renewal is no longer optional, it is essential.

DIANA HERNANDEZ, ST. CATHERINE ST.

**THE DISTRICT THAT
OUTSOURCES ITS DEMOCRACY**

For the third consecutive election, Councillor Jeff Shamie in District 3 has been acclaimed. He has never had to campaign or ever face an opponent. He has already been declared the councillor for District 3 ahead of the November 2 election.

Isn’t it interesting that District 3 is the only district to have no opposing candidates running in the upcoming election? That alone should raise some eyebrows. But there’s more.

Two candidates running in the upcoming elections – both residents of District 3, Councillor Shamie’s district – are running in other districts. Paul Levine is running in District 6 and Alec Chamlian is running in District 8. Curiously, Levine’s official agent is Councillor Shamie’s wife, Daphne Tsadilas, and his daughter, Chloe Shamie, is the official agent of Chamlian.

So while Councillor Shamie faced no challengers in his own district, candidates from his district are running in other races. Isn’t it worth asking: Why?

Wouldn’t District 3 benefit from having electoral options, especially given they’ve not had any in the last eight years? And now headed for another four? And wouldn’t Paul Levine and Alec Chamlian have a better chance running in their own district against someone who has no one else running against him? And what if each of these candidates get elected? District 3 will have three candidates on council. How does that make sense?

No one is suggesting anything illegal – but when a councillor continues to go unchallenged while his family members play key roles in campaigns elsewhere, it raises serious questions about how power is being protected and wielded.

GEORGE VESNAVER, DORCHESTER BLVD.

The Independent has a longstanding and oft-advertised (see for example October 21, p. 6) policy of showing letters appearing in this final issue before the election to candidates named in them so they can reply. In keeping with this policy, we sent the above letter to Paul Levine and Alec Chamlian.

Paul Levine replied:

Thank you for offering me the opportunity to reply.

The letter raises questions about geography and affiliation, but misses the more important issue: why I chose to run in District 6. For the past two years, residents of this area, including many seniors, have endured ongoing intimidation, harassment and protests near their homes and community institutions. It has become one of the most unsettled neighbourhoods in Montreal.

I chose to run here because I could not stand by while my fellow citizens, many of them vulnerable and long-time residents, felt unsafe and unheard. District 6 deserves calm, security and respect. People should be able to walk their streets, shop locally and gather peacefully without fear or disruption. That commitment is at the heart of my campaign.

I also intend to pursue the restoration of weekly garbage collection, a basic service that residents have every right to expect. As a forensic accountant, I will bring a disciplined, transparent approach to ensuring that taxpayers’ funds are used responsibly.

Councillor Jeff Shamie is my next-door neighbour, a dear friend and a dedicated representative of District 3. He and I share a respect for public service, but my campaign is entirely my own. My decision to run in District 6 reflects my commitment to the issues and residents here, nothing more and nothing less.

I am pleased to see so many candidates stepping forward across the city. Democracy is alive and well in Westmount, and that is something we should all celebrate.

As for the reference to Councillor Shamie’s family, there is nothing improper about residents volunteering as official agents. The role is administrative and governed by Elections Québec rules, which are clear, transparent and fully respected by everyone involved.

This election should be about solutions – restoring a sense of safety, civility, and community – not about innuendo or conjecture.

PAUL LEVINE, CANDIDATE FOR DISTRICT 6

Alec Chamlian replied:

Je suis un résident de la Ville de Westmount, habitant dans le district 3, ayant fréquenté *continued on p. 8*

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

We are Westmount

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

..... l'école St-Léon, travaillé
continued from p. 6 à l'Épicerie 5 Saisons, client de la Banque TD et de la pharmacie Jean-Coutu sur la rue Greene, ainsi que de plusieurs commerces d'Alexis-Nihon et du Westmount Square.

Le district 8 fait partie de ma vie quotidienne.

Je m'y présente parce que j'estime que c'est dans ce secteur que se jouera l'avenir de notre ville.

Les défis hors du commun auxquels fait face le District 8 exigent un engagement fort, celui d'un jeune candidat déterminé, plein d'ardeur et animé d'une énergie nouvelle.

L'exécution du plan de revitalisation du sud-est et le développement d'infrastructures récréatives me tiennent particulièrement à cœur. Des ressources sont encore disponibles pour le règlement des nuisances sonores à proximité de l'autoroute Ville-Marie; elles n'ont pas été suffisamment explorées, je compte aller les chercher.

Mon engagement politique au sein de notre ville repose également sur la nécessité de porter la voix des jeunes au conseil municipal où elle n'a été que trop peu entendue au courant des dernières années.

Écouter et réunir tous les citoyens autour de la table et sortir des sentiers battus s'avèrent plus important que jamais.

STAYNER PARK TENNIS COURT
WORK – BUDGETTED
OR AWARDED?

The Independent was copied on this string of emails by both parties. This back-and-forth is long, and not for the casual participant in municipal politics, but it does not contain any deliberately-withheld-until-the-last-minute sensational allegations and both participants have had more than fair shot at explaining their point of view, so I include it here as a "five-course meal" for those interested in this very detailed exchange, either due to their personal interest in the precise topic or to learn how such an exchange can unfold in municipal politics. – DP.

October 5
Dear Councillor [Mary] Gallery,

I am writing to you as commissioner of Sports and Recreation, responsible for green spaces and parks, with a question regarding Stayner Park's clay tennis courts.

As you are aware, re-surfacing of the courts was included in the 2025 budget, which was passed in November 2024. Yet, as of today, this work has not been carried out.

Could you clarify what happened with the allocated budget, and why the re-surfacing did not proceed as planned?

The Stayner Park courts are a well-used facility, but they do not appear to receive the same level of upkeep as other parks in Westmount, such as those behind the library or in the upper areas of the city. Residents deserve clarity as to why priorities differ, and why maintenance at Stayner Park has been deferred or abandoned despite approved funding.

I would appreciate your response.
Sincerely, Natasha Arora [Wood Ave.]
Arora then submitted a letter to the Independent on the same subject, "What happened to the Stayner Park budget?", which was published in our October 21 issue on p. 6.

October 21, 2:08 pm
Hi Natasha,

I apologize for the delay in getting back to you. It has been an exceptionally busy period, as you can imagine.

I am not sure where you saw that the re-surfacing of the courts was included in the 2025 PTI budget. Unfortunately, it was not. I know how well used and appreciated the Stayner courts are, and I will make it a priority to ensure they and all our outdoor courts receive the proper maintenance they deserve.

Our outdoor facilities have been neglected for decades, and while progress has been made, there is still a great deal more to do.

Take care and I hope to see you soon,
Mary Gallery, candidate for mayor

October 21, 3:23 pm
Dear Mary,

In November 2024, the re-surfacing of the Stayner Park tennis courts was clearly signalled in the capital works program (PTI) for 2025. This factual information was confirmed to me by my city councillor, Kathleen Kez, over two weeks ago.

Council and all relevant departments were present when that budget was adopted. Your reply – coming only after the matter was published in today's paper – is unfortunate in its timing and tone. It raises legitimate questions about communication and accountability within council. Residents simply expect clarity and consistency, particularly when official information provided by elected representatives appears to conflict with your own.

Integrity, honesty and transparency are the foundation of public trust, especially on decisions affecting their public spaces.
Respectfully, Natasha Arora

October 21, 4:46 pm
Hi Natasha,

The re-surfacing was indeed included in the original PTI plan, but it was, unfortunately, not among the contracts awarded this year under the 2025 PTI. Our three major infrastructure projects came in higher than expected, which required adjustments to remain within the approved budget envelope. Unfortunately, that meant some of the smaller projects had to be postponed.

That said, the Stayner courts are a well-used and valued facility. If elected, I will ensure that proper funding is allocated next year. Our outdoor spaces play a vital role in the community and deserve continued investment.

Take care,
Mary Gallery, candidate for mayor

October 23, 4:47 pm
Thanks for your recent response regarding the long-delayed explanation for why re-surfacing of the Stayner Park tennis courts did not – and will not – take place in the year ending 2025.

I appreciate your acknowledgment – after some pressing – that "the re-surfacing was included in the original 2025 PTI plan." However, several concerns remain.

One key point is unanswered: could you clarify the division of responsibilities between the department of Sports and Recreation and Public Works when it comes

to maintenance, re-surfacing and overall care of our outdoor facilities? Residents are genuinely interested in understanding who does what, so that no one is left guessing whether a tennis ball or a budget line item takes priority!

Additionally, I would appreciate clarification on the following points:

- What was the allocated budget specifically for the Stayner Park tennis court re-surfacing in 2025?
- Which other smaller projects, originally planned for this year, were postponed due to the higher-than-expected costs of the three major infrastructure projects?
- Looking ahead, what is the likelihood that the Stayner Park clay courts in District 8 will receive the maintenance and attention they require?

Given that my initial email to you went unanswered for 16 days, I had no choice but to bring the matter into an open, public format to ensure proper accountability. This step was taken because the issue – involving budget allocation, maintenance, safety of a well-used community facility, and in turn, safety of its users at said municipal space – warranted timely attention and could not remain unaddressed.

For contrast, Councillor Kez – also extremely busy working to seek a third mandate to represent her district – is diligent and respectful of her constituents and their needs, concerns and issues. She responds in a timely, courteous manner and demonstrates integrity in addressing local concerns.

No deflecting, no outbursts or insults, no finger-pointing, no walking away; disgraceful behaviours I have unfortunately witnessed firsthand from some current campaigning councillors and certain past and present elected officials, whose conduct seems driven more by personal and political positioning than by genuine public service. None of these are consistent with my own standards and ethics, nor those of the many residents of standing in our community.

Life is short. There's simply no time to waste precious time. People's problems are real. And Election Day is upon us.

As for [Independent editor] David Price, he too is very busy, running an invaluable local news outlet, very likely on a shoestring budget. Days before publishing my open letter, he verified that my source was reliable. Indeed *she* is. In fact, the three of us are, each in our own way, consummate professionals.

I look forward to your clear and transparent clarification so I can share it with the community. I trust
this exchange serves as *continued on p. 9*

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 *REFERRED FOR A REASON* 

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

a reminder that stewardship and responsiveness are not optional in local governance.

Respectfully,
Natasha Arora

October 25, 9:16 am

Thank you for your follow-up message and for your continued advocacy for the state of our parks and recreation facilities. I share your desire to see ongoing improvements to our park infrastructure.

I want to begin by again apologizing sincerely that your earlier email was answered late. It truly slipped through the cracks, and I regret that. I take my responsibilities seriously, and it is never my intention to leave a resident feeling unheard. I value integrity and accountability in public service, and I appreciate the opportunity to clarify the points you raise. Let me also say that I would never be disrespectful toward any resident.

Decisions around the capital works program are never taken lightly, and certainly never with disregard for residents' concerns. It is always a balance between many projects that must be completed across the city within an approved budget envelope that is adjusted throughout the year as real costs come in, not just estimates.

To your specific questions:

- The resurfacing of the Stayner Park tennis courts was indeed included in the 2025 preliminary three-year capital works (PTI) Plan. However, as the year progressed, several major infrastructure projects, some of which faced higher than expected costs, required re-allocations within the capital budget. With hundreds of competing priorities across the city, some smaller projects, including this one, had to be deferred. This does not mean it has been abandoned. It remains on the capital works list for reconsideration as resources allow, and if I am elected, it will be a priority for the spring work of 2026. The investment in Stayner Park tennis is expected to be around several hundred thousand dollars.
- As for your question about which other smaller projects were postponed due to the higher-than-expected costs of the major infrastructure projects, I do not have access to that level of administrative detail at the moment. Given that we are currently in an election period, the city administration does not provide that type of information to candidates.
- Regarding departmental responsibilities, the department of Sports and Recreation oversees programming, user coordination and facility scheduling, while Public Works manages infrastructure maintain-

ance and capital improvements. The two departments work closely together to ensure that facilities are safe, well maintained and prioritized appropriately within the city's overall plan.

Westmount is fortunate to have residents who care deeply about our shared spaces. I remain committed to ensuring that investments, whether in Stayner Park or elsewhere, are made responsibly, transparently, and with long term community benefit in mind.

Thank you again for your engagement. Have a great day, Mary [Gallery]

INDEPENDENT CRITICAL TO BINDING WESTMOUNT TOGETHER

The *Westmount Independent* is a critical core component of what binds our Westmount community together. Sources of information, other than the local municipal government, enrich our daily dialogue and understanding of different perspectives concerning various issues.

I would be more than willing to buy a yearly subscription, make an annual donation or present my argument to city hall that the *Westmount Independent* deserves sufficient funding so that it not only survives but thrives.

MARILYN COOPERMAN,
DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

HAMAS, NOT ISRAEL, TRUE SOURCE OF GAZA'S SUFFERING

This letter is in response to D. M. Roskie's misinformed statement (October 21, p. 6).

While many protestors claim their outrage is directed only at Israeli policies, the uncomfortable truth is that their anger too often aligns with Hamas's narrative – a group that openly vows Israel's destruction and deliberately sacrifices its own civilians for propaganda.

Hamas embeds rocket launchers in schools, hospitals and apartment blocks, guaranteeing civilian deaths to fuel international outrage. It diverts aid, steals humanitarian supplies and executes dissenters. Every civilian death in Gaza is not only a tragedy but a calculated part of Hamas's strategy – one designed to keep its people in perpetual victimhood while preserving its grip on power.

To portray pro-Palestinian protests as purely motivated by compassion ignores this reality. True compassion demands condemnation of those who use their own population as human shields. It demands outrage at Hamas's decision to start wars it cannot win, knowing its civilians will pay the price.

Israel, like any sovereign nation, has the right – and obligation – to defend its citizens from terrorism. Calling that self-defence "genocide" is not only inaccurate but dangerously dismisses the moral difference between a democracy protecting its people and a terror group exploiting its own.

If protesters truly cared about Palestinian lives, they would march not against Israel, but against Hamas – the true oppressor of Gaza's people and the chief author of their suffering.

ALLAN GOLDBERG, LANSDOWNE AVE.

Editor note: This debate has strayed from the issue in Westmount, i.e. the protests near the Israeli consulate on Wood at St. Catherine. As in the case with discussions of vaccination and climate change, the Israeli-Palestinian controversy will not be resolved here, i.e. in a weekly paper seven time zones away from the core disputes that is devoted to municipal politics and life in one small city. For this reason, I am declaring this debate closed in this paper at this time. If local demonstrations continue, and people want to comment on them in some way, those letters will be welcome. – DP.



PAUL LEVINE

District 6

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A Determined Voice

Autorisé par Daphne Tsadilas - Agente Officielle de Paul Levine.
Authorized by Daphne Tsadilas - Official Agent of Paul Levine

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THOMAS ROLAIN

District 2

November 2, 10:00 AM - 8:00 PM
2 novembre, 10:00 à 20:00
École The Study - 1, Place Braeside

SCAN

Autorisé par Thomas Rolain, agent officiel / Authorized by Thomas Rolain, Official agent

Children’s Hallowe’en ‘Extravaganza’ event features best pumpkins



Left, viewing some of the many decorated pumpkins already submitted October 20 to the children’s library for its Halloween Extravaganza October 25, are, from left: Celina with daughter Eve, and children’s librarian Wendy Wayling, along with Zayn, library clerk Faith Holness and Zayn’s mother Nesli. Right, the lawn decorations.

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Close to 200 decorated pumpkins submitted for this year’s Hallowe’en Extravaganza event at the Westmount Public Library were expected to remain on display until October 31 after judging October 25.

This year’s theme, “The Library Quest,” was based on the popular game Dungeons and Dragons that was featured in various ways throughout the after-hours event for participants aged 6 to 12 who had submitted decorated pumpkins in various age categories.



Plans called for the children to participate in an opening skit and then move throughout the decorated library, “completing exciting challenges,” explained children’s librarian Wendy Wayling. Loot bags and treats awaited them when they completed all the challenges.

Prizes for the winning pumpkins were also awarded during the event in the following categories: ages 6-7 years, 8-9, 10-12 and also Family.
See p. 3 of this issue for a complete list of this year’s winners by age category.

As we approach the end of the pool season we remind everyone of the importance of winterizing the pool equipment, whether you do it yourself or by a pool company, water left in hoses, outdoor faucets, pool heater or heatpump can cause freeze damage this winter. When that is done think about checking your home heating & hot water before winter.



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News, opinion & analysis

Trent: I was misquoted and misrepresented substantively by Gallery

Gallery concedes misquotation, fails to precisely defend characterization of former mayor's views

BY DAVID PRICE, EDITOR

Ugh. This dispute about mayoral candidate Mary Gallery's remarks at the Westmount Municipal Association's meet-the-candidates event held October 23 at Victoria Hall has flared up just as we put to bed this last issue before the election.

Former mayor Peter Trent has claimed that he was misquoted and misrepresented by Gallery. He has made his case successfully on both counts, in my view. Gallery herself concedes the alleged quotation is not one, but she continues to dispute the allegation of misrepresentation.

This whole affair is unprecedented for us, and I find myself as the unwilling last-minute reporter and moderator. I have done my best to capture both participants' points of view, and to inform the general reader given what I know about the issues at hand.

This dispute is about opinions, yes, but also about the facts of what Trent thought and thinks (much of which is well documented, even for third parties' use). The result is this very different and perhaps confusing (or even overkill) format. Despite its novelty, it allows me to present my opinion about what is so and what is not, as well as a very full record for people to make their own judgements.

I note also that Gallery opened this can of worms when she tried both co-opt and attack a known ally, i.e. Peter Trent, of one of her mayoralty-race opponents, i.e. Lynne Casgrain, and not back down when in a dispute with a person about his own ideas.

The dispute begins

Saturday, October 25, 9:35 am, former Westmount mayor Peter Trent wrote to

mayorality candidate Mary Gallery, Victor Drury and the Independent:

Having received no answer from you as to the page number of your "quote" from my book that you read out loud during Thursday's debate [October 23], and after conducting multiple word searches of my text [*The Merger Delusion* book], I conclude the "quote" was a complete fabrication that has caused me reputational damage in front of many of my fellow citizens, all with the goal of furthering your own political career.

I insist on a full public apology on social media, your website, and in the *Westmount Independent*.

*

Gallery's First Statement

2:03 pm, Mary Gallery wrote back to Peter Trent, the Independent and Victor Drury: Peter, David & Victor,

My statement [at the meet-the-candidates event was]: "After de-merger, municipalities will compete with each other in attracting skilled labour – municipal staff (engineers, urban planners, IT, public works.) That competition will drive up salaries, benefits, retention bonuses and hiring costs – especially in specialized roles. Funny how Peter Trent has been criticizing our administration on the past and with regard to rising expenses, and chooses to forget what he warned us about over 10 years ago."

My reflection [on] these comments: Peter Trent's book *The Merger Delusion: How Swallowing Its Suburbs Made an Even Bigger Mess of Montreal*, is an important book written in 2012 documenting our city's de-merger history and its relationship with Montreal.

In my recent remarks, I referred to the Conclusion and the Appendix of that book, which outlines the position and warnings expressed by Peter Trent regarding the financial implications of Montreal's cost-sharing model. My reference to his position was drawn directly from those sections. I understand that Peter has taken issue with my use of the word *quote* rather than *reference*. To be clear, my intention was to not to misrepresent or claim his words verbatim. I stand by my reference to his position, which remains well documented and available for anyone to read in his own work. [...]

Mary Gallery, candidate for mayor

Trent rejects Gallery's first explanation

October 25, 3:08 pm, Peter Trent wrote to Mary Gallery, Victor Drury and the Independent: Mary,

Sorry, this won't do. Not by a long chalk. You said in the video of the debate:

"May I add one thing? I'd like to quote Peter Trent from his book of 2012 called *The Merger Delusion*.

"*He actually said, 'After de-merger, municipalities will compete with each other in attracting skilled labour and municipal staff – engineers, urban planners, IT, public works. That competition will drive up salaries, benefits, retention bonuses, especially for specialized roles'*" (my italics).

This was **not** your statement; it was presented as a direct quote from me. One, by the way, with which I do not agree. At all.

You compound your obfuscation when you write "my intention was to not to misrepresent or claim his words verbatim." That was precisely your intention.

I require a full public apology, both for the original misrepresentation and for this attempt to recast what actually happened.

Peter [Trent]

*

4:59 pm, Peter Trent wrote to the Independent:

The quote, supposedly from me, that @Mary Gallery cited during the debate is not from me, nor from any passage from my book *The Merger Delusion*.

It is a complete fabrication that entirely misrepresents my thoughts and opinions and I take offense to it. Her use of my public credibility to validate her own political campaign agenda is shameful.

An apology has been requested but denied by @Mary Gallery to date.

Price presses Trent for more detail

Editor David Price wrote to Peter Trent at 5:16 pm:

Leaving aside the quotation issue for a minute, what are your substantive views on this topic?

*

Peter Trent wrote back at 9:25 pm:

As for the fabricated quote confected by Mary [Gallery], my main reason to find it antithetical to my thinking is that I am convinced that commercial and governmental operations are improved by competition. As a former entrepreneur, I have lived in that world and know how effective competition can be. It is far from perfect, but both the public sector and private sector become more efficient through competition. [...]

The wholly-manufactured quote by Gallery in fact preached the opposite: that de-merged municipalities would "drive up" salaries. I oppose this idea to the core of my being. It is megacities that drive up salaries, not the small ones.

This is why, after merger, Westmount employees got tens of thousands of dollars increase in their remuneration in order to match Montreal's. That Gallery could interpret my Appendix to say the opposite is a travesty of what my entire book was all about.

*

In order to compare apples to apples (i.e. Trent's interpretation of Trent's book vs. Gallery's interpretation of Trent's book), editor David Price further pressed Trent for quotations from the book itself October 26 at 9 am.

Lots of meat from the present here [i.e. in Trent's 9:25 pm response]. Thank you. Can you direct me to a passage in the [*Merger Delusion*] book with the same point?

Trent replied to Price at October 26 at 10:22 am

p. 534-535 from Appendix: Figure 2 tracks the aggregate spending of all Island of Montreal cities for the period 2001–12, adjusted for both population (that is, demand) and inflation. A distinction is made between those costs affected by the merger and those subjected to purely external forces. The trend of total spending is relentlessly upward after a two-year plateau. However, costs affected by the



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merger peaked in 2009.

p. 537: Looking at Figure 3, we can see that, after 2001, these core costs increased from \$1,385 per capita in today's dollars and (so far) have stabilized at \$1,600 after 2008. Had the megacity not been imposed, we have no reason to think that the costs of delivering municipal services across the Island of Montreal would not have remained at their 2001 levels, since both inflation and population have been factored into these figures. Instead, we have a sudden rise in costs of \$215 per capita following merger. With an Island population of 1,886,000, this means the imposition of the megacity cost \$400 million a year in today's money.

Price presses Gallery for more detail

Editor David Price wrote to Mary Gallery October 25 at 5:33 pm:

Hi, Mary,

Regarding your statement "I stand by my reference to his position, which remains well-documented and available for anyone to read in his own work," would you please direct me to the page or pages of *Merger Delusion* where this Trent position can be found?

Best regards, David

*

On Sunday, October 26 at 8:35 am, Gallery wrote back to refer Price again to her first (i.e. 2:03 pm) statement. Price wrote back to Gallery at 8:58 am:

Hi, Mary,

Can you please be more specific? Peter is claiming the alleged quotation is not a quotation (which you now concede), but also that it mis-represents his views. I think a quotation from his book is in order, not a vague reference to pages and pages of text. Over to you...

Best regards, David

Gallery's Second Statement

Gallery wrote back to Price at 11:48 am: David,

As noted in my previous response, I refer you to the Conclusion and Appendix. One of my key takeaways from *The Merger Delusion* was that while de-merger restored local autonomy, it also resulted in higher administrative and labour costs at the local level.

As shown in the attached excerpts [i.e. a Microsoft Word document with the filename of "Reviews"] from published reviews of Mr. Trent's book at the time of its release, that interpretation is consistent with the views of others.

I misspoke in my remarks by describing it as a quote when, as I have already clarified, it was a reference.

Mr. Trent is publicly supporting another candidate [Lynne Casgrain] whose views differ from mine. My focus remains on the issues that matter most to Westmount's

future, including the growing infrastructure needs, responsible fiscal management, and the re-development of our southeast sector.

Best regards, Mary

On October 26 at 12:42 pm, Price replied to Gallery:

Hi, Mary,

When I read *The Merger Delusion*, about 13 years ago, I took Trent's major point to be that MERGER caused Westmount's costs to rise to the higher, city-of-Montreal level during the merged years, which remained as a starting point after de-merger, but which were caused by merger. The first two bullet points in the "Reviews" Word document that you just sent me echo my point. Do you care to respond?

Also,

- Who wrote the "Reviews" Word document that you sent me?
- In a dispute of this kind, isn't it odd to quote reviews of a book, which also contain the reviewer's own analysis of the real-world facts, and not the book itself?

Best regards, David

*

No reply was received from Gallery to this final email by the *Independent's* press time on October 27.

*

Price's final thought

One last point for the reader: Gallery seems to disparage Trent's reliability due to his mayoral choice in this election ("Mr. Trent is publicly supporting another candidate [Lynne Casgrain] whose views differ from mine"), but it was Gallery who chose to try to co-opt Trent to her side by bringing him up, presumably because of his opposition to the council that she was a part of and because of his support of her opponent. How can she now complain when he talks about what *he* meant in *his* book?

David Price is the editor of the *Independent*. He is looking forward to the end of this election.

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'Reviews' document provided by mayoral candidate Mary Gallery

The following text was in the Word document with the filename "Reviews" sent by mayoralty candidate Mary Gallery to *Independent* editor David Price on October 26 at 11:48 am.

Review of Peter Trent's *The Merger Delusion: How Swallowing Its Suburbs Made an Even Bigger Mess of Montréal*

When reviewing Peter Trent's **The Merger Delusion**, several respected publications commented on the book's analysis of how Montréal's municipal mergers and subsequent de-mergers increased labour and administrative costs by dismantling shared services and duplicating management structures.

Frances Bula, writing in the *Literary Review of Canada* (January–February 2013), observed:

- "Municipal salaries in merged cities tend to rise to the level of whichever group was the highest paid among them all."
- "There are very few administrative positions eliminated... and no merger can reduce the number of people it takes to pick up a set number of garbage cans or police a set number of roads."

Her review concluded that the recon-

stituted municipalities regained pride and autonomy, but at a price – higher overhead, duplicated management, and complex cost-sharing.

Richard Harris, in his *Métropolitiques* review (6 March 2013), echoed that conclusion:

- "It has probably reduced civic efficiency, and certainly raised costs by giving wider scope to an expensive bureaucracy."

Together these independent assessments conclude that Trent is indicating that while de-merger restored local autonomy, it inevitably produced greater administrative and labour expenses through the loss of shared-service economies and the replication of municipal staff and structures.

Citations

- Frances Bula, "Handle with Care," *Literary Review of Canada*, Jan–Feb 2013, reviewcanada.ca/magazine/2013/01/handle-with-care
- Richard Harris, "The politics of municipal mergers (and demergers) in Montreal," *Métropolitiques*, 6 March 2013, www.metropolitiques.eu/The-politics-of-municipal-mergers

Extra edition coming re: municipal election

Due to the late-breaking nature of this dispute and the November 2 municipal election generally, the *Independent* will publish a web-only edition on Friday, October 31 by noon, even if there is nothing new to say. To see it, please go to www.westmountindependent.com. – DP.

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How to deliver ‘reminder cards’?

Canada Post strike creates challenges for municipal election, especially at multi-unit buildings

By JENNIFER BALL

The yellow reminder card received by registered voters is actually a combined notice – it serves both as a Notice of Entry on the List of Electors and a Notice of Revision of that list. Under the law, municipalities must send these two notices: one informing registered voters at a given address of the dates, times and locations for voting, and another indicating when and where the revision commission will be sitting. So, how was it delivered to Westmount homes during the Canada Post strike?

A resident living at the 4300, which is located on de Maisonneuve between Clarke and Redfern avenues, alerted the *Independent* on October 20 that 300 voter cards were dumped on the concierge on October 15 without instructions.

“Because I wrote to [Minto apartments, which owns Le 4300], they had their local management and staff distribute the cards to each addressee... It is anti-democratic... anything that causes voters to not receive government information about where to vote is anti-democratic...”

A resident in Tower 3 at Westmount Square – which has Wood Ave., as its eastern border and Greene Ave. as its western border – also said, on October 21, that voter reminder cards were left with her concierge, information she shared with the *Independent*. She did not provide the exact date they were delivered to the concierge.

On October 22, Maitre Paule Geoffroy Béliveau, the returning officer for municipal elections Westmount, was asked by the *Independent* how the cards were delivered in Westmount.

Municipal employees pivot

On October 23, she said, “Voter ‘re-

minder cards’ are usually delivered by Canada Post to all registered electors. Due to the Canada Post strike, the Office of the Returning Officer had to quickly find alternative solutions to ensure the delivery of these cards...”

“On Thursday, October 9, municipal employees from various departments came together to assist us and successfully completed the delivery of all voter reminder cards. This information was shared through multiple channels – including social media, the city’s website and a special newsletter – to inform residents and seek their cooperation. For individual addresses, reminder cards were delivered directly to each address.”

“For multi-unit residential buildings (such as Le 4300 and Westmount Square): there was an additional challenge because, unlike Canada Post, municipal employees did not have access to individual mailboxes. This issue was experienced by municipalities across Quebec. To address it, we prepared envelopes by individual apartment address, which were placed at the entrance of apartment buildings and/or at reception desks (concierge desks), where applicable...”

“When possible, municipal staff provided verbal explanations to reception staff and posted notices on site to explain the nature of the documents delivered and request their assistance in distribution. For certain addresses, particularly high-rise buildings, we also contacted or left messages with the building administration. We acknowledge that not all of them reached back to us or that the information may not have filtered down to all concierges as intended...”

“We regret any inconvenience caused by the unforeseen circumstances of the postal strike and the subsequent *ad hoc* delivery method.”



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RMR to observe Remembrance Day, centennial of its armoury

The Royal Montreal Regiment (RMR) is closely linked to Westmount, including through its iconic St. Catherine St. armoury, which is in Westmount and on municipal land*.

The RMR Foundation raised the funds to build it, making it one of the only regimental headquarters in Canada to be funded in this way. Construction began in June 1925, was completed in November of that year.

It was dedicated to the memory of the 1,192 men of the regiment who died in World War I. Later, the dedication was extended to include the 104

►At the corner of Park Place and St. Catherine St., four banners can be seen, including one for Private Richard Maurice Thornicroft (1922-1944), as seen October 24.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.



men who died in World War II.

This year, RMR Remembrance Day events and initiatives include:

- Lamppost banners: 10 lamppost banners have been hung along St. Catherine St. between Bethune and Abbott to commemorate individuals who served with the RMR.
- the annual poppy campaign will run from October 31 to November 11. Veterans, reservists and friends of the RMR will be distributing poppies at the Metro grocery store (4840 Sherbrooke); at the IGA in Alexis Nihon; and at 5 Saisons (1280 Greene Ave.),
- a special museum exhibit: "Armoury or Bust: A Century in Westmount" will run from November 3 to 11, 10 am to 6 pm at the RMR armoury. It is open to the public and free of charge,
- Book launch: *Glory Never Dies*, a new illustrated history

of the RMR by former Montreal *Gazette* journalist Alan Hustak will be launched on November 7. Books are available for purchase at rmr-kit-shop.square.site.

"Remembrance Day is an important moment for all Canadians to pause and reflect on the sacrifices made by our women and men in uniform," says Colin Robinson, former commanding officer of the RMR. "For our regiment, it is also an opportunity to think about the deep ties that connect us to Westmount – our home for the last century. On behalf of the regiment, I would like to thank the city of Westmount for its supportive partnership."

"The RMR has been an integral part of the Westmount community for the last century, and we are very proud of this long-standing relationship," said Mayor Christina Smith. "The unique circumstances under which the armoury was built illustrate the deep ties between our city and the regiment. Remembrance Day is a time to think about our history and the RMR reminds us of the tremendous sacrifice made by Canadians in times of conflict."

*For now. A complicated transfer is under way to sell the land to the federal government. See April 2, 2024, p. 7 and May 14, 2024, p. 4.

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NEWS

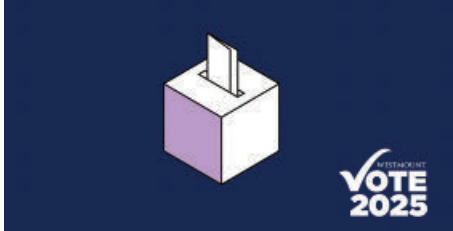
NEXT COUNCIL
MEETING

Monday, November 17



Élections municipales 2025

Les élections approchent à grands pas et chaque voix compte. Consulter le site Web de la Ville afin de découvrir tout ce que vous devez savoir pour participer activement à ce moment clé de la vie démocratique.
westmount.org/elections



2025 Municipal Elections

The elections are fast approaching, and every vote counts. Consult the City's website to learn everything you need to know to take part in this key moment in the democratic life.
westmount.org/elections

Cérémonie du jour du Souvenir

Dimanche 9 novembre à 14h, la Ville de Westmount convie le public à la cérémonie commémorative annuelle du jour du Souvenir, qui se tiendra au cénotaphe près de l'hôtel de ville.
westmount.org/evenements

Abonnez-vous aux avis de collectes !

Créez votre compte dans le Portail citoyen ou modifiez vos alertes existantes pour recevoir des rappels la veille de chaque collecte prévue, par courriel ou SMS, à vous de choisir!
westmount.org/collectes

Remembrance Day Ceremony

Sunday, November 9, at 2 p.m., the City of Westmount cordially invites the public to its annual Remembrance Day ceremony, to be held at the Cenotaph near City Hall.
westmount.org/events

Sign up for collection alerts!

Create your Citizen Portal account or modify your existing one to receive notifications the day before a scheduled collection by email or SMS, as you prefer!
westmount.org/collections

Conseils de sécurité pour Halloween

Avec des enfants de tous les âges sillonnant les rues le soir du **31 octobre à l'Halloween**, il est important que chacun reste vigilant, car rappelons-nous que la sécurité est l'affaire de tous.
westmount.org/actualites

Obtenez de l'argent pour vos achats durables !

Vélos, réparations, couches et produits menstruels réutilisables, bidets, pommes de douche à faible débit et plus encore ! Les achats admissibles effectués en 2025 pourraient vous rapporter jusqu'à 150 \$ par demande.
westmount.org/subventionsvertes

Halloween Safety Tips

With children of all ages roaming the streets on the night of **October 31 for Halloween**, it's important for everyone to stay vigilant. Let's remember that safety is everyone's responsibility.
westmount.org/news

Get money back for your ecofriendly purchases!

Bicycles, repairs, reusable diapers and menstrual products, bidets, BIXI memberships and more! Eligible purchases made in 2025 could grant you up to \$150 per request.
westmount.org/greengrants

BIBLIOTHÈQUE ET ÉVÉNEMENTS COMMUNAUTAIRES

Exposition : Tyler Rozicki et Jessica Jane Roszler

La Galerie du Victoria Hall a le plaisir de présenter, **du 10 octobre au 9 novembre**, une exposition mettant en vedette les oeuvres des artistes Tyler Rozicki et Jessica Jane Roszler.
westmount.com/evenements



Artisans Westmount 2025

Les 8 et 9 novembre, de 10 h 30 à 17 h, Victoria Hall. Le salon Artisans Westmount est l'endroit idéal pour dénicher des créations uniques. Les artisans vous proposeront des oeuvres de joaillerie et de céramique, des articles de papeterie, des accessoires, des produits pour enfants et bien plus. Un incontournable de l'automne ! westmount.org/evenements

Atelier sur l'environnement : biodiversité

5 novembre, 18 h, Salle Westmount. Participez à une discussion bilingue sous forme de jeu sur un sujet brûlant de l'actualité environnementale. Avec l'aide d'un animateur, les aspects scientifiques liés à ce sujet important seront discutés. En collaboration avec la Division environnement de la Ville de Westmount.
westlib.org

Projection spéciale : *Hola Frida* (2025)

5 novembre, 19 h, Victoria Hall. Visionnez le film *Hola Frida* présenté en collaboration avec Humanité et Inclusion Canada, suivi d'une table ronde sur l'inclusion et l'éducation des personnes en situation de handicap. Cet événement est conçu pour un public âgé de 8 ans et plus.
westmount.com/evenements

Journée du film de famille 2025

12 novembre, 19 h, Salle Westmount. Du 15 septembre au 31 octobre, déposez vos films familiaux à la Clinique de films de famille, au Studio. Les films sur 8 mm, Super 8, 16 mm, ainsi que les cassettes vidéo sont acceptés. Ne manquez pas cette occasion de faire restaurer et partager vos précieux souvenirs ! westlib.org

Exhibition: Tyler Rozicki and Jessica Jane Roszler

From October 10 to November 9, the Gallery at Victoria Hall is pleased to present an exhibition featuring the works of artists Tyler Rozicki and Jessica Jane Roszler.
westmount.org/evenements

Environment Workshop: Biodiversity

November 5, 6 p.m., Westmount Room. Join a game-based discussion about a hot topic on the environment. With the guidance of a facilitator, the workshop will simplify the science behind this important subject. In collaboration with the Environment Division of the City of Westmount.
westlib.org

Special Screening: *Hola Frida* (2025)

November 5, 7 p.m., Victoria Hall. Come view the film *Hola Frida* presented in collaboration with Humanity and Inclusion Canada, followed by a panel discussion on disability inclusion and education. This event is for a public-aged 8 years and older.
westmount.org/events

Artisans Westmount 2025

November 8 & 9, from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Victoria Hall. Artisans Westmount is the perfect place to discover one-of-a-kind creations. Come admire the wonderful variety of quality items for sale by this year's fantastic artisans. Jewelry, ceramics, stationery, accessories, toys, and more, perfect gifts for the holiday season!
westmount.org/events

Home Movie Day 2025

November 12, 7 p.m., Westmount Room. From September 15 to October 31, bring your family films to the Home Movie Clinic at the Studio. Films in 8mm, Super 8, 16mm, as well as videotapes, are accepted. Don't miss this opportunity to have your precious memories restored and shared! westlib.org



Police Report

Police seek Westmount Square handbag thief who dropped ID

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Police at Station 12 on Stanton St. had what appeared to be an open-and-shut case early last week against a thief who attempted to rob a women's fashion boutique in the Westmount Square shopping mall, but may get nailed after inadvertently providing some almost irrefutable proof of his guilt.

It was after regular store hours on the evening of October 22 when the mall was still open but there were few if any customers around, according to Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit.

While walking through the mall, the suspect used a rock he was carrying to smash a window, behind which a half-dozen or so women's handbags were being displayed.

He grabbed several, piled them on the mall floor, and was preparing to leave when he was interrupted by the sound of the arrival of a security guard who had spotted the stolen merchandise heap.

However, while trying to get away, the suspect dropped a piece of personal identification, said Cst. Yigit.

With that and images from security cameras showing the suspect, the police hope they have enough evidence, although even that isn't certain. For instance, the

security guard didn't actually see the suspect.

"Nothing's open and shut in our work," said Yigit, while adding that the person is considered a "person of interest" for the time being.

Springfield car entered

As reported to police at Station 12, a vehicle was entered in Westmount last week, although nothing was stolen.

The car was parked overnight on Springfield Ave. on October 22.

Cst. Yigit declined to identify the make and model, saying he couldn't provide that information "in case it might identify someone living on the street."

As there were no signs of forced entry, such as broken window glass on the street, it's possible the car was unlocked at the time.

It's always worth double-checking that the car doors are indeed locked, he continued, taking into account that car thieves are always out hunting for opportunities.

"Oftentimes, what suspects do, especially in the middle of the night, is to just walk up the street trying all the car doors, without even looking in the vehicle," said Yigit.

Although there were signs that someone had searched the vehicle, including the glove compartment, the owner reported that nothing was missing.

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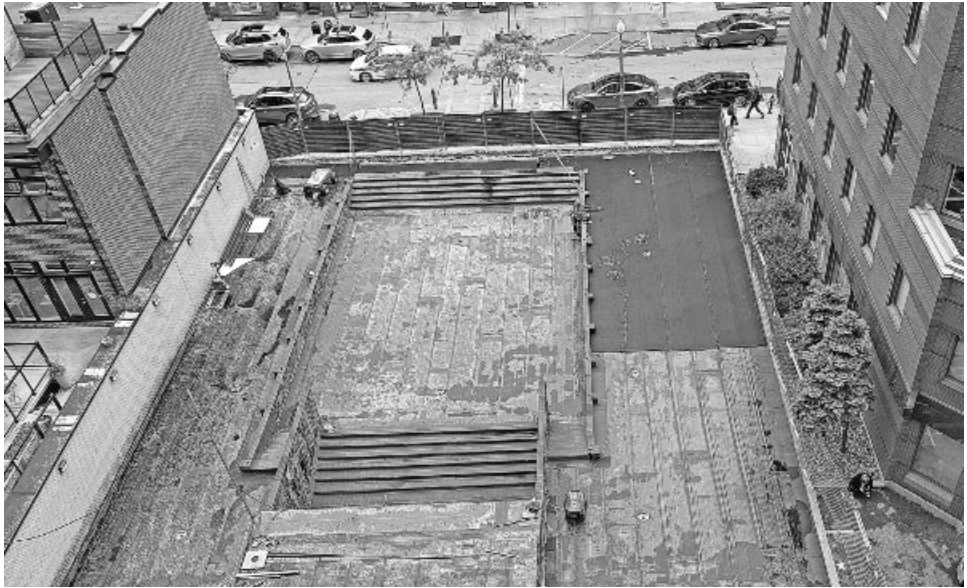
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Westmount Square work continues



Looking down at the laying of the exterior plaza membrane over the Greene entrance to Westmount Square. Work is part of the \$18-million renovation at Westmount Square the cost of which is to be shared by the residential owners and the commercial towers. The project is currently in phase 1, which began on July 7 and is set to continue until November 30. See full story on the scope of work in the October 21 issue, p. SL-22. As seen October 22.

PHOTO: JENNIFER BALL

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.

Email us at:

editor@westmountindependent.com

Deadline earlier than for self-removal

An ‘extra’ voter at your address? Maybe they can’t be removed

By JENNIFER BALL

Westmount residents Susan and David Stein – who have lived at their Westmount residence for 20 years – received their voter reminder card at their mailbox the week of October 6.

The yellow card serves as both a Notice of Entry on the list of electors and a Notice of Revision of that list. They immediately noticed that there were two unknown individuals entered beside their names as elec-

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tors at their address. A visit to the board of revisors followed, yet they were told they were too late to make any changes.

Maitre Paule Geoffroy Béliveau, Westmount’s city clerk and the returning officer for municipal elections here, was asked why by the *Independent* on October 22.

On October 23, she replied. “We are not in a position to comment on a specific situation. The initial voters list (before any changes made by the Board of Revisors) is provided to us by Élections Québec...”

“The permanent list of electors is a computerized register that is updated daily using various sources, such as the Québec change of address service (Service Québécois de changement d’adresse – SQCA) and the Régie de l’assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ)...

“Occasionally, people who have moved may not have correctly updated their address with all relevant services. While we cannot confirm the exact cause in this instance, it usually stems from the electoral list being updated from multiple administrative sources, which can sometimes result in errors or the retention of names of individuals who have moved out...”

“The purpose of the Notice of Entry and the subsequent session of the Board of Revisors is precisely to allow electors to check this information and request corrections, removals, or registrations.”

On October 21, David told the *Independent* that he had just returned from such a session and upon requesting that the revising officer strike the unknown individuals from the card, he was told: “It’s too late.”

Béliveau was apprised of David’s account, and she said, “...For the removal of a voter’s name [it] is important to understand that:

1. A request for removal made by the person wishing to have their **own name removed** (self-removal) could be heard

up to the very end of the Board’s proceedings on October 21.

2. However, when a request for removal is made by a **third party** (e.g., a landlord, co-resident, or your source requesting the removal of unknown persons), an investigation must be conducted by the revising officers of the Board. This investigation is mandatory to ensure that no elector is unfairly removed from the list and that their right to vote is protected...

“Therefore, while the deadline for *general* applications for entry or correction was October 21, the deadline for a third-party application for *removal* would have been an earlier date (e.g., October 20)...”

David said he knew he would be able to vote, but he just did not want other people to get a vote that they were not entitled to.

Béliveau said, “The voter reminder card (yellow card) is not mandatory to vote. To vote, electors must provide their name and address, and present one of the accepted pieces of identification, such as:

- their health insurance card,
- their driver’s licence,
- their Canadian passport,
- their Certificate of Indian Status,
- or their Canadian Forces ID card.”

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List of ‘strike condition’ *Independent* distribution boxes

Top:

- Devon Park entrance on Upper Belmont,
- The Boulevard/Aberdeen (southeast),

Middle, west:

- Côte St. Antoine/Victoria (northwest corner),
- entrance to Murray Park (Westmount Ave./Murray Hill),

Middle, east:

- entrance to Murray Park (Montrose/Murray),
- Montrose/Mt. Pleasant (northeast),

Lower, west:

- outside our building at 310 Victoria Ave.,
- de Maisonneuve/Lansdowne entrance to Westmount Park,

Lower, east:

- entrance to Queen Elizabeth Gardens (Barat/Vignal),
- Greene Ave. parking lot just south of Sherbrooke, at sidewalk, south side.

Major turnout for WMA's mayoralty candidates' debate

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

If attendance at Victoria Hall last week for the 2025 city of Westmount mayoralty candidates' debate was anything to rely on, the turnout for the November 2 election is likely to be correspondingly positive.

The ground-floor section of the Vic Hall auditorium was filled to capacity, with residents eager to hear the views of mayoralty hopefuls Lynne Casgrain, Mary Gallery and Michael Stern, while the balcony's seats were nearly all filled.

Although the tone of the October 23 event, hosted by the Westmount Municipal Association, was courteous and respectful for the most part, there were some tense moments.

These included attempts by mayoralty hopefuls to discredit each other's campaign or record, as well as efforts by audience members to force candidates to account for some of their past actions or statements.

Gallery, who has served two terms as the city councillor for Westmount's District 6, got the ball rolling in her opening remarks when she noted that neither Casgrain nor Stern has previous experience in municipal government.

Stern scores with trash removal

Gallery accused Stern of refusing to respond to questions put to him by local media. "The *Westmount Independent* asked Mr. Stern straightforward questions on issues of importance to all residents and he refused to respond," she said. Stern did not reply to the charge when his turn to speak came up.

However, Stern, a chartered professional accountant and former Ernst & Young

partner, scored points when he pledged, if elected, to immediately restore weekly garbage removal service year-round.

Currently, garbage collection takes place once every two weeks from October 1 to April 30 at single-family homes and residential buildings up to eight units.

Stern also pledged to shore up the city's finances, and improve services and infrastructure. "Westmount has lost its way," he said. "We must regain our direction and build a city that's even better for children and grandchildren."

Casgrain, a longtime Westmounter who is a senior partner at the Grey Casgrain law firm, which handles many human rights and constitutional cases, said she felt suited for the mayor's job as the mandate is very similar to what she had been doing for 20 years as ombudsman at the MUHC (McGill University Health Centre).

"I have extensive legal and mediation skills, which is what the city needs now," she said, claiming that many of the Westmounters she met while campaigning door to door were not happy with the recent council and told her they were not being heard.

"Who was consulted on the construction of streets like Lexington and Claremont, on the garbage collection, on priorities and planning?" she continued. "What about our parks? It is clear that the citizens are not looking for a continuation of the current experience, but are looking for a fresh approach."

Southeast sector re-development

On the controversial issue of the last city council's plans to re-develop a portion of the southeast sector, including the erection of high-rises along St. Catherine St., Cas-



From left, Westmount mayoralty candidates Lynne Casgrain, Michael Stern and Mary Gallery.

grain suggested the city needs to collaborate with the city of Montreal to relieve a related problem involving homeless people who are increasingly populating the area.

However, she acknowledged that a lack of developers to build on St. Catherine "is not proactive" because they will become involved only "when there is a demand, but there doesn't seem to be one now."

Stern said the previous zoning regime "did not make economic sense, and the proof is that there are five property owners that own properties there and they haven't done anything ..."

But he didn't dismiss re-development in the future, saying that "if we're smart and if we play our cards right, we're going to have a new development there [under the new zoning regime] and these will be taxpayers for housing and retail and that will provide much needed tax dollars for the city."

For her part, Gallery defended the course of action council took in the southeast, saying, "We must move forward and when I'm there we'll be able to manage the next stage. This was just the beginning."

Casgrain grilled on protest legal work

During the public question period, Paola Samuel of District 6 took Casgrain to task over her response to the question as to how she would deal with the pro-Palestinian protesters who have gathered at Wood and St. Catherine over the past two years.

While Casgrain insisted that statements like "kill the Jews," as attributed to the protestors by Samuel, are "actually unlawful speech and cannot be tolerated" and "it is absolutely horrendous," Samuel responded that Casgrain's law firm defended some of the protestors when they faced charges.

Casgrain replied, "Our law firm did not defend people who cried 'kill the Jews.'" She said her firm defended persons representing a movement for the unity of Palestinians and Jews, as well independent Jewish voices.

She noted that Grey Casgrain had also previously defended Sikhs in the Canadian Supreme Court when their right to carry the ceremonial *kirpan* knife was legally challenged, as well as Orthodox Jews when their use of the *sukkot* and the *eruv* faced legal obstacles.

"So, that's human rights, that's what our law firm does," she said to some applause.

When another resident again challenged Casgrain on the same question, she insisted, "We do not defend people who break the law ... We do not defend that. That is undefendable, that's what it is. But freedom of expression is a right that exists and that must also be protected. This is a right for everyone in this room to speak."



The crowd at the October 23 meet-the-candidates at Victoria Hall.



Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

OCTOBER

Wednesday, October 29

Atwater Library's Annual Benefit Party. Guest of honour John Blachford. Dave Turner Jazz Trio performs. Cocktail features Dunn's famous smoked meat sandwiches. Silent auction online bidding opens October 17. 6 to 8 pm. Tickets \$175. Contact: Lavina Alonzo, 514.935.7344. Canadahelps.org/en/charities/Atwater-library-and-computer-centre/events/2025-benefit-cocktail-party. 1200 Atwater Ave./Tupper St. (accessible entrance and elevator).

Thursday, October 30

Festival de musique de chambre de Montreal cocktail-concert hosted by Phyllis Lambert. Works by Chopin and Brahms performed by Charles Richard-Hamelin (piano), Andrew Wan and Eva Lesage (violin), Victor Fournelle-Blain (viola) and Denis Brott (cello) 6 pm. Tickets \$275. 514.489.7444. info@festivalmontreal.org.

NOVEMBER

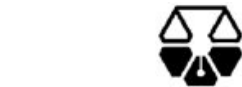
Thursday, November 6

Miriam Foundation's Art Auction for Autism. Co-chairs Jeannette Hoffman-Zaffir, Carol Tryansky, Judy Wolfe and Franki Yanofsky. Catering: Ristorante Beatrice. Tickets: \$350. Miriamfoundation.ca. 6:30 pm. Maison Alcan, 1188 Sherbrooke St. Valet parking.

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Autumn Social Calendar (part II)

Friday, November 7

St. Mary's Ball, hosted by the St. Mary's Hospital Foundation. Co-presidents Stephen Kelly, senior partner Norton Rose Fulbright, and Lindsay Matthews, general counsel at Nuvei. Theme: mid-century style. Entertainment Montreal Rhapsody Orchestra. Catering: Beatrice. Dress: Black tie and evening gown. 6:30 pm. Tickets and information kris.hebert.comtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca. Windsor Station, 1100 Ave. des Canadiens de Montréal. Valet parking.

Saturday, November 8

65th annual Museum Ball presented by IG Private Wealth Management. Theme: freedom. Co-chairs Alexandre L'Heureux, CEO WSP Global; Jérôme Péresse, chief executive, aluminium, Rio Tinto; Tracy Robinson CEO CN; and Erik Ryan, special advisor on stakeholder engagement, Atkinsréalis. The museum will pay tribute to the major exhibition *Kent Monkman: History is Painted by the Victors*. Black tie. 6 pm. Information.mbam.qc.ca/en/the-foundation/the-museum-bal/. Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1380 Sherbrooke St. West. Valet parking.

Saturday, November 15

Viennese Ball of Montreal celebrating the 200th anniversary of the "King of the Waltz," Johann Strauss II. Held under the auspices of the Austrian ambassador in Canada. Cocktail reception, dinner and débutante presentation. 6:30 pm. Tickets \$400. Austrianmontreal.com. Montreal Marriott Château Champlain, 1050 de la Gauchetière West.

Sunday, November 16

ICRF Women of Action Brunch. Honorees Joanne Miller Eisman, co-founder Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer Foundation; Eva Derhy Sinai, co-founder Derhy Law and the Québec Jewish Legal Alliance, and Dr. Pnina Brodt, co-founder

Liver Metastasis Research Network. Guest speaker Sivan Yaari, CEO Innovation Africa. Event co-chairs Alana Wexler Schwartz and Stephanie Zucker. Tickets and information info@icrfmontreal.org.

Friday, November 28

Cedars Celebration. 10th anniversary of the Cedars Cancer Centre at the MUHC; 25th anniversary of Sarah's Fund for Cedars, and the 60th anniversary of the Cedars Cancer Foundation. Honorary co-chairs Andrew Lutfy and Melanie Cosgrove; George and Simé Armoyan; and Nadim Rizk and Audrey Huot. Gala co-chairs



9 Lives

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To find out more about him, please do not hesitate to consult the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, then scroll to his information page from his identification number, 309328826.

Since the shelter is open every day, you can easily plan your visit with Leo Montana and the adoption coordinators to discuss bringing him home with you. It is open from Monday to Friday from 3 pm to 8 pm, then Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to

Paola Aprikian and Daphne Tsadilas-Shamie. Black tie. Tickets \$2,000. Information Shoshana.nuez@cedarscancer.com. 514.656.6662 x 228. Legala.ca. Windsor Station, 1100 Ave. des Canadiens de Montréal. Valet parking.

DECEMBER

Friday, December 5

Toy Tea 2025. High tea with performances by children's choir in special holiday décor. Mission is to purchase non-violent toys for children of abused women in shelters in Greater Montreal. (No need to bring a toy.) Dress: elegant. Tickets \$175. Toyteammontreal.org. Mount Royal Club, 1175 Sherbrooke St. West.

Leo Montana, stunning Siamese



6 pm. The SPCA is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West, in Côte des Neiges, Montreal H4P 1X4.

Please bring a carrier, and if you do not have one, you can choose one from the various models available at the in-house boutique. You can also stock up on food, accessories and toys for him from their large selection. Leo Montana is so beautiful, it would be wonderful if you could share affection and companionship.

Your neighbour, Lysanne

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Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Fieldman Fraiberg, supporters mark 45 years of Allegra



The sold-out audience at the Redpath Hall event rose to a standing ovation after each spectacular performance.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Dorothy Fieldman Fraiberg.

Not only is local res Dorothy Fieldman Fraiberg a talented pianist, she is also the founder of Allegra Chamber Music.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin joined her in a special evening celebrating 45 years of Allegra concerts. A world-renowned conductor, Yannick Nézet-Séguin is currently music director of the Orchestre Métropolitain, the Metropolitan Opera and the Philadelphia Orchestra. He is also a talented pianist and joined Dorothy to play Franz Schubert's Fantasy in F Minor, D 940 for four hands.

The program also included Johannes Brahms' Intermezzo Opus 118 # 2 arranged for clarinet and piano, performed by Simon Aldrich on clarinet and Yannick, who then played the piano in Mozart's Concerto No. 12 in A Major for piano and string quartet K 414, joined by violinists Amélie Benoit Bastien and Alexander Lozowski, Pierre Tourville (viola) and Sheila Hannigan (cellist).

Committee members for the evening were Anna Birnie-Lefcovitch, Jacqueline Hopmeyer, Gabi Opas, Adam Gold and Kathryn Stephenson.

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YES to employment, entrepreneurship, and female entrepreneurs



Social Notes
VERONICA REDGRAVE

An intimate YES salon evening was hosted by **Marina Boulos-Winton** and her husband **Grant Winton**. Marina was then executive director of YES Employment + Entrepreneurship. Now she is executive director designate Sun Youth and YES is led by fellow Westmounter **Elizabeth Gomery**. The gathering featured three inspiring female entrepreneurs, current clients of YES: **Louloua Maleh**, founder LOULINE Interiors, specializing in high-end remodels and luxury interiors; landscape painter **Kylie Sandford**; and **Beth Cytrn**, founder of BethCare, celebrating more than 12 years as a home care service supporting local seniors. Noted in attendance were **Andrea Usher-Jones**, residential real-estate agent Profusion; **Ivan Greenstein**, Oberon Capital; **Danielle Grill**; **Mira Katnick**, archi-



Beth Cytrn, Kylie Sandford, Nour Zirat, Louloua Maleh and Marina Boulos-Winton.



tect/partner ARCHITEM Wolff Shapiro Kuskowski; **Monica Flores**, formerly vp government affairs and communications at Telefilm; **Anna Romano**, Stikeman Elliott; YES board member **Larry Markowitz**, NATIONAL Public Relations; former Westmount mayor **Peter Trent**; and **Nour Zirat**, provincial legislator **Jennifer Macca-**

rone's office. Others in attendance included **Anne Marie Marilley**, general manager Fairmont Tremblant; **Jason MacCallum**, Raymond James Ltd. with his wife **Antoinette von Hahn**, Bell Canada; **Françoise Faverjon-Fortin**, past chair Montreal chapter of the International Women's Forum; and **Mario**

Clarke, longtime director of Entrepreneurship and Programs at YES. The evening's theme of pitching respective businesses and making new connections highlighted the role YES plays in helping and empowering entrepreneurs to pursue their visions.



Westmount A-dog-tions
LYSANNE FOWLER

A young two-year-old poodle-type, Ricardo is ready for a family in our neighbourhood. Even though he has great carriage and elegance, Ricardo is playful and keen on pleasing everyone in his foster family for the Montreal SPCA. He is loving and cuddly, bonded for training as activities are very interesting to him. Ricardo is very healthy, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and micro-

Playful and Cuddly Ricardo

chipped. You can find out more about him by scrolling to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com and referring to his information page by his identification number, 2000345851. Then you can open the link on his page at the "Fill out the form" black rectangle, presenting your contact information and interest in Ricardo joining your family. Please do not hesitate, he is such an affectionate and sporting companion.

SPCA calendars available!
The 2026 SPCA calendars are available

now! Please go to their website at www.sPCA.com to take a peek at the great photographs and order yours. For your purchase of this classic annual fundraiser, you can also refer to the link: www.sPCA.com/alerte-a-automne-2025/#acheter-le-calendrier-2026. Your neighbour, Lysanne



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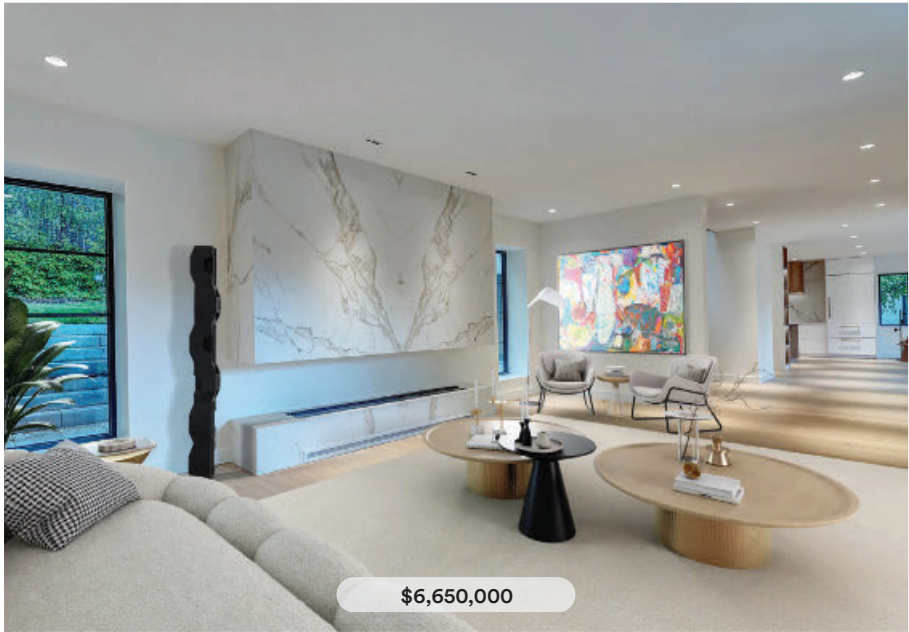
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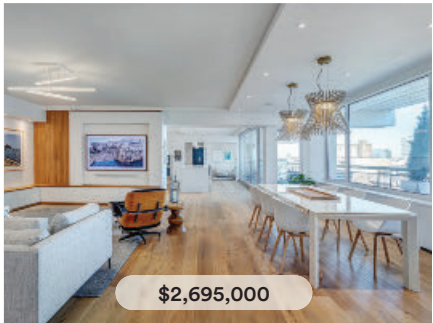
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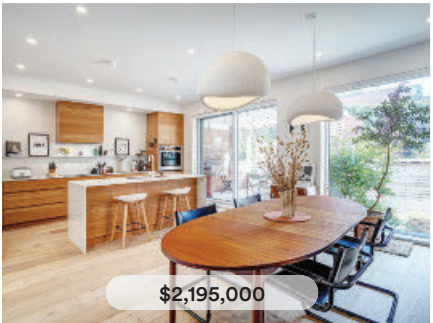
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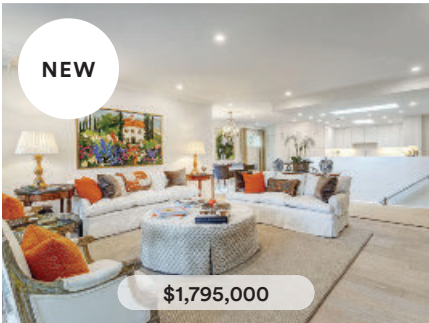
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ENDORSEMENT LETTERS

LISTENING TO RESIDENTS, EXPERTS KEY SKILLS FOR NEXT MAYOR – VOTE CASGRAIN

As a former city councillor for 10 years and mayor for eight years, I know what these jobs demand. That is why I am very enthusiastically supporting Lynne Casgrain as our next mayor of Westmount.

With 20 years as ombudsman of the MUHC, Lynne is a practised listener, manager and problem solver.

Lynne has many new and creative ideas for how Westmount should be moving forward and what sorts of measures should be taken to get back on track. She does however, maintain the traditional values that have made our community so special.

She believes in and embodies the importance of respecting and listening to residents, being transparent and welcoming their involvement. Lynne recognizes the urgency of responsible planning and sound fiscal management – making sure we do what must be done without wasting resources, time, energy or money.

Lynne has shown in the past few months that she not only understands Westmount’s major issues but she has already reached out to experts and has done the research to deepen her knowledge about some long-standing problems. She has researched what tools and support are available from other levels of government to do effective and comprehensive long-term asset management and investment planning.

In looking at the challenges of the crisis in Westmount’s southeast corner, she has reached out to various organizations supporting the homeless in order to touch base and hear their input and ideas and was surprised when she spoke to them that no one else from Westmount’s previous council had done so. She has come up with some innovative ideas to bring to the community. If all this was done in the few months of campaigning, imagine what could be done as mayor in a full term on council.

All of this is why, I have no doubt Lynne Casgrain is ready to be mayor and I look forward to having her lead the next council and administration in a sound and effective way.

KARIN MARKS, WESTMOUNT MAYOR (2001-2009) & CITY COUNCILLOR (1991-2001)

LINGUISTIC SKILL, DIPLOMACY NEEDED IN NEXT MAYOR – VOTE CASGRAIN

This fall, Westmount residents have a clear choice about the kind of leadership our city needs. Of the three candidates running for mayor, only Lynne Casgrain brings the professional experience, linguistic fluency and diplomatic skill needed to represent Westmount effectively beyond its borders.

Many of the challenges our city faces – homelessness, policing, infrastructure renewal – cannot be solved within Westmount alone. They demand collaboration with Montréal and with the provincial government. As a small municipality, we must recognize both our strengths and our limits, and elect a leader who can build those partnerships. With a possible Parti Québécois administration in Quebec City [after the next provincial election], all of that collaboration will take place in French. Even with any other administration in Quebec City, all written correspondence will take place in French. As a bilingual and bicultural francophone and anglophone, Lynne is uniquely equipped to ensure Westmount’s priorities are heard and respected.

A lawyer by training, Lynne spent nearly 20 years as ombudsman at the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC), one of Quebec’s largest and most complex institutions; a difficult job in which she became respected for fairness, diplomacy and an ability to navigate bureaucracy while achieving concrete results. Those same skills – negotiation, balance and persistence – are exactly what municipal leadership requires.

Lynne has lived in Westmount for 43 years. While family background is no qualification in itself, her mother, Marie-Claire Kirkland-Casgrain – the first woman elected to Quebec’s National Assembly and the province’s first female cabinet minister and judge – gave her rare insight into how the provincial government works.

Westmount is a distinct society within a distinct society. Lynne Casgrain has the experience, fluency and judgment to lead it well.

CAROL LEITNER, DISTRICT 3